



# Northern Nashville Country Music Club

## November 2012 Newsletter

Came back from sunny climes on the 18<sup>th</sup> - we'd had a nice holiday but as I predicted the weather wasn't brilliant. When it was hot it was really hot, but had a horrific thunder & lightning storm with lightning like I'd never seen before, and also a couple days with a cloudy start when we wandered around stopping to eat and drink frequently.

Anyway as soon as we were home it was back to finalising the arrangements for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show which we held on Friday night.

We had decided to put together a souvenir booklet so naturally still had the final touches to finish and get it tidied up for printing, lots of hard work, time - and bottles of wine went into it! However we are pleased with the end product - it looks good and, amongst other things, it contains a list of all the bands that have performed in the club since 1987, as well as words of congratulations from artistes and promoters who have supported us over the years.

There are bios from the committee members, some statistics and, of course, a rogue's gallery.

We had also requested old photos and memorabilia so we were delighted when some members dug them out, several blasts from the past all which were displayed in the darts room. A few strange fashion items, hairdo's and skinny bodies, but all good to look back on ... one thing that hadn't changed - we are still having as much fun now as we had then!

Come Friday and we were all organised, the hall nicely decorated with silver table cloths, balloons etc. and looking the part (thank you boys). Should have realised that nothing goes according to plan something always happens to keep us on our toes and give us stress.

Got the dreaded phone call at 4.00 pm to say that Gerry Guthrie had broken down outside Helmsdale, well me as usual freaking out and as you know Johnny, who doesn't panic, saying 'lets think it through calmly'. Okay the plan being we got a breakdown to go and take care of the van, Martin Nicolson agreed to go for the guys and bring them to the Legion, Johnny Brady had arrived in Thurso so he agreed that Gerry could use as much of their gear as he liked.

That wasn't the end of the problem... as we had previously discussed with Johnny they had to be back in Stranraer to catch the ferry first thing Saturday morning, and hoped to leave before the end of the night to give themselves plenty time. So on the premise of that we had decided that Johnny would do the first part of the show, Nicky James as a solo would do the middle, and Gerry would raise the roof during the final part.

Of course now that wouldn't be feasible but if Nicky would close the night, they could take their gear off stage during the break before Nicky went on and still get on the road at a reasonable time. I knew Nicky was also heading down to Aberdeen but he wouldn't be in such a rush.

Anyway we went up the road, got fed and dressed, and when we arrived back at the Legion at 6.00pm the queue was already building up and the corridor was freezing - what a shame as I knew they would have a longish wait - memories of the Viewfirth days.

Johnny was setting up and him the band and crew were very helpful saying they would do what they could do to help out when Nicky arrived he agreed the same.

It wasn't long before Gerry and his band arrived looking tired and miserable, but once they got themselves sorted out with gear, did a quick sound check and came back after having something to eat, they were all relaxed and ready to get on with the show.

The show was a complete sell out weeks in advance. I did have a few tickets returned due to illness, but even after I resold them there were still names left on my waiting list of folk that I couldn't give tickets to. The people that were forced to cancel due to being unwell we hope they are all now on the mend and we were thinking of you as I am sure you were of us.

One face I didn't expect to see there was Rita. She recently had an operation and suffered complications and was very poorly, however she was determined not to miss out and struggled along for a little while. It was great to see you Rita and I hope by next month you have your strength back.

I am sorry for those who were disappointed - we did try and accommodate as many as we could without spoiling people's comfort. We also let the people in as quickly as we could and do apologise for leaving you out in the cold, but you know what they say the best laid plans!

Anyway all that out of the way and on with the show...and what a show! I think maybe awesome is how to describe it, brilliant night what an atmosphere... everyone had a ball.

George Malcolm, being the compere of our first show 25 years ago and, of course, our current Festival compere, did the honours of opening for us, he said some very nice things about the club and presented us with a Quaich engraved to mark the occasion.

What a way to start the show, none other than Ireland's latest singing sensation Johnny Brady from Co. Antrim. Johnny has been involved in the music industry for 20 years, and has a long association with Irish country legend Big Tom... I don't know why it took him so long to put a 5-piece band together and take country music by storm.

He has the whole package, puts on a fantastic show using every spare inch of stage to perform on. He never stops, and when having a break from singing he was on the floor dancing.

Johnny has a recently released debut album called *Living All My Dreams* which contains some self penned numbers along with some American & Irish classics...all given Johnny's personal touch.

During his part of the show he treated us to the title track along with some other numbers including *My Mother My Teacher My Friend*, *Bless the Broken Road* & *Mr Mom* which all us Hot Country fans have watched as part of the show. An excellent performance it didn't take long for him to have everyone on the dance floor and there they remained for the rest of the night.

During the break I spoke about my memories of the club in the early days, and how it was easy for me to take over the position of chairperson as the club was well established due to the hard work dedication and commitment of committee members past and present. They should all be very proud of their achievements and for their contribution in bringing top quality American, European & British acts to Caithness.

We then asked Davie Shearer as our past Chairperson to cut our cake (which was a white Stetson) and say a few words. Everyone present then got a piece of cake and a small souvenir of the occasion.

Our second act of the night, and another very popular young man from Co. Mayo, Gerry Guthrie who continued where Johnny left off, giving the crowd what they wanted...a set of pure country and Irish music. Gerry started his career in country music in the year 2000 when he joined Sandy Kelly's band as a guitarist touring with her as part of the stage show the Patsy Cline Story.

He later worked with many of Ireland's prominent country stars such as Shawn Cuddy and Louise Morrissey, before being signed up and managed by Henry McMahon in 2009.

Gerry's first single was *Shut Up Heart* and his second which was a big hit for him *Lucky Horseshoe*, written by Henry, and a much requested song on Hot Country.

Gerry's spot was brilliant. He sang a great selection of numbers old and new including *Is Anybody Going To San Antone*, *Much Too Young* by one of his idols Garth Brooks, *Carroll County Accident* & and of course *Hard Act To Follow* which he certainly is - he had the crowd eating of his hand. For his finale he asked Johnny up on stage and they finished the spot together - it's easy seeing why they are two of the busiest and most popular award winning acts currently in Ireland.

Mustn't forget they were both backed by two very experienced and accomplished sets of musicians, their bands, so well done to them.

Another break, whilst the bands cleared the stage and got packed ready for the road... when they eventually managed to stop posing for photos (yes there were more than Jenny) and speaking to the crowd.

Alan Miller then called out anyone wearing Nashville ties, jackets or the nylon sweat tops etc and there were a good few, he read out one of his now famous poems and presented all the models with a miniature tippie of 25-years Country Vintage.

Time to move on to the final part of the show and this guy had the hardest job of the night...poor Nicky James, on his own, however it didn't appear to faze him, despite it being late on in the night - he kept the crowd dancing and the floor full which is not an easy task for a solo artiste. I thought he had played in the Viewfirth in the past but he said he had waited 25 years to perform in the NNCCMC.

I know a lot of us have seen him perform at many festivals and venues - he has been a regular part of the Invergordon festival for many years - so we knew what to expect...a varied selection of music all perfectly delivered.

Aside from being a respected country & Irish singer Nicky is also a promoter organising concerts and tours for many American acts. He is responsible for arranging tours for the likes of Gene Watson, Moe Bandy and Will Banister who is included in our festival next year.

We did think he looked a bit lost on the stage all by himself and needed some company, so he got some backing singers and dancers (whether he liked it or not), and I think us girls did better than the committee boys, although I am sure they had been practising their moves...no chance of them becoming 'dirty dancers' though.

Nicky then had us all on the floor in a circle singing *Best Of Friends* a very appropriate way to close what had been a night of brilliant music, crack and celebration amongst friends.

I would like to thank everyone who helped in anyway to make the night very enjoyable. A very special thanks to Martin for arranging transport at a moments notice to bring Gerry and the band here, and also for running them back to Inverness after they came off stage.

Thanks to everyone who donated prizes for our raffle - too many for one night so we will use the rest next month. Remember to hand in your answers to the quiz next club night and we will announce the winners at our Christmas show.

Thanks to all our visitors who travelled to join us... I didn't fancy my chances on the boat to Orkney on Saturday morning, but we hope you all had a safe trip home and will come back and see us soon.

When's our next party!!!

Don't really think I have a lot of news as I've been too busy listen to anything. I did hear that Don Williams was poorly and had cancelled some of his tour dates - he did look poor in a recent picture I saw of him somewhere but you forget that he will be coming on 74 - we wish him a speedy recovery.

Last month I told you that Ellis County were splitting up... well my information source got it mixed up, or maybe I got it confused. Anyway the good news is that they haven't come of the road. I spoke to Willie Mac on the phone the other night and he said that yes, Dan had gone back to the States, but that Brian Hughes had now joined him.

Brian was also in the club with his band where they played mainly original material. Willie told me that Brian & himself will be mainly doing covers, an interesting combination...sure they will work well together.

We now have the festival line up complete and are just in the final stages of getting things in place. The tickets will be on sale within the next few weeks and as a gesture (or financial suicide) we have decided to keep our early bird price the same as last year which will be £75.00 for the full weekend ticket without lowering the standard of our entertainment. I don't think anyone can moan about that...hard to beat for value! The delay at the moment is that The Booth, the on line ticket seller which we have used for a few years, is no longer operating, so we had to find another outlet - looks like it will be Ticketmaster and we will be ready to go very soon.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> November I am going to see Charley Pride in Glasgow. Saw his first concert way back in the early 70's, so couldn't miss this which is deemed to be his last across here, will tell you next time what it was like.

Well I think that's about it for now better go and get something done.

Until next time, keep it Country.

*Christine*

Christine Gray  
Chairperson NNCMC