



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

Oct 2011 Newsletter

Well it's been an exciting and eventful time for me since I last wrote; I turned the big 60 and celebrated the fact pretty well no burying my head in the sand. I've been wined, dined, pampered, received an amazing amount of cards and lovely gifts everyone has been so kind and I really do appreciate it.

In the midst of it all we had our club night and as Alan, our committee member and Festival coordinator, had his 50th the hall was duly decorated with banners balloons and photos. I did think I would switch the 50th & 60th things around, but decided there was no chance I would get off with that! I decided to take the night off as I had my family there - well every second person who came in the door either said 'you've got your clothes on tonight' or 'you're dressed' so, to set the record straight, I don't usually appear naked, I just didn't wear my uniform!

My boys, true to form, tried to wind me up... Alan had written a poem called The Boss Is Retiring and each one of the committee presented me with an appropriate gift for my old age: some new wheels (a Zimmer frame), incontinence pants, pan drops, stout, and Norah Batty stockings, before presenting me with a bouquet of flowers, a clock and frame engraved with the NNCCMC logo plus boots/hat and a personal message, and a huge cake of which everyone in the hall got a piece.

On the Saturday night Alan and I had a joint get together with the rest of the committee and had a great night - some good laughs, plenty to eat/drink - a late one, or should I say an early morning. Don't think I've got any intention of slowing down just because I'm a pensioner.

This was my last day at work and the whole week has seemed surreal, again I have had a lovely week spoilt rotten, more flowers cards, etc. - it was a really strange feeling tonight knowing that my 38 years with the council is over and I start a complete new chapter in my life. I am sure it will be fine... I will have time to do things instead of rushing around all the time and can even do the Northern Nashville work through the week thus getting my weekends back. I've warned Ally that his holidays are now over and I'll find out now what he really does - I'm sure to find him plenty to do if I think he's bored.

Anyway got sidetracked to say the least, so back to the show and we had two Scottish acts - New Gambler from Elgin, along with our local favourites, The Kate Bain Band.

A bonus certainly for me both bands delivered pure country music, some old some new and bang up to date, but definitely country.

Kate remains very popular across the north. She has a voice which allows her to carry of numbers like Gretchen Wilson's Redneck Woman and covers of hits by country music's divas such as Martina McBride and Reba Macintyre, and she does a brilliant version of Suzy Bogus' hit My Side Of The Story.

Band members Gordie and Andrew compliment Kate with their own style of music - Andrew's gentle voice lends itself to the Garth Brooks and Eagles numbers he does and Gordie is a fine musician who takes us back to his Colorado days.

It was a very welcome return to the club for New Gambler who all come from around the Elgin area. The boys are all well established and accomplished musicians who certainly look and sound as if they are enjoying what they are doing. A six piece (shortly to become a 5 piece) band made up of members from the original Gambler, Broken Wing and Mustang couldn't fail to impress and that's certainly what they did. The crowd enjoyed the banter and crack between them on stage (they get no better with age), they loved their range of country music and offered something for everyone - from Johnny Cash to Zac Brown, throwing in some classics and numbers we haven't heard for a while - something a bit different, away from the ordinary.

We had a good crowd despite some regulars being away at the Manson Grant Weekend in Dyce, and others maybe saving themselves for Mick Flavin in Lybster the following night. It's always the same all or nothing, I heard that there was a good crowd in Lybster and Mick put on a great show, so that's good for the organisers that they had a good turn out.

Last Saturday night we went along to the Legion to support Davie and Barbara Shearer in their fund raising night on behalf of the LUPUS Support group. I am pleased to say there was good turn out and they raised over £1000. Slange Ava provided the music and put on a great night as usual so had everyone on the dance floor in no time at all.

Last week just finished watching the Festival programmes on BBC Alba and have mixed feelings about them as I am sure many of you have. I thought they did a good job of showcasing the event, and the stage lighting etc. looked really good and professional - it's hard to believe sometimes it's a riding centre. I can also see why they promoted the fact that our Festival has strong links to American stars as it is the only place you can see them in this country. However we were hugely disappointed by the lack of local artistes featured seeing some artistes got to sing 6/7 numbers. Our local artistes, in particular the school bands work very hard to be included in our weekend and I am sure must have been bitterly disappointed not to have seen their contribution. NNCMC heavily promote local acts who have a very respectful reputation country wide and had hoped that BBC ALBA would go along with this but clearly not. We have registered our disappointment to them, however we were told that content and production is down to them, so to all those who missed out all I can say on behalf of the committee is Sorry. A personal gripe for me as always is the choice the songs they select for some acts doesn't show them at their best. I know the BBC feel they have done a good job of promoting our Festival and haven't let us down - they did it all for the right reasons but maybe should have done a one-off American special as they recorded plenty.

I think I have mentioned that Mervyn Conn after many years - think it's about 20 - was trying to re-instate the Wembley Festival at Easter, and I was a bit worried - not that I thought it would affect our weekend, but that they might have had some mega super country stars like Alan Jackson or George Strait taking part and I wouldn't be able to go! Anyway they have just released the line up and it looks like it is only a one day event on Sunday 26th February so it doesn't even clash with ours. The big names announced at the moment are Reba McEntire, Ricky Skaggs, Lonestar, Little Big Town, from Ireland John McNicholl, so unless they add something exceptional we can live with that.

I was reading though the latest edition of the CMDS Scotland magazine and saw that Michelle Wright, who was at our 2009 Festival, was inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame for her contribution to Canadian country music. I also saw that Lanark born Johnny Reid was awarded the Fans' Choice Award - he appears to be doing very well and has gained several awards recently. Kay and Gordon gave me a CD of his they had picked up in Canada and I enjoyed it very much.

This week I bought a couple of CD's. The first was the duet album from Gene Watson and Rhonda Vincent called You're Money and My Good Looks and it's excellent. It's a very laid back album in the vein of Conway & Loretta, every track is good and the harmonies perfect, real country music. The other one was from the 17 year-old young man Scotty McCreery, from North Carolina, who won this years' American Idol. I followed it religiously when it was on TV and was delighted when a country singer won, and I thought he was great from the first night I heard him. The album is called Clear As Day - I have only had time to play it once but really enjoyed it and think he has a bright future in country music.

I see George Strait has released his 39th album to mark his 30 years in the business, its called Here For A Good Time - I think it's a lot of newly written material by George so must get a hold of that one, for me he just cant go wrong.

Well I think that's about it for now will tell you next time what I think of this retirement lark.

Until next time, keep it Country.

Christine (Lady of Leisure)

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCMC