

The History for Harrow CMC

When John Ryan founded Harrow 40 years ago, little did he imagine the club run by himself, and subsequently by Ronnie Simper, Tony Lee and presently by the team of Deb and Becky, would still be flourishing so well.

With so many clubs, both nationally and locally, are closing or cutting back to become fortnightly or monthly, we are strong due to the loyal support and remains weekly.

There have been many highlights in the past few years with some U.S. Stars playing to our members.

Harrow CMC hosted artistes over for the Wembley festival, at the eve of festival shows. Box Car Willie springs to mind on the eve of his sensational debut.

After being based at Kodak, North Harrow, The Morritt Suite at Wealdstone FC and several years at Kenton, we are now settled at Venue 33 at Wealdstone Social Club.

Among our regulars there is a small core of members that have been at the club since the start; very knowledgeable and great supporters of country, to them and the many other Thursday evenings are not to be missed social occasion.

We continue to attract some of the countries most popular groups and personalities who have become friends to us all.

Written by GEOFF SARGENT 4th June 2015.

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Harrow Country Music Club was started by John Ryan on October 3rd 1975 at the Headstone Hotel, North Harrow with a band called The Original Shades.

This was after John ("The Mad Irishman!") & Veronica (Ronnie) Simper returned from the then annual British Country Music Association annual trip to Nashville for Fan Fair. Several of us who were on the trip who lived fairly local used to meet up with John & Ronnie at the 7-11 Country Music Club at the "Traveller's Rest" at

Kenton on Sundays & it was then that John decided to run his own country music club.

The Club ran monthly at the Headstone Hotel to begin with & then went fortnightly in 1976 until the venue was changed to Lower Mead Hall at Wealdstone FC in August of 1976 & then went weekly. As well as the weekly meetings John also had several "specials" with visiting American artists such as Vernon Oxford, Jim Glaser, Red Sovine, Justin Tubb & Gene Watson. I know that in later years the club moved to Kenton when Lower Mead was knocked down & that this year moved to the current venue.

This was written by BRIAN SHELLEY 29.5.15

This picture was taken from Southern Country Magazine in July 1986.

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When I first visited Harrow Country Music Club Back in 1986, I never imagined that I was going to meet so many great musicians and make so many new friends, or that I was to become a part of such a successful club. Founder John Ryan made this a reality by his warm welcome and introducing me to his assistant Ronnie and the wonderful people of Harrow CMC.

In a short space of time he persuaded me to help with the running of the evenings and teaching me how to compere and present an on time show, at the beginning with plenty of shouts to me, 'look at the time, get that band back on the stage'. A learning curve that I will never forget.

Invaluable instructions that were to prove themselves later on when John succumbed to illness leaving Ronnie, myself and some loyal helpers to carry on running the club.

A few years later when Ronnie decided that she would retire from organising, fears of Harrow CMC closing prompted me to take on the role of organiser. Thankfully supported by the members of this great club. Although I had my own plans to retire and move away in a few years I felt that those few extra years had to be, if at all possible. Luckily as my retirement was getting closer, Deb and Becky finally agreed to take on the running of the club. Although they both have full time jobs,

and run another club, their dedication to Country Music and its fans has proved to be the life saver for this great club.

Just as important for this clubs 40 Years of success has been the support from friends old and new that have chosen to spend their Thursday nights with us.

Proud to have been a part of the clubs 40 year success.

Tony Lee 06/07/2015