



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## May 2010 Newsletter

Things, as you can imagine, have been pretty hectic for us since the last newsletter, we have had two shows plus our Festival from which we have just about recovered.

Our show at the end of March was quieter than usual which was a pity as those who didn't turn up missed themselves. It was a good night with the two bands from the east coast laying on a great night of pure country music and crack.

On stage first, kicking off the night, were father and son duo Drew and Terry Thompson, or Double Trouble - they certainly set the tone for the night with some great country music delivered in fine style.

The next band may go under the name of New Gambler but are some old faces - sorry Dougie I meant well known faces!!! From the original Gambler are Dougie Sim, Mikie Sim and drummer Marino, who has certainly not mellowed with age - he's as daft as ever, while from Mustang is Ian Horne, and last but by no means least Ian and Mike from Broken Wing. Now with a line up like that they couldn't fail impress. They covered all styles of country music - some old favourites, some new, and also some that took us right back.

Both bands were clearly enjoying themselves with lots of banter going on between them; they carried the crowd with them which created almost a party atmosphere - good ole country music enjoyed by all.

I'm sure there were a few feeling sorry for themselves and saying never again when everyone turned up on Saturday morning to start the arduous task of turning the Riding Centre into a country music venue.

The weekend went well everything going according to plan and work was ahead of schedule. However the down turn in the weather soon put paid to that - it was so bad in the middle of the week that they just couldn't get the outside work done, and when they did they were soaking and must have been freezing.

I really felt sorry for them - it was a tough week, but with long hours and hard graft we got there in the end, and by Thursday night the venue looked the part. I really can't thank enough all those who turned out to help; some even took leave from work. It just couldn't be done without that on-going support - some of us are not as fit as we were when we started, so we are always on the lookout to recruit new young blood.

I must admit to getting a bit twitchy in the middle of the week when we realised just how much snow there was further south, and the disruption caused to travel, roads closed and no ferries sailing. Thankfully everyone managed to get here safely. The bands were all flying in to Aberdeen and, as the main road was closed due to power cables being down, they had to go round the coast. Despite being tired and cold they said the scenery was worth it.

The bands all did a marvellous job over the weekend, there wasn't a bad act on the stage, and to pick a favourite one would be impossible - they all had something that appealed.

I personally thought the American acts this time were tremendous - the musicians were spot on.

Rick Trevino and his band were one of the best I've heard - their performance was flawless and what a showman.

Amber Digby and her band awesome!! She was the one I kept saying would be one of the favourites, and I just loved her voice and her choice of material, for me one of the highlights.

I also thoroughly enjoyed Leona Williams. Her polished performance proved experience counts although perhaps her choice of material appealed more to the mature audience, but she had an easy listening style and great voice.

Red Jenkins from Sweden lived up to his Honky Tonk Man nickname. He has a superb voice and his duet set with Amber was something special - harmonies or what!

Our Irish acts were as popular as ever. Brendan Quinn proved he hasn't lost any of his magic and his voice was as good as ever - let's hope it's a while before he retires.

First time visitors to our Festival were Thomas Maguire and Fhiona Ennis and no wonder they are earning themselves the reputation as one of the top country duos.

Representing England we had Lemon Grass who are currently one of the most popular bands on the British country music scene. They enjoyed the whole experience saying they had played Festivals all over the country but had never seen any to match ours.

Our own bands always hold their own and get the praise they deserve. I include Nickels and Dimes and The Jacks in this category, and also this year Gwenda and Liberty.

Our local youth bands were once again an important part of the weekend, and once again scored a big hit with the crowd, as did the Chicken Pickers who were one of the highlights of last year.

Following Gerry's retirement I thought that we would struggle to find a replacement to compere the Festival, however George Malcolm did a tremendous job for us. He kept things running smoothly, had quite a rapport with the audience, and also sang a few songs.

On Friday George came along to Bayview House and then Pentland View to entertain the residents. He interacted with them and kept all the wifies going, singing numbers they could sing along to. Thanks for that George and also for the great compere job over the weekend. Shame that he has now made his home in Thailand so we won't get a chance to see him very often.

Apart from all giving fine performances the bands were all very easy going and a pleasure to work with; this made us all much more relaxed. Feedback has been very positive with the greatest percentage of the audience saying that it was the best Festival yet. However we did receive some criticism as per usual, I suppose the main one was in regard to reservation of seats.

We decided that country clubs or large groups should have the right to sit together as some of these people book more than 40 all weekend tickets as a block booking, so it is easier for us to allow them to sit together than find seats for them all dotted around the place.

Some of our sponsors also donate us considerable amounts of cash in return for having seats together, without this cash we could not put on such a show. I hope this clears things up a bit - I can see it from both sides of the coin but can't see any other way round it.

A few people resent the fact that there are so many young people in. I personally think it's great to see them enjoying country music, and they are the ones who will keep it going after our day. On the whole they are very well behaved; they pay their money the same as anyone else so are entitled to enjoy themselves (we were all young once). If they spoil anyone's enjoyment, cause trouble, or if we are alerted to a problem, or aware it's happening then we are more than happy to deal with it

We had some comments about things out with our control such as lights outside the toilets, times of buses, lack of bar staff, etc and we will do what we can to sort these things out.

Thanks goodness we had no moans about the heating as some areas were cooler than others on Friday night, but we managed to get things resolved on Saturday and actually heard people saying they were too hot!

Anyway aside from these things most of the people had nothing but praise and some have already booked hotels for next year. If anyone didn't like the music then they are certainly not country music fans!

So can I once again extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed by way of sponsorship, in the setting up, provided a service, or helped in any way at all over the weekend, and then also to the crew who turned up again on Monday, Thanks to You All.

Last years Festival has just finished being repeated on BBC Alba on Friday nights and I have had a couple of e-mails from folk who have just seen it and are already asking for tickets for 2011!

Speaking about TV this years' crew were a great bunch to work with. They were very helpful and appreciated everything we did for them - they really were a pleasure. I am sure they will make a grand job of the programmes when we see them later in the year.

I can't remember if I told you last time that Gerry Ford had at last got all his paperwork through, house sold, and since mid April has officially emigrated to Australia. I am glad things worked out for Joan and him in the end, and hope they have many happy years with their family in Australia.

Have you all been managing to see the new programme on Rural TV its called Tru Country at the Circle T Arena, definitely one of the better shows on the station. It's a half hour showcase of artists recorded live at the Circle T Arena in Hamilton, Texas and really is full of authentic country honky tonk music. Heather Myles was on the first one (but I missed her) while Bobby Flores was on the 20th and I thoroughly enjoyed him. Last weeks' featured Amber Digby along with Justin Treveno and it was excellent. You can catch it on Tuesdays at 3pm then again 9pm, repeated Wednesday mornings at 3am and 9am, try and catch it.

A wee while back I was listening to Stewart Fenwick's Sunday afternoon programme on line, and heard him interview John Miller and play some tracks from his new album. I had heard of the guy, knew he was Scottish, and had been around on the country scene for a while, but hadn't heard a lot of his stuff - most of which he writes himself. Anyway I loved the voice right away, got Davie to contact him and he sent some demos - well I'm hooked! I noticed the new album called Still Carrying a Flame is being previewed in some of the magazines this month and is getting good reports. John has penned all the songs and they are well written love songs in a variety of styles, but defiantly all pure country music. I have one or two particular favourites but all twelve tracks are winners.

There is also a new release from The Indians - one of the longest running bands on the scene. It's titled From The Beginning and that's what it does; takes us right through their career from their beginning in 1971. The line up hasn't changed much over the years although they have had five Big Chiefs, and the album features three tracks from each era. As like their live shows, the album is not strictly country, but a good album to take you back to the show band days.

I've noticed recently that there seems to be more happening around Nashville which is good news for visitors. There are major renovations going on in the Hall of Fame and Museum, Dolly Parton has opened a new gift shop called Trinkets and Treasures beside the Wild Horse, there are some new restaurants including the re-opening of Hard Rock, also Margaritaville owned by Jimmy Buffet, as well as more live shows, definitely must get back soon!!

From this month visitors to Nashville will now be able to fly direct to Branson. It is initially until August however it is hoped to continue; previously visitors could only fly to Springfield which is 60 miles from Branson. We drove it once which was a bit of a nightmare so flying would definitely be the best option.

Willie Nelson will be touring this UK during June and is set to appear at the Glastonbury Festival on the 25th - I hope he's got his wellies with him! Before that he has several appearances in Ireland, then to Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and then going on to England.

Friday night saw us having another successful club night with Gwenda & Liberty supported by Buzzard Creek.

Buzzard Creek, a duo from Falkirk, entertained with some fine cover versions ranging from country standards and up to date American country. Two nice guys who went down well with the members.

We heard Gwenda and Liberty at the Festival, so knew what to expect, and we got it! What a superb performance from the band from Orkney. Three of the band members originally played with Shogun; one of the most popular and most requested acts in our club - evident as they won our Band of the Year Award twice. Gwenda, Philip and Ian were joined by Andy Cant, an outstanding fiddle player - he joined them on every tune producing a great country sound. Gwenda as we know is a brilliant vocalist - she has a great ballad voice and treated us to numbers by Faith Hill, Dixie Chicks and Martina McBride, alongside songs by artists such as Eagles, Lonestar & Steve Earl. The band is very busy and has lots of commitments but let's hope we can get them back on the mainland before long.

Next month we have All Jacked Up which includes some members of Tennessee River. They will be joined by Nickels and Dimes for the show on 28th May.

All you ones that are off to Letterkenny on Friday, with the trip run by Manson & Robert, have a great time and think about us all left here working hard. Hope the weather is nice for you, have a good trip and enjoy the music.

We'll think that's about all for now

Until next time,

Keep it Country

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCCMC