

Jonny Williams

Jonny Williams was born 3rd March 1967 and raised in the North East of England. He moved to Sheffield, South Yorkshire in September 1988 where he helped form rockabilly band, The Mercurys, performing original songs and also covers from the greats such as Jerry Lee Lewis, Eddie Cochran and Little Richard. Also songs from lesser known rockabilly artists such as Johnny Powers, Warren Smith and Macey Skipper to name a few. This band had 10 successful years together playing all over England and parts of Europe. They also backed some of the lesser known singers from the 1950s who were becoming popular again with the young rockabilly audiences. Those such as Dale Hawkins and Johnny Powers, even managing to get a support to pop star Morrissey, which was to be the biggest crowd they played to, 9,000 at Birmingham's NEC. Due to other commitments from band members the band more or less ground to a halt and Jonny, always being a huge Country fan thanks to his hero Jerry Lee Lewis who covered lots of Country music as well as rock 'n' roll, decided to see if there was room for him on the thriving Country circuit.

After travelling around some of the local Country clubs and seeing some of the top British solo artists he decided to give it a go along with Kev, his soon to be father-in-law and best mate, who agreed to do the sound out front.

After an encouraging 18 months on the road, the bookings were coming in fast and it came to the point of 'do I pack the day job in?' which was a van driver for a bakery. The choice was more or less made for him when one day after everything possible had gone wrong, the work van had broken down twice, he was hours late and was going to get it in the neck from his customers. As he sat on a slip road close to the M1 with a van full of undelivered bread and realised his boss wasn't coming with another van, he locked up the van, posted the keys and never returned. He still wonders what happened to the van full of bread and the week's wages he is owed! That was in April 2000. Since then he's never looked back.

Jonny's material is always pure Country and he tries to pick out songs that are a little different, or not heard anymore. There are so many great songs that just get overlooked, although he still peppers the set with some of the classics. In his own words 'there's 70 year's worth of great Country music to go at. Why certain artists have to cover the recent over played, done to death, stuff is beyond me. It seems like 50 artists all doing the same sets!'. He often hears from audiences



that 'it's great to hear real traditional Country music again'. After travelling the length and breadth of the country performing well over 200 gigs a year and having just released his ninth cd, *Sing Me Back Home*, Jonny never tires of performing, although he says getting on stage and playing is the easy bit, it's the getting to and from the gigs that can be a pain.

In an interview with *Up Country* magazine a few years ago he was asked 'what are your ambitions?'. The answer was simple . . . 'This is it, I've achieved my ambition, which is to make a living singing and doing something I love.'

With his feet firmly on the ground, Jonny will continue to play his style of traditional Country music for as long as people want to listen and dance to it.