

'I spend every waking moment in lederhosen'

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"There's a million ginger-haired Presbyterians hanging off the edge of my island and they belong to you [Scotland]."

Maxwell was brought up in Dublin but his mum's side of the family hail from Fermanagh and Tyrone. He gigs regularly in the north and having already taken in Omagh and Derry since his tour started in mid-February, he takes in the Mandela Hall in Belfast next Thursday (before playing Vicar Street in Dublin the following night). The comic was on our TV screens recently in the second series of panel show *Monumental* – opposite Jimeoin, Michael Smiley, Micky Bartlett and a selection of celebrity guests.

"Jackie Fullerton was a good sport; he was one of the best on this series. We just kept showing the same clip of him getting slammed by [wrestler] Giant Haystacks," he laughs.

"John Linehan [the man behind May McFettridge] was hilarious. That was the last one in the run and he held the whole show together. All I had to do was sit back and let him go.

"So they were all good sports, even Dana. I was a little bit worried about her but she got into it."

After his Irish tour, Maxwell will be "on the piste" in Austria, when he takes part



in the Altitude Festival in Mayrhofen from March 31 to April 4.

He co-founded the festival that combines comedy, snowboarding and skiing and it's now in its seventh year.

"None of us ever thought we'd get this far. Our headliners this year are John Bishop, Al Murray and Tommy Tiernan.

"It's great. Sunbathing in the village, snowboarding on the mountain, bubbling around in a Jacuzzi, a couple of drinks, lots of laughter and me in leather for a week. I spend every waking moment of it in my lederhosen."

As for his Irish tour, does he see 27 gigs in six weeks as hard work?

"Not at all. I've done the Edinburgh Fringe, which is 28 Saturday nights in a row, so I'm pretty battle-hardened.

"On this tour I get to drive through scenic countryside and eat seafood and have a couple of pints and do a bit of walking, so you can't complain."

When he plays Belfast next Thursday he'll be taking to the stage while TV's Miranda Hart, below left, plays the Odyssey Arena. So does he feel threatened by this comedy face-off?

"If you had a Venn diagram, me and Miranda Hart are at different ends of it," he laughs.

"She tells jokes by falling down. I fall down and then tell jokes about it. It's a different end of the spectrum. But I've met on her on several occasions and she's lovely. "I don't fear there'll be a demographic split; I think there's room for both of us."

■ **Andrew Maxwell plays the Mandela Hall in Belfast on Thursday March 27 at 7.30pm. Tickets (£10/£15) available from Queen's students' union and Ticketmaster outlets.**

"Sunbathing in the village, snowboarding on the mountain, bubbling around in a Jacuzzi, a couple of drinks, lots of laughter and me in lederhosen for a week"

Andrew Maxwell

Belfast buckles up as Pam Ann jets in

Played by Aussie comic Caroline Reid, Pam Ann has been described as "the glamorous sharp-tongued air hostess from hell". As she wings her way to Belfast, the hostess with the mostest talks to **Brian Campbell**

YOU won't see the words "politically correct" anywhere on a Pam Ann poster or in a review of one of her shows.

The hilarious air hostess – the creation of Aussie comic Caroline Reid – gigs all

over the world and regularly has audiences in tears of laughter. She even counts Elton John, Madonna, Cher and Alan Carr as fans.

Her shows all lampoon air hostesses and air travel in general and the press release for her new show *FLY!* mentions that it is "not for the easily offended" and that "no news story is safe from this comedian".

So considering that one of the biggest world news stories at the moment is the mystery behind missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, it's safe to say this might feature in Pam Ann's Belfast show on Sunday.

"I think the Malaysia Airlines story will be in full swing all right," she says.

"It's never too soon. I've already offended about 150 people on Facebook when I said I'd found the plane.

"For some people it's a fine line but for me it has to be said. I know what people are thinking and I'm not a hypocrite and I say what I have to say.

"I do feel very sorry for the families involved but at the same time people need to work through things like this with humour.

"When isn't it too soon? You have to have humour. People in Belfast know that too well."

Caroline came up with the character Pam Ann – a play on the defunct airline Pan Am – after seeing an air hostess fancy dress costume.

The character has proved a huge success, leading to world tours, a TV show and even seeing Pam Ann support Cher on tour and act as

in-flight entertainment for Elton John.

Her shows are notable for both Pam's double entendres and her immaculate outfits inspired by air hostesses from the 60s.

Caroline hails from Melbourne but is based in New York now, yet she has a real fondness for Belfast – she even greets me over the phone with a big Belfast "How arrr ya??"

"I love Belfast. I've always had a great time there. I started there years ago in a club – the Kremlin – and the Northern Ireland crowds are really hardcore.

"It's always like 'You BETTER be funny' so I like that aggressiveness and that honesty," she laughs.

"My top places to play over there are Belfast, Manchester and Glasgow – because you just can't get any more hardcore."

When she last played the Grand Opera House in 2009 she had to compete with an over-enthusiastic drag queen in one of the boxes, but Pam wasn't bothered a bit.

"Bring it on. I love them all. They're like family to me."

Her gigs also attract airline employees and she has said that she's "obviously doing a good job" if she's getting the industry in: "I guess I say what they think and what they all wish they could say."

In a nice touch, online tickets for Pam Ann's Opera House show are listed as either 'business class' or 'economy'.

She promises to have a good bit of material on Ryanair.

"Oh, Ryanair is just like a gift. They have calendars now with women over engines in bikinis. Ryanair is hysterical," she says.

Caroline says she hopes to start working on a Pam Ann film soon.

"It's a violent comedy. I think people in Belfast will really like it," she laughs.

"It will probably come out in 2015 or 2016. It's in the works, but it will take time."

Perhaps she could get Pam Ann fans Madonna and Cher to sign up for cameo roles and that would get the ball rolling?

"Yeah, they could play the economy flight attendants."

■ **Pam Ann, the Grand Opera House, Belfast, Sunday 7.30pm. For tickets (£18 to £24), see Goh.co.uk or call 028 9024 1919.**

"I love Belfast. I've always had a great time there. I started there years ago in a club and the Northern Ireland crowds are really hardcore"

Pam Ann

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