

# North Staffs Accordion Club

## Newsletter

September/October 2020

No 490



HI EVERYONE, I HOPE THAT YOU ARE ALL WELL AND KEEPING SAFE AND VIGILANT AS WE HEAD FOR WINTER.. LILY

## VIRTUAL AGM

to be held 7 pm Monday Night, 26th October

With the flexibility that live-play-lockdown and meeting-from-home-via-Zoom provide, the AGM this year will be held at 7 pm on Monday 26th October, not on a club night. As well as the usual electing of the committee and setting of the new fees, this year we hope to gain approval for a new constitution, a member's handbook, change the way we operate financially and bring in a two-tier membership system. Your input will be important and we ask all members capable of being there to be present if at all possible.

## CLUB NIGHTS

Since our last newsletter we have had two wonderful club nights, within the constraints of the Zoom system, with guests Helen Rich (Stockport) in August and Barry Graham (Wrexham) in September. We are extremely grateful for their contribution.

Following the pattern set over previous months, each half starts with Paul Hobbs taking the 'live' role in playing selected pieces from our circle book with all players playing along, in sight but unheard. We then give any of our own members who wish to take part, a slot in the programme with the guest having a ten minutes spot before the mid-way break, and another as the last spot of the evening.



## FUTURE CLUB NIGHTS

We are delighted to say that we have booked Richard Adey as our '20 minute' guest in October, and Bert Santilly for November. Richard has been to our club on several occasions, has always had a good reception from the audience and has a lovely, gentle, easy listening style with something for everybody. Bert, from Cambridge, is an excellent player and a favourite for accordion festivals. He has not been at our club since May 2004!

## AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

The theme for the August club night was French and Italian music. Miriam Umpleby played the introductory music, entertaining those logged in early with her playing and singing. French was the favourite choice for the evening with only three players choosing Italian. The first half club players were Paul Hobbs, Miriam (again) accompanying her playing in song, Mike Richards, Peter and Viv Cowie, with Peter singing *Tous les Garçons*, in French to Viv's accompaniment, and Steve Hughes.

Our guest, Helen (*below*) playing her new Serenellini accordion, joined in the spirit of things with some French selections included. For her first spot she played *Echoes of Spring*, *I Don't Care*, *Chanson D'Amore*, and *La Varenne*. It was a lovely performance with the Zoom acoustics behaving quite well.



Club players in the second half were Tony Britton with an Italian selection and sporting an Italian flag backdrop, a Betty Nixon and Ken Hall duet, Geoff Capewell and John Jones. We were pleased at this point, to welcome Barry Graham

(*right*) who was to be our guest in September. Barry played three numbers beautifully but unfortunately the Zoom acoustics were playing up which did spoil what was obviously a great performance. Helen returned playing *Kingsbury March*, *Dublin Airport*, *Besame Mucho*, *Pigalle* and encore *Golden Slippers* by Frossini, taking us to the end of another satisfying evening, everyone unmuted at this point with appreciative applause.



## SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT

No pre-event music this month, instead we had a chat as members joined. Once again Paul Hobbs led the communal playing. This was the last month for us to use the circle book before switching to the **250 All-Time Hits** publication now acquired by all of those who normally attend.



The first half solo performances were given by Paul Hobbs, John Jones, Miriam Umpleby (*right*) and Greta Moseley before our guest Barry Graham (*left*) came 'on stage'. During the month we had been working with Barry to get the best out of



his sound and lighting for the performance and that proved well worthwhile with big improvements to his August reconnoitre/test. To be fair, we normally have a trial with all guests but it is not usual for them to 'visit' one of our club nights in advance.



Barry has a very musical style of playing and for this spot he gave us renditions of Adrian Dante's arrangement of *Soir de Paris* (Evening in Paris), composed by Louis Ferrari, adding a fourth part, and one of the themes in 'Accordion in Paris' by Albert Delroy. He followed this with Stanley Myers' *Cavatina* and Barry's own composition, *Sofia*, written to celebrate the fifth birthday of the daughter of

a friend from Italy.

After a break came club players Mike Richards, Tony Britton (playing all parts of the **Blackadder** and **Godfather** themes using two accordions, melodica and mandolin in different sections of the screen having pre-recorded three of them), duet Betty Nixon (accordion) & Ken Hall (keyboard) (*right*). Having suffered a recent accident (with his golf buggy!), Ken was unable to carry or play his accordion. Geoff Capewell ended the club players' contribution.

Barry's programme for the end of the evening began with *Hotcha* (Hal Richards), followed by *Triste Sourire* ('Sad Smile' by Frans van Capelle) and *Monti's Czardas* adding on as encores, and showing remarkable versatility in style with *Indifference*, *Moorland Dew* and *My Little Irish Rose*.



Another good club night came to an end and we look forward to having Richard Adey as our October guest.

*Full details of what was played by our members are displayed on our website.*

## **ARTICLE BY BARRY ON THE TWO ACCORDIONS HE USED**

My favourite 'grandfather' of accordions is my ageing Guerrini Superior 5. I had totally worn out a Paolo Soprani, so that it needed the treble keyboard long rod and all the keys replacing. It was many years ago when they were checking accordions to make sure there were no weapons inside, because of the Irish troubles. So, I took it to a shop which I think was in or near Levenshulme, and rather than repair it, which would have been rather expensive, I fell in love with the second-hand Guerrini off the shelf and did a trade. It is one of the best decisions I ever made, as I have had hours of joy from the instrument. It is a bit heavy, and no-one else in Chester will play it. It was made when young Italians were more likely to



be in physical jobs and agriculture, rather than sitting in offices tapping keyboards, so they could enjoy the weight of these heavy instruments, much of which is in the bass reeds. It has been re-tuned twice over the years, but no reeds have failed so far.

I had been unable to obtain an identical spare, even after speaking to the factory. It is an amazing instrument and inside, the fine joinery on the reed blocks is something that one just does not see on later accordions. It has five treble reed sets, and 13 registers, so there are three single reed options, (Bassoon, Clarinet, Piccolo) four straight reed combinations (Bandoneon, Oboe, Organ, Harmonium)

three different musette type sounds, and Master with another two combinations ('Accordion' and 'Sax') of the musette sounds but with the bassoon reed added.

The bass has the luxury of 9 different registers. It can play very very quietly and very very loudly, and has great potential for classical pieces and French musette type music, although it does not match the beautiful French musette sound that you might hear from Yvette Horner and similar players. (Listen to her play 'Summertime' on YouTube with Boy George!) I am still looking for an accordion that can do that.

So, needing a spare 5 voice accordion, I visited Italy. I spent an hour playing a Zero Sette Mayora, which seemed a light and responsive accordion. But it was only 4 voice. After a little discussion and thought, the sales manager said they could make a 5voice version, slightly stiffer and in a slightly larger case. It was an attractive accordion as well. It has a '0' and '7' as trade marks on the grill. They omitted to tell me it would take nearly two years! For the time being it is the only one of its kind and I have had it for just over a month. I put the Guerrini away for a little while to get used to the Zero Sette.

If the Guerrini is the Rolls Royce of accordions, then this is the Alfa Romeo. It is light (5 lbs lighter than the Guerrini) and fast and quite well balanced. I am very happy with it, as would be most accordionists. Harry Hussey has a compact accordion, being fairly compact himself, and it reminds me of his accordion which he kindly let me try a few years back. (I may be wrong, but I think it was a Borsini.) The smaller keyboard takes some of the strain out of those horrible flat key arpeggios that wear out our finger and wrist joints!

It has a similar range of registers in the right hand, but actually 15 combinations, there being an additional two combinations with the lower reed included. There are 7 bass registers on the left, but that is enough to tackle a lot of the classical music I love to play. It hasn't quite got the full dynamic range of the Guerrini, and the tuning of the musette type combinations is a bit less distinctive, something that I may investigate later on. It is impressively powerful in its own way.

Well it is very difficult to describe accordions. One has to listen to them and pick them up and play them to really understand them. But I feel very lucky to hold these two instruments in my collection.

Perhaps one day you will hear the other 9 accordions on my shelf !!

**Barry Graham**

## SOCIAL DISTANCING ON THE EDGE



Here we see member Vivienne Cowie with her cellist friend Rose, playing on the moors at Ipstones Edge. Lugging a cello and an accordion over the stile and heather to this sheltered hollow is no mean feat on the windy ridge. It was all worth it though to make music outside and watch the sun set over the hills of Derbyshire as they played.



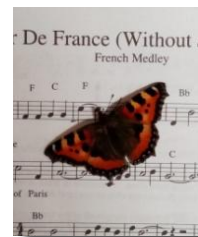
PS, They had hoped to charm the adders but only managed to attract this little beauty pictured on the leaf!

## SEARCHING FOR MADAME BUTTERFLY

This morning I went into the room where I practise and discovered this musical butterfly settled on and studying my piece for Tuesday night.

Hope it makes a better job than I probably will!!

Miriam Umpleby



## GOLDEN HILL WORKINGMEN'S CLUB

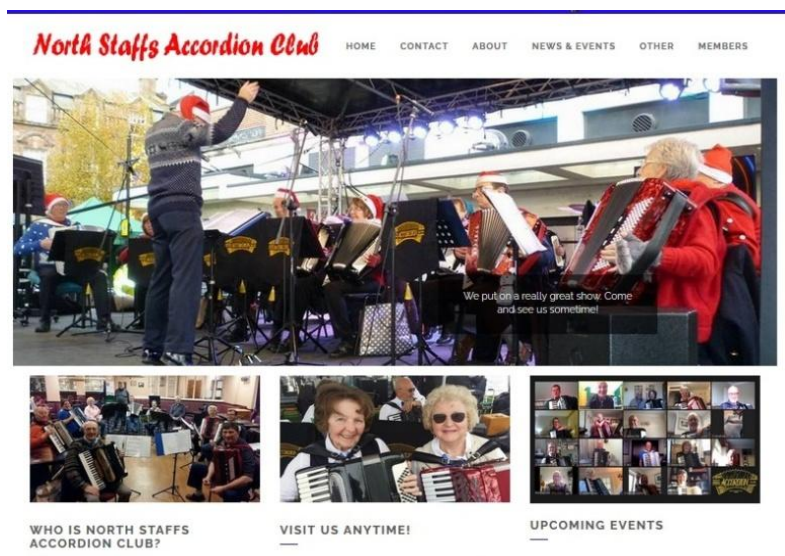


There's no space for our cars in the car park of our old venue, Goldenhill Workingmen's Club. Work is now well under way to convert it for housing and a new club.

## OUR NEW WEBSITE

After a few months of work, this is to announce a new website for our club. It is, in fact, much more than a website in that, apart from its public facing part it has a members' section which is an advanced administrative tool giving us the ability to:

- list our membership and control subs
- define our musical groups
- list and file the music, separately for each group and with videos or sound files
- record our events and venues
- provide a club calendar
- from an email, easily register your availability (or otherwise) for an event
- easily create programmes and look at historical ones by venue
- display the latest news and newsletter
- maintain a bulletin board (possibly the equivalent of a private Facebook)
- receive suggestions from members
- send out polls or surveys by email to members or groups
- list committee / sub-committee groups
- maintain our documents and make them available
- link to YouTube and Facebook



- send out emails and text messages to members
- and more



Once logged in, all of this is easily accessible from a 'Members Options' panel as shown in the diagram.

The website uses the Making Music Platform as a template and can be accessed by computer, laptop, tablet or Smartphone. 'Making Music' is the 'trading name' of The Federation of Music Societies and our membership of this organisation gives us very attractive rates for the Platform as it has for our public liability insurance.

Our 'old' website was excellent and has served us well over the years, created and maintained by Lily Lynch to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. Her artistic background and eye for detail, I'm sure, will help us as we continue to develop the new site.

In making this transfer we have changed the 'url' link:

[www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk](http://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk)

becomes

[www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com](http://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com)

We hope that each member will start using it and you can start by making sure that your photograph is the one you would prefer, and by constructively contributing to the suggestions box!

## SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTER



Tony Britton has taken on the appointment of Social Media Promoter for the club and will oversee the work we do on Facebook, Twitter, Zoom and YouTube (possibly others in the future), maximising our presence. He will keep you informed on social media, of course, and also through articles in this newsletter.

Videos of both Helen Rich and Barry Graham have joined our selection of club night video recordings on our YouTube channel, Accordion TV North Staffs, Helen playing the 'I Don't Care Polka' and Barry 'Soir de Paris'. If you visit and like what you see, give them a 'Like'.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEh8EKB3aSGSeTh9NG0C8vQ>

### Club Management

President Steve Houghton 01270 768178

### Committee

Chairman	Steve Hughes	01782 787935
Secretary	Steve Hughes	01782 787935
Treasurer	Tony Britton	01782 563088
Safeguarding	Steve Hughes	01782 787935

Helen Brown, Ken Hall, Paul Hobbs, Barry Tunnicliffe, Alan Fernandez (co-opted).

Newsletter Editor Lily Lynch

Web - [www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk](http://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk)

Email - [northstaffsaccordionclub@gmail.com](mailto:northstaffsaccordionclub@gmail.com)