

Buchanan

Buchanan was formed in the summer of 2002 and are: Mark Wilkinson (vocals/guitars/mandolin); Steve Conway (pedal and lap steel/dobro/guitar/mandolin/vocals); David A Smith (bass/vocals); James Fildes (guitars/vocals); and Danny Wells (drums/percussion).

The five members came together through a love of Country music and a burning desire to write and play together. The songs are written in an 'unapologetic Country style' and draw on many influences, from Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard to Gram Parsons and The Jayhawks.

James had been playing in rockabilly and indie bands such as The Rhythmaires, Thurman and the Mock Turtles. Mark had played with Country bands such as West Coast and Buckskin, written songs and gained some critical success in the late 80s with Red Moon Joe but had spent most of the 90s as a sideman and session player with Gary Hall and Cathryn Craig. It was time, they decided, to get back to their roots.

Before James and Mark sat down to write for the first time, they laid out a few guidelines. They would employ a strict quality control process – all the songs had to be good enough, that they would be honest with each other and, finally, they would approach the songs with unflinching eye for detail and honesty.

They were very pleased with the first couple of songs and went into a local studio, the Voodoo Rooms with producer Gary Hall to record them. It was then that they decided to form a band to play the songs live.

James had known drummer Danny Wells from the Manchester music scene and knew that Danny had considerable experience playing in Country bands. Danny is a real 'band' drummer, in that he listens to the songs and works out what they need. He is a true believer in the 'less is more' philosophy of drumming, which belies his power and technical ability.

David A Smith had played with Mark in The Stormkeepers and was always the first choice bass player for the band. His knowledge and understanding of Country music, his songwriting and arranging skills have proved invaluable to Buchanan over the past four years.

Steve Conway was an early musical hero of Mark's. When Mark started playing Country music around Preston in the mid-seventies, Steve was playing with some legendary Preston based bands – Bush Country and Busted Arrow. He is undoubtedly one of the finest steel



Mark Wilkinson.



James Fildes.



Danny Wells.



David A Smith.

players working in Britain today. The band initially didn't approach any Country music clubs because their previous experience had told them the audiences wouldn't listen to original songs. They were also refused gigs at some Country venues because they played original songs. Undeterred, they carried on playing gigs and went into the studio to record an album. They sent the results to Goldrush Records in Perth, a label that specialised in Country/Americana music and Stars A' Fallin' was released in the fall of 2004. Their second album, The Picture, has this year been voted Album of the Year in the UK Country Radio Awards and has received rave reviews from many sources. 'We are a British Country band through and through', said

lead vocalist Mark Wilkinson, 'and this award recognises the fact that good Country music can originate in the UK.' Joe Fish of BBC Radio Lancashire started playing Buchanan's album on his weekly radio show. This raised the band's profile in the area and the Country gigs started coming in. The band were pleased to note that many Country music fans were ready for new material played with



Steve Conway.

passion and energy and the band's reputation is on the rise. The band has since been playing to a growing fan base at home and has also played in Europe alongside the likes of Asleep At The Wheel, Dwight Yoakam, Danni Leigh, Marty Stuart, Dave Edmunds, Bobby Bare and Chely Wright. Through recent live shows in Europe, Buchanan has also formed allegiances with greatly respected American artists such as Ricky Broussard, Sunny Sweeney and Brennen Leigh. They've also recently recorded an album with the wonderfully enigmatic Norwegian country singer/songwriter Benedicte Braenden.

Now booked to appear at the Country Music Hall of Fame ceremony in September they are on the lips of most of the British Country music loving fans at the moment.

For further information/pics/interviews, get right back to them via info@bloodygreatpr.com or by phone 01505 706346.

