



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

May 2015 Newsletter

I managed to get myself confused (mind you that's easy done now a days) I thought I had written a newsletter after our last show but realised that I hadn't :| then remembered that our March show was early due to the fact that we would be starting to set up for the Festival on our normal Friday.

Since it was so close to our last club night and near to the Festival we decided to go with just one act and have a dance. As we expected it was a bit quieter than normal but we had a great night. During the last show we had announced for people to come along in western dress if they wanted to, so most people were very relaxed lots of jeans, check shirts and boots; we also threw away the uniforms and joined the others: the guy who made a real effort was Sandy he certainly looked the part of the Sheriff, mind you it was a bit ironic it's him that usually needs to be kept in order!!!

Entertaining us for the night was the Angie King Duo, Angie on vocals and guitar and Davy Adams on pedal steel what a fantastic combination.

It's been many many years since Angie last played for us in the club as part of The John C King Family Band; she took a break from the music scene to raise her family but is now back stronger than ever. Angie's captivating voice has wowed her audiences for years and it's still as powerful and strong as it was back then.

Angie and Davy provided a brilliant night of music they covered a great selection of numbers all of which went down very well – with a voice like hers I think she could sing anything and get away with it. She certainly went down very well with the crowd it's a long time since I've heard so many compliments about a Scottish act especially a duo.

I'm sure during the course of the night she must have been fed up with people asking her if she would come back and bring her dad; to date they have done a few gigs together and are booked for some more including the Triple C in Wick for their June show (I'll miss out on that one we have a wedding in England) but with Angie living in Inch and John still in England it's not easy.

Throughout the show we also had some fun we played Irish Bingo, had a spot dance, and was entertained by Robin Young performing an upbeat break dance routine to become winner (stick to the radio Robin). We also raised £172 for our local Parkinson's group by rolling pound coins at a bottle it got quite competitive although pretty close Darryn was pronounced the closest – thanks to all who participated – All in all a very enjoyable night.



Then it was the Festival and what a brilliant weekend we had no major problems most things fell into place, and the standard of music very high impossible to pick a favourite act everyone did a marvellous job. I'm not going through the acts individually in any depth everyone had their personal favourites and enjoyed some bands more than others meaning we did our job and provided something for all tastes in music. As per normal lots of debate we often hear that the American acts are not that popular and that we could do without them that's not entirely the case. Whilst some folk are happy just to stand around the stage listening to them rather than dance doesn't mean they are not enjoying them. Since the biggest percentage of our audience is made up of people who travel they tell us they wouldn't come unless we included Americans as it's the only place in Britain you can see them.

The Heart of Texas acts gave us what we come to expect from them good old country music all perfectly delivered: great to see Amber & Justin back with us and they certainly didn't disappoint, Jeff Woolsey a brilliant honky tonker and Jade Jack with her beautiful voice, fiddle playing and good looks added glamour to the stage.

The Derailers again some mixed opinions some said best band of the weekend others thought them too loud and rocky but that aside they were musically and technically brilliant they certainly knew how to play the stage the crowd and the cameras.

James House provided an excellent spot his voice very unusual but vocals perfect his band very tight and together all in all a very professional set with the right balance of powerful ballads and up tempo numbers.

Rene Meijer & Friends the band from Holland a bit different: a very talented outfit but again at a disadvantage as they played a lot of their own self-penned numbers which folk didn't know.

We know that the Irish bands are always popular and go down well they have a great following up here and this time that was no different. Trevor Loughrey did a great job of opening up the show and getting everyone on the dance floor as we knew he would. Anthony Mc Brien along with Broken Note very popular on Saturday night, he maybe wasn't so well known as the rest of the Irish bands but scored a big hit nevertheless. Gerry Guthrie the right man to close the weekend for us a brilliant spot him and the band were on top form and left them shouting for more.

Manson Grant & The Dynamos never let us down they remain as popular as ever, during their spot Lorraine Christie presented the band with their award for being Top Scottish Act as voted by North Highland Radio and judging by their performance you can see why.

Young Brandon McPhee put his accordion to one side and picked up a guitar to present us with The Country Side of Brandon McPhee joining Brandon, Robert Manson and Keith was Davie Holland one of Scotland's top steel guitar player and from Ireland the very talented and versatile Crawford Bell on acoustic and harmonies who also treated us to a few songs—a very impressive line-up and impressive set.

Sadly Nigel was in bed poorly and unable to attend the Festival so Donny Matheson ex Slange Ava band member stood in for him on the drums and along with George and Alasdair were Dougie Stevenson on steel Jimmy Glenn on lead who enhanced the band and together they got our Sunday nights entertainment started in great form.

A band making their debut on the Festival was the newly formed Norman Borland Band they received great reception and rightly so they made it all look very easy great stuff from Norman and the band.

Broken Note has recently changed their line up and maybe another rearrangement in the future but they did a cracking job backing Anthony and also during their own spot they went down well with crowd and covered a wide range of country music.

We certainly have some very talented youngsters in Caithness on Saturday the Northern lights representing Thurso High Scholl were very well received. Some of the band had taken part in the Festival in previous years but going by the comments we received people thought this time they all seemed much more confident which shone through during their performance their vocals very tight and they enjoyed the selection of numbers they treated us to.

This Festival we invited along two very talented sixteen year olds also from Thurso High School Rosie Fiddler & Craig Chambers who certainly have the ability

to pursue a successful career in country music they well deserved the best order and applause the audience gave them. The treated us to some older country numbers along with up to date ones going down a storm.

The acts were all blown away with how impressive the venue looked they enjoyed the atmosphere , meeting people and were delighted with the hospitality shown to them everywhere they went. Feedback has been very positive with folk telling us the best one yet and how could we follow it.

So now for the negative part - numbers were on par with last year which sadly effects our financial situation, I think it's sad that $\frac{2}{3}$ of our audience are from the south and travel to be with us. Disappointing for us that more folk in the area don't support what is officially the top Festival in the U.K. and it's on their doorstep. No wonder folk get disillusioned putting things on if people even attended one show it would help us out.

Rant over and I wasn't going to go on about the Festival but now I've rabbled on for ages better get on with the rest of the newsletter.



Last Friday night our April show saw us staging our Sandy Swanson Memorial Award Presentation and our winners Manson Grant & The Dynamos were supported on the night by Kentucky Rain.

First timers in the club Darren 'Colt' Murphy & Kris Davies travelled all the way from Preston, Lanarkshire to be with us and after the gig turned around and headed back home again.

Darren on lead vocals and rhythm guitar started his career aged 16 singing as part of a duo with his sister the popular Donna Wylde then going on to become a D.J. before playing as a solo on the cabaret and country circuit.

Kris on lead guitar and harmonies (he did sing us a few numbers) is originally from Scotland but has lived in England since 1979 has played as part of several duos and bands including Red Dirt Road & No Regrets.

The guys had never been up north before and were really looking forward to playing for us but I think we totally threw them when we told them that our first half hour spot was cabaret. Knowing no better they took us at our word and performed a pure 'cabaret' spot not at all country. This included numbers from Elvis, Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra some great oldies from the likes of Buddy Holly, Billy Fury & Bobby Vee and then they asked everyone to join in with their final number Leaning On The Lamppost from George Formby without a ukulele and did we all sing along of course –good fun – I think we will have to stop calling it a cabaret spot especially for bands not in the habit of being with us and just call it a non-dancing spot. Anyway that over they gave us an absolutely brilliant next spot covering a wide selection of country music lots of classics, up to date numbers from their influences such as Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks & Brad Paisley some songs we don't often hear and all very enjoyable. Kris provided suitable harmonies and accompaniment to Darren's superb country voice.

The boys got a great reception the crowd took to them and also to the dance floor where they remained for their full set; in return they were delighted as playing mainly on the English club circuit they are asked to cater for the line dancers. So to see our floor full of couples dancing together and the girls all on the floor for the 'fast' numbers was something of a novelty.

Kris & Darren are two genuinely nice blokes who enjoyed their night and were glad they made the long trip to be with us , they were well impressed with our hospitality saying there was no way they would get treated like that in English clubs. Sandy and Ally were helpful to them whilst they were setting up in the afternoon, Robert & mansion went out of their way to be accommodating letting them use their gear enabling Kentucky Rain to clear their gear away quickly following their spot and get on the road so they didn't have to wait until the end of the night – thanks again boys - also thanks to Beat & the Legion staff for supplying the boys with sandwiches and goodies for their trip very thoughtful of them – once again our Caithness hospitality shines through – I am sure we will have the duo back with us again hopefully we might be able to get them another couple of gigs to make the trip more worthwhile.



Of course we knew what we were getting when Manson Grant & The Dynamos came on stage we knew they wouldn't let you down in fact I thought they were on top form played a fantastic two spots. So it was no surprise for the second consecutive year they were again worthy recipients of our Sandy Swanson Award for Top Local Band of the Year in our club for 2013.

After 50 years in the business they remain as popular as ever and 2014 was another award winning year for them they were awarded the title of Scottish Artist of the Year by North Highland Radio; featured in a one hour special programme on Sky TV released a DVD & CD entitled The Dynamos 50 Years and More following the bands nostalgic journey through music, film classic footage and live recordings – a must for all Dynamos fans -

The past year has also been a biggie for young Brandon McPhee aside from being part of Manson Grant & the Dynamos he won two major awards on the button key accordion, had his own sell out Scottish and Country Music Show in Eden Court Inverness, released his first CD The Country Side of Brandon McPhee a 13 track album.

Anyway as I said we had a great night with the band they covered all types of music and dance providing a bit of everything. Me personally I like the Buck Owens numbers they do and love some of the new numbers Keith's doing, Travis Tritt has always been one of my favourite artists and I used to play Sometimes She Forgets constantly so loved Keith's version suits his voice. We look forward to the band being back with us next year to be awarded the title of The Sandy Swanson Scottish Band of the Year for 2014 as voted by our NNCMC members. Well Done boys Caithness certainly has a lot of talent.

As expected we had a good turn out with lots of birthday's in the hall including Terry Johns who turned the Big 60 at midnight he had a great night –but he always does – Sadly we also had a few familiar faces missing due to illness one being our committee member Dennis who is in hospital at the moment, he is still undergoing tests hopefully they will get to the bottom of the problem soon and he will have recovered and be back with us next month. Another not with us was Barbara Shearer our former Chairpersons Davie Shearer's wife has had very major surgery and after a few problems she is thankfully now recovering in the ICU in Raigmore, Barbara is a hardy lady I'm sure she will be on the mend very soon, we wish her all the best.

During the Festival we all got an award from North Highland Radio this was in recognition for us winning the Festival of the Year Award and also for our contribution to country music it was a very generous gesture on their part they are worthy of an award themselves for the great job they are doing in promoting country music for us to listen to across the north.

This week the George Jones exhibition opened in Nashville by his widow Nancy along with a huge array of country music stars including Dierks Bentley, Tracy Lawrence & Lorrie Morgan also George's only surviving sibling his sister Helen

who is 93. The four story building located down town houses a vast selection of memorabilia including his many awards and gold and platinum albums there's a corner dedicated to his turbulent marriage to fellow country star Tammy Wynette. Also there is the leather jacket which the paramedics cut off George following his near fatal accident, much of his stage wear there's even the couple's wedding bands and of course the infamous John Dere Lawnmower I'm sure it will be very interesting something not to miss on a visit to Nashville.

I read that Randy Travis made an appearance at the 2015 Awards held recently he seems to be making slow steady progress since his series of very bad strokes almost two years ago I also saw somewhere he also recently married his long term fiancé, so he must be in better health.

Well I'd better go and get things done we are going away to Benidorm next week for a ten day chill out looking forward to doing nothing very much soak up the sun and check out the country bars at nights ---Bring it on ---

After we come back we are off to the Hooley in the Highlands in Strathpeffer if last year has anything to go by it will be a great day out looking forward to hearing our acts from the Festival Norman Borland Band & Broken Note and of course Philomena Begley.

Whilst we are away the Wick Triple C Club has Nicky James on their bill another act I would like to have seen and I said that we would also miss Angie and John C King hopefully they will get good turnout for both these shows.

Until next time

Keep It Country

Christine