



Northern Nashville Country Music Club

September 2008 Newsletter

Firstly I must apologise for not writing anything last month, I've no excuse other than I just didn't have time, now I'm struggling to remember what happened.

We have had two shows since then, in July we had George Malcolm and the James Quinn Band and last Friday, Trevor James & Joe Moore.

George Malcolm stepped in for us when Bill Alexander couldn't manage, George as you know was a member of the ever popular Duke Boys and played regularly locally before spending the last few years playing in bars abroad. He put on a good show and covered a wide range of cover versions, which took us back to the good old days with some of his impressions thrown in (his Manson Grant one went down well) and also the odd joke.

Naturally James Quinn along with Brendan did as he always does and pleased the crowd; they were down to a four piece band as Noel was away on holiday. As I said last time Cloudy is no longer with them however he was replaced on piano by Chris, who used to play with Collette and Jive Beat, who was very nervous as he hadn't played with them before but the others kept him right and he did fine.

Brendan and James shared vocals which clearly was a bonus, Brendan still has that special something. They were booked to play in Skinandis on the Saturday night which they were very apprehensive about - it didn't help when I said to Brendan once the young ones get pissed they will dance to anything - didn't mean it to sound the way it came out, I meant as long as they played something they could dance to they would be happy!!!

To be honest I still don't know how they got on - it was the same night as the Halkirk games dance which had Kate Bain playing at it so I would have imagined that a lot of the regulars went to that. I don't know if Skinandis is ready for country music but we had a great night on the Friday anyway.

Trevor James from Lossiemouth has played in the lounge regularly and we thought he was good any time we heard him and well worth a spot in the club. I'm sure after hearing him you'll all agree with me, he has a different voice that lends itself to a wide range of country songs and country he definitely was - complete with Stetson. I'm sure Trevor will have gained himself more fans for the next time he comes to the Legion on a Saturday night

Next up was our Band of the Year Award Winner for 2007 Joe Moore, we know Joe is always very popular with our members as he was with our festival audience this year.

It almost didn't happen; Joe was a replacement act for Ian-Calford and the Railmen who had to cancel due to work commitments. The week before Joe phoned to say that he didn't have a band so thought we wouldn't want him to come. Luckily Nickels & Dimes came to the rescue and said they would back Joe. I could see folk looking when they saw Nigel and thinking to themselves 'didn't think they were playing tonight'. Anyway they did a first class job of supporting Joe. Joining them on stage was our own talented musician Alistair Wordie. It took some folk a while to recognise him with his new short hair cut - very smart he looked!

It was a very busy night we had some visitors with us and also some new members, things just took off right from the start the atmosphere was brilliant. Joe received his Band of The Year Award and was delighted with, and it hearing him again I can see why you voted for him - his voice is something else. Trevor joined Joe and the band on stage to finish the night a superb night of pure country music. Joe is going to America soon and he's still planning Australia but you never know we might manage to squeeze him in again before he goes.

On the first weekend in August, Kenny, Margaret, Ally and myself went over to Ireland to the UTV Country Fest. We motored down having an overnight stay in Margaret's daughter's hotel in Ayrshire before crossing on the ferry from Cairnryan to Larne. The journey made me realise what it must be like for the bands who travel over to play in the club (some for just the one night) - I had forgotten how tiring it was. Coupled with the time it takes and the ever increasing prices of fuel it's no wonder it's getting harder for us to get bands to travel here. I just can't imagine travelling over, driving up, playing, then packing up and driving back down, sometimes to play another gig the following night - nightmare!

The festival was being held in Dungannon Country Park in Tyrone, and we were staying in a hotel in Portadown about 15min drive away. I knew that Raymond Peters and his crowd were booked in there but when we were having our dinner we spied another contingent from home. They included Isobel Beattie who is on the committee for the Triple C club in Wick and one of our festival directors. Jim and Catherine Nicolson, Jim of course is one of our main festival sponsors, Derek and Jean Anderson, Derek does the electrics for the festival and Jean is part of the security team.

Raymond does the country spot on Elgin Radio on the web on Sunday nights and a regular visitor to our festival bringing a very large party with him, in his group was Dougie Sim who played with Gambler many moons ago and now goes out as a solo act. So you can imagine that the crack was good in the hotel. I haven't forgotten about the CDs Raymond I will get them in the post as soon as I remember to buy envelopes!

Jimmy & Co had hired a 16 seater mini bus complete with very helpful friendly drivers for the duration of the trip (they flew over), and they very kindly offered us lifts to and from the festival with them. This was a bonus for us as it meant

we could all have a drink, so we are very grateful to them - Jean also did a splendid job as our courier.

There were 50 acts performing on four different stages, also stalls selling CDs cowboy hats, etc, several caravans offering fast food and a large beer tent. The food and drink was an extortionate price it really was a rip off but, as we got hungry and very frequently thirsty, we had to buy both. The weather wasn't that great - it was either roasting hot, or torrential rain, and I mean torrential; the ground was like a quagmire and didn't get a chance to recover from Saturday to Sunday. First stop on Sunday was to Matalan for wellies, rain jackets and another poncho to add to the collection.

As I said 50 acts took part - too many to mention them all, inside on the first stage (very popular place to be when it rained) were the least known and up and coming acts. We managed to catch Colm Kirwin son of Dominic, funnily enough we had been playing his newly released CD in the car on the way down. I enjoyed him he has the same charisma and stage presence as his dad. We also saw Tony Kerr who will be one of the acts appearing at our festival next year.

On the second stage amongst others were Eamon McCann, Louise Morrissey, Shawn Cuddy, Kenny met his long time hero Brian Coll and we then watched and spoke to Roly Daniels. Roly remembers the great nights he had with us in the Viewfirth, he has come out of retirement and is better than ever still very much a showman. He will be playing in Vegas later this year but says he would be just as happy to be in the NNCMC.

Moving up the park were the Irish acts that seem to be very much 'in' at the moment amongst whom were John McNicoll, Mike Denver, Jimmy Buckley, Aidy Quinn. Not forgetting Philomena & Ray Lynam who did a fantastic duet spot on the Sunday afternoon taking us back to our Wembley days - magic.

By pure luck we got a chance to speak to Robert Mizzell, who we also have booked for the festival, Robert was born in Louisiana but has lived in Ireland for the past ten years. We were warning him to take his long johns with him for the weather in Caithness at Easter.

That takes us on to the main stage which was for the American stars, these included Gretchen Peters, Stonewall Jackson (who I really enjoyed), Ricky Skaggs and the main men Gene Watson and George Jones.

Kicking off on the American stage were twin sisters Debbie & Carrie Moore, who call themselves Moore and Moore they were brilliant we all thoroughly enjoyed them.

We chatted to them in the beer tent and they said that they had been speaking to Davie about our event, and since we've come home they have been in touch again asking if they come and play if not next year maybe in the future.

Despite the rain we stood beside a sea of umbrella's to watch Gene Watson. When he came on he was dressed in shorts and a baggy shirt and I said to myself surely he could have tidied himself a bit, however it turned out that their

suitcases and instruments had gone astray, I believe it was early the next week before they turned up! Anyway shorts or not he did a tremendous spot just belting out one hit after another for an hour and a quarter each day.

Everything else shut down both nights in time for George Jones to take the stage and what a climax - the best living country legend, who turns 74 next week, and after over 50 years in the business still sounds like no one else. He continues to amaze - the atmosphere was something else! Everyone was singing and dancing even in raincoats and wellies! We heard his entire signature hits like He Stopped Loving Her Today, The Grand Tour and of course Choices.

On the Monday, complete with hangover, we drove to Dublin after the poor navigators found the right road and, whilst sitting have our dinner in Kenny's sisters that night, I thought I recognised the voice on the TV behind us - to my horror it was myself! On the Sunday afternoon we were interviewed by Ulster TV - well I had a few drams that time and rattled on never thinking it would be on the TV as they must have spoken to hundreds of folk!

They did a two hour television special in Ireland the following week, James and Margaret Simpson who were also at the festival got it recorded and guess what we are on it. However thank goodness the 10 minute clip got cut to 10 seconds. A crowd of us met up at Jimmy Nicolson's last Saturday night and had a very good night of nostalgia watching it.

We didn't catch any country shows in Dublin - we did the tourist things including spending an enjoyable afternoon in the Guinness factory, nothing to do with the fact we got free pints of course!

On the Thursday Kenny (our treasurer) and Margaret got engaged so it was champagne celebrations that night - we were joking he would get done for taking diamonds out of Ireland, seriously we wish them all the best for the future they both deserve it. Must be something in the water (or Guinness) as I've just heard that our very own country DJ from Caithness F.M. has also got himself engaged to girlfriend Zoe whilst in Ireland - we wish them all the best for the future.

On the Friday we travelled up to Castlebar to see George Jones in concert. The show was supposed to be in the Royal Theatre however they are still in the process of refurbishing, so in the interim they have erected a big marquee. We cottoned on to the fact it was first come first served for seats so decided to queue early. This paid off and we got great seats six rows from the front. The show was opened by Frank McCaffrey who is part of the Manson Grant and The Dynamos fan club weekend next month, and following him was Mike Denver. Mike over the last year has become a household name on the live country scene, and he became the first Irish singer to record a duet with George Jones in Nashville earlier this year. Naturally they performed it during the show. I'm not going to say any more because it's all been said before but 1 hour & 45 mins later we emerged from the show star struck once again.

Incidentally George was knocked out by the voice of Jimmy Buckley, and the two

met in Nashville to re-record one of his greatest hits The Grand Tour as a duet, Jimmy has been a lifelong fan of George's.

Have you all got a copy of the Manson Grant new CD called A Tribute To Buck Owens? Manson and Robert were live in the Caithness FM studio a week last Sunday launching it. It's a must for every Buck fan, featuring some great tracks, and Keith Macleod supports Manson on vocals.

Appearing at next months show we have Springfield and Western Rhythm - no Irish for the first time in a few months, but I'm sure we are in for a great night of country music.

I have mentioned some of the acts who will be performing at our festival next year others will include Heather Myles, Billy Yates, Becky Hobbs, Mike Bella, Eamon McCann and of course all our regulars and locals. Details will be on our festival website www.nccmf.co.uk. Looks like another great line-up

Until then

Keep it Country

Christine

Christine Gray
Chairperson NNCCMC