



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

November 2016 Newsletter

It's been a really hectic and busy time recently hence the reason I am once again apologising for my late delivery of the newsletter. I did try and get myself organised for last month but must admit I breathed a sigh of relief when I knew our web site administrator would be away on holiday so wouldn't be around to upload the newsletter anyway – so no rush!

I hate to admit to this but at the end of September I became 65; I have to say it was quite scary not so much the age it's only a number it was the fact that it's five years since I retired where on earth have they gone. The blow was softened by the fact that I celebrated my birthday in the sun as we had managed to fit in a quick week to Portugal and it was lovely everything was fine we just chilled out ate, drank and soaked up the sun.

We arrived home on Thursday night and had our club night on the Friday; this time it was an all Scottish show featuring Dave Allan and Norman Borland and his Band. Dave used to be a regular visitor to Thurso although never played the club before but frequently provided the entertainment in the lounge on a Saturday, however he did play in the hall once many years ago doing me a big favour. We had booked Bill Johns Band to play at my mum and dad's golden wedding but the night before Bill had an accident so was unable to play luckily Dave was appearing in the lounge that night so with the Legion's agreement he said he would cover our night and anyone who was in the lounge could just come through to our dance it worked out perfectly we had a great night. Shortly after that Dave moved to the Aberdeen area and I only saw him once since then and that was at a Manson Grant & The Dynamos weekend in Dyce must have been about 10 years ago now. When I spoke to him he said that for personal reasons he hasn't been gigging regularly but has realised that he has been missing playing his music so wants to get back out more regularly.

Being a solo act and not knowing what type of audience he was playing to didn't make things particularly easy for Dave however he gave the crowd exactly the kind of country they wanted to hear; good old country standards the ones they could sing along and dance to; we heard some great covers from the likes of Charley Pride & Johnny Cash. Dave certainly enjoyed his night we could see he was delighted to be on stage he interacted well with the crowd and also with the boys in Norman's band.



Last time Norman played for us was just over a year ago but apart from his mad drummer Shane he had a completely new line up so along with them on stage were Frank Taynor, Jim Ramsay & Ernie Whiteoak.

It's taken a wee while for the band to gel together but they are happy with the way things are going for them now; they sounded pretty good to me and they certainly seem to be very busy at festivals and gigs north and south of the border this summer they played the Rock Ridge Festival and Kelso and also as part of the Embo weekend.

During their spots we listened to some great American and Irish country music with songs from Norman's albums Choices and I'm Just Me all perfectly delivered. Although a big man Norman has a very gentle laid back mellow voice which lends itself to the type of songs he chooses to sing making it look very easy.

Being September we had the usual run of birthdays including three of us on the committee - I had hoped they would just let mine pass but no chance - roles were swapped instead of me 'dishing' out the customary celebratory poem I was on the receiving end but thankfully they weren't too hard on me.

We didn't have a big crowd between holidays the Manson Grant weekend, no Irish bands and the recent Nathan Carter shows we kind of expected that all the same it was a good going night all real country music the stuff folk could join in with and also keep us on the dance floor.

Whilst on holiday we heard the sad news that long term member of the Grand Old Opry the great Jean Shepherd had passed away on September 25th aged 82 from Parkinson's disease. Jean grew up in California near Bakersfield and during her career she released 73 singles and recorded 24 studio albums her 1st number one smash hit was A Dear John Letter a duet with Ferlin Husky recorded in 1953. Jean was married for three years to Hawkshaw Hawkins before he was killed in the same plane crash as Patsy Cline. Jean was loyal to her traditional country roots and was president of the Association of Country Entertainers formed in response to Olivia Newton John winning female of the Vocalist of the year in 1973 with the intent to keep country music pure without pop influences (sadly that didn't happen) She spoke out again recently when she criticised Blake Shelton for his comment referring to traditional country fans as old farts and jackasses. Jean's final album was in 1981 and a remake of her hits, however she continued to tour and perform regularly at the Opry when at the time of her death she was the longest running living member.

Jean was one of the first international acts to appear in the club way back in 1989 along with Gerry Ford and his band, a huge achievement for NNCCMC we had a great night with her and what a lovely lady she was. When asked to write a piece for our 10th Anniversary booklet Jean said she remembered being with us right up at Johnny O Groats and what lovely people we were.

I read that Randy Travis recently lost his father at the age of 83; Randy has had a tough time himself recently after suffering a major stroke in 2013. The future was grim for Randy but he is making slow steps back to recovery his speech is still very poor, however improving all the time enabling him to thank people when he heard he was to be one of this year's inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame. The ceremony took place recently and Garth Brooks sang Randy's hit Three Wooden Crosses and had the honour of presenting him with his award.

Wife Mary thanked everyone on Randy's behalf saying that they have good and bad times but are thankful for what they have together saying they laugh and sing daily their favourite song being Amazing Grace. When the band started playing the tune Randy took the mike and sang the words to the best of his ability it certainly amazed everyone in the room. More recently at the CMA Awards he joined all the stars at the end of the show as they sang his hit Forever and Ever Amen initially he stood and listened then as the newest member of the Hall of Fame he sang the last line.

I also noticed that Tanya Tucker had collapsed prior to going on stage in South Dakota she was diagnosed with pneumonia then airlifted to hospital in Nashville. The 58-year-old singer apologised to fans when she was forced to cancel the remaining six shows of her tour saying she would only get worse if she didn't take time to recover.

Closer to home more sad news Jackie Storar lost her battle with cancer aged only 50. Apart from being a very popular country singer in the central belt and on cruise ships she was also country music presenter on Radio Tay, Smooth Radio and CMR Nashville. Jackie was inducted into the British Country Music Hall of Fame just after being delivered the blow that her cancer was terminal. She certainly didn't let her illness stop her pursuing her dreams she worked her way through her bucket list ticking off as many as she possibly could.

Jackie's final wish was to record an album to leave as a legacy and the money raised from it would be donated to Maggie's cancer centre in Fife who was a great support to her. The CD called Behind Her Eyes contains songs all very poignant to her situation with four of them being written by Jackie and her husband Steve and it also features some numbers with a Scottish feel to them. Jackie got to receive the hard copies of her album released on the 1st September but sadly passed away on September 14th before she was to be part of the public launch.

I got quite a shock when I opened my latest edition of CMDS magazine and noticed a piece by Gerry Ford saying that on the 12th July he was in hospital in Canberra undergoing a quadruple heart bypass op. I thought I had been in touch with him after that but clearly not once again reminding me how time goes flying by. Anyway, I was delighted to read that the operation was a complete success it has solved his problems and prevented him having a serious heart attack. He will have to take things easy for a while yet but is already back walking, driving and on air again. In true Gerry style he says "I have joined the unique club along with Marty Robbins, Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash - glad it all worked out well for Gerry - If you would like to tune into one of his programmes one is available on line one at 3.am on Wednesday morning owing to the time difference but it is also available on podcast a couple of days later so you can listen any time go to www.sapphirefm.org click podcast and that should be it.

The tremendous fiddle player John Permenter put on a great show for the Triple C Club in Wick recently for which he received fantastic feedback. Shortly after that I read that he had cancelled a booking to appear at the Stonehaven all day festival on September 24th. Good on him he published a message of apology saying he was sorry for letting the club down claiming he screwed up his dates he is now playing as part of Mike Denver's band.

I was very interested reading Stewart Fenwick's article covering his 40 years in broadcasting, his first radio programme was at school when along with some other pupils they set up an after-school club. After that he went on to present Campus Country at Stirling University during his time there he interviewed Colorado & George

Hamilton and began making trips to Nashville to record interviews at Fan Fair. Central FM was next and after 15 years Stewart was made redundant when they were bought over; thankfully along came Celtic Music Radio and his first slot on it featured Jolene & Barry, Stewart has seen many changes in music over the years but he continues to support his kind of country and encourages home grown acts to send in their music for him to play.

I also managed via catch up to listen to his programme when he told us some of the highlights of his career recovered interviews he had broadcast with Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Shania Twain & Marty Stuart very interesting.

It's always an excellent programme great country music news and interviews which goes out on line every Sunday on www.celticmusicradio.net between 12am & 2.00pm and if you miss it then there's always catch up



My nose bothered me a few months back when Jim Duncan from Cross Country magazine contacted me to ask how to get in touch with Geordie Jack, so was delighted to have found out that it was because Geordie has been selected as one of this year's inductees into the British Country Music Hall Of Fame alongside Darren Busby and Lynn Jones. I don't need to tell you anything about Geordie we all know him and why he was chosen; he has made a fantastic contribution to country music over the years backing and touring with major American acts including Jean Shepherd, Melba Montgomery & Boxcar Willie. Founding the very successful band Colorado who were the first Scottish band to play the Wembley Festival, going on to front Caledonia and then the Jacks and of course he is a very talented songwriter and a great guy.

Darren Busby is probably one of the UK's most popular professional singers who has many awards under his belt including being a multi BCMA award winner as male Vocalist and Entertainer of the Year.

Inductee Lynn Jones passed away in 2015 was founder of the British Country booking agency U.K. Chelsea Artistes prior to that he played as part of several popular British bands.

The award show was held on Sunday October 30th near Heathrow I saw a clip on Facebook of Geordie receiving his award from Jim Duncan who spoke about his career and achievements Geordie in return was very laid back about the whole thing finished his speech saying " getting country into mainstream in the future will be a challenge but there's lots of new artistes out there who can help" Well said Geordie and well done on your long overdue award.

I read in The Mail on line two Sunday's ago that Mervyn Conn was jailed for 15 years for raping and assaulting young girls way back in the 70's and 80's. Mervyn if you remember was a well-known music promoter and the guy behind the very successful Wembley International Country Festival. Apparently, he promised these teenagers tickets for his concerts he told one to come and collect them and raped her in his office another he offered to take home but instead drove her to his home and assaulted her. Mervyn who is now 85 was always a bit of a lad who clearly used his money power and position to control and get what he wanted.

On Friday 21st we went along to the Assembly Rooms to the Triple C's club night and joint Declan Nerny show I hadn't intended to go but Alan and Johnny persuaded us with the offer of a free dinner. George Macintosh who was booked to perform at the Triple C's club show opened the night he had brought along a female singer and together they played a great selection of songs from true country acts like George Strait, Travis Tritt & Ricky Van Shelton to name a few an entertaining spot.

Needless to say most of the crowd were there to see Declan and got going the minute he came on stage now as you all know I like a good country sounding voice and for me Declan hasn't got that so although a god entertainer not one of my favourite artists however he had plenty fans there who thought the exact opposite. He gave a good show singing his way through all the numbers he has made his own so everyone knew and joined in with them, must admit he is an accomplished musician his backing band were very good, and we had a fun night.

Paul and Claire from Raintown are now the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl born at 8.20 am on Saturday 22nd weighing 7lbs 15 ozs, prior to her birth she was affectionately known as Raindrop but she has now been officially named Alba Rose Bain huge Congratulations to Paul & Claire. The couple were over the moon when they found out they were to become parents; they are planning taking some down time but as they love what they do and have so much more to contribute to the current music scene they will hopefully have plenty willing babysitters to allow them the opportunity to do this.

Me & Paul which is one of Willie Nelson's four custom built tour busses was recently sold at an auction for the price of \$76,500 along with the artefacts which was still in the 20-seater vehicle. Imagine if the bus could speak what stories it could tell!!!

Speaking about weddings as you know we missed our October club night because we were away celebrating Michelle's and Calum's big day, however our weekend and the wedding which took place in Piper Dam resort in Dundee was amazing. Our accommodation for the weekend was in log cabin type luxurious lodges they came in various sizes but the one we had for our family slept 12 and was called Vegas!! certainly living up to its name. It had six on suite spacious bedrooms a massive living area containing four leather couches, coffee tables, huge TV dining room table big enough to seat everyone, kitchen with two fridges, freezers, dish washer, washing machine tumble drier, cooking facilities, plenty crockery and equipment. For the guys a huge games room with full size snooker table roulette and gaming table and for the girl's hot tub sauna/steam room pure luxury. The venue carried on the wooden theme all done with logs and beams they had it beautifully decorated for our stunning bride, very nice laid back humanist ceremony, lovely meal, good going dance band played a mixture of all kinds of music keeping us dancing so all in all a brilliant time was had by all.

Since I've come home I've been speaking to a few people to ask how the club night went and received the same answer from everyone; they all had a great night two good acts but sadly low on numbers.

Opening the night father and son duo Drew and Terry, Double Trouble I can't believe that Terry is now a married man doesn't seem that long ago when they first started coming up here he was just a shy young lad. The duo always put on a crowd pleasing show they are enthusiastic in what they do giving it 100% ensuring everyone has a great night. This time was no different they covered all types of music traditional, middle of the road with an odd Irish tune thrown in, each visit they update their play list and introduce some new numbers. As usual they were a firm favourite with the crowd and they gave them what they wanted to keep them on the dance floor.



Next up was a young man from Co Fermanagh Sean Corrigan who was supported on stage very capably by FlameZe who this time came as a five-piece outfit. Sean is super guy who in my opinion doesn't get the recognition he deserves --although he did come in third place for our Band of the Year for 2015-- He has a genuine love of country music in particular some of the American stuff as he grew up listening to the likes of George Jones, Merle Haggard and Charley Pride which ensures his spots has a bit more country than Irish flavour to them. I'm sure this time he treated the crowd to numbers from his Hello Heart and One Of These Days albums and I heard he had them all laughing at his impersonations of some Irish singers such as Jimmy Buckley, Stephen Smyth & Mick Flavin it's really hilarious he has them all to a tee. I'm sure Sean will be back with us again soon and I won't miss him.



Wednesday 3rd November the big night for country music when the 50th CMA Award show took place in Nashville, I won't go through all the results but will tell you some. Chris Stapleton capitalised on his surprise awards last year as a virtually unknown to this year walking away with Male Vocalist and Music Video of the Year awards, Vocal group went to Little Big Town: Thomas Rhett received the award for his single of the year Die A Happy Man; Eric Church was a winner with Album of the Year Mr Misunderstood beating Keith Urban and Dierks Bentley.

Garth Brooks was this time again crowned Entertainer of the Year, he has had a record breaking 12 months being named as the best-selling artist in the nation with sales exceeding 136 million, and he is also the only singer in music history to have seven albums certified diamond.

Great to hear that Alan Jackson and George Strait came together to perform two of their many hits they sang Jackson's Remember When and George's Troubadour, good that they are still included in such a big night for country and recognised as top performers who have influenced so many – delighted they received a standing ovation for their style of country –

For the last six years, the female vocalist accolade has gone to Miranda Lambert (this made history) however this time her winning streak was broken when Carrie Underwood was pronounced winner; no one being more surprised than her.

Dolly Parton was honoured with the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award the first time it has gone to a woman; in celebration a line-up of country female vocalists paid tribute to her by singing some of her biggest hits, poor Reba forgot some words for 9-5 saying she saw Dolly in the crowd and missed the line. Dolly thanked everyone for her award before being escorted on stage by Vince Gill where she said "Wow what a tribute I could have cried but it would have messed up my lashes"

Remember I told you over the summer that Jade Jack Stone had split from husband Doug Stone after very publically announcing on Facebook that due to issues with alcohol he had assaulted her physically and mentally and was very aggressive. They are now reconciled going out on the road together again; bet she now feels a bit silly for saying so much about their private life hopefully things work out this time for them and baby Bristol.

Well I think that's about it for now can't believe we are speaking Christmas already and only two more shows before the end of the year. Next show we have something new Paul Kelly and James `n Wood then it's the Christmas nights Friday & Saturday 9th & 10th December Stephen Smyth & Flame Ze so remember and get your tickets booked for that nights come along and join our Christmas cracker.

Until next time

Keep it country

Christine