

# North Staffs Accordion Club

## Newsletter

July/August 2021

No 495



HI EVERYONE

I HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL AND COVID FREE. I'M INFORMED THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN RELEASED BUT I'M HANGING ONTO MY MASK FOR THE TIME BEING.



A BIG WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER, SUE ORD, WE HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY OUR COMPANY. AND HAVE FUN.

### See Club Website for details

For our events covered by this newsletter, full details of what was played, and by whom, are given on our website [www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com](http://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com)

## JUNE ZOOM CLUB NIGHT

This was another Zoom club night with good attendance from members and visitors.



We started with our usual playalong with pieces chosen and played by Barry Graham, the rest of us accompanying him but muted. This month we played *Guantanamo*, *Only You* and *The Poor People of Paris*.



The theme for the evening was 'music from the 1980's' and though some had difficulty in choosing music from that decade, it actually proved to be one of the theme nights with the highest number of brownie points for playing theme songs. It was clear that Miriam Umpleby and Viv and Peter Cowie had interpreted the theme to be '80s' not '1980s', bringing in music from the 1880s! The Cowies giving accordion/vocal rendition of *The Big Ship Sailed Down the Ally-Ally-Oh* and Miriam, *Funiculi Funiculà*. Miriam also gave an impressive performance of *Hallelujah* on a glockenspiel. It was good to have return performances from visitors Tracey Middleton

from Birmingham, and Joseph Grima and David Attard, both from Malta. David's performance was unfortunately cut short with technical problems when we lost the sound.



The following members took part, Mike Richards, John Corden, Barry Graham, Tony Britton, Miriam Umpleby, John Jones (*bottom right*), Greta Moseley (*left*), Ann Millward (*top right*), Viv and Pete Cowie, Paul Hobbs (*top left*), Steve Hughes.



## JULY ZOOM CLUB NIGHT

The club night was held on a swelteringly hot day with the highest UK temperature ever registered in the country. Not surprising, therefore, that players complained of sweaty hands and could be seen sipping drinks throughout the night. We welcomed once again our visitors from Malta.

Tracey Middleton (*right*) told us of an unfortunate experience that she had with her accordion when she played in an extremely humid hotel room, where “even the walls were sweating”. Afterwards she brought the accordion home and put it in the music room in its case and didn't play it for a couple of days. The music room was significantly cooler than the hotel where she had played. The air in the accordion cooled, and turned to moisture and sat on the reeds. If she had played it and pushed fresh air through the reeds as soon as she had got home she would have been OK but instead the reeds rusted. Despite being retuned three times the reeds have metal fatigue and won't stay in tune, and she needs to have the reeds changed in order to



rectify the problem - a costly mistake.

Paul Hobbs led the playalong with its selection of music from the ‘250 All Time Hits’ book that we use. This month we played *Once in a While*, *Red Roses for a Blue Lady* and *The Shadow of Your Smile*, a good selection by Geoff Capewell who drew the short straw last month.

On the whole, the Zoom technology stood up very well for the evening though first player up, Miriam Umpleby (*above left*), had problems with her setup and had to be relegated down the list. It is felt that members prefer to play earlier in the evening because there is less chance that one of the other players plays the piece they have practised over the last month.



After the playalong, John Jones, taking Miriam's spot, got us off to a good start with a Latin American medley. This was followed by Betty Nixon/Ken Hall duets (*right*), including Steve Roxton's version of *Vaya Con Dios*, and then Paul Hobbs. Paul explained that his second piece, *Eternal Flame*, referred to the Elvis Presley eternal flame at the head of his tombstone in Memphis, Tennessee.

Miriam, having sorted out her audio issues, then gave us a *Beethoven's Minuet in G* and got us singing and waving arms to *You'll Never Walk Alone*. Miriam records her own backing and vocal harmony on her electronic keyboard joining in ‘live’ with the melody on accordion and in song.

David Attard followed from Malta with *Adios Muchachos* and one that translates to *A Moment in Paris*. David plays a Roland digital accordion and one reason for this, other than the different sounds at his disposal, is because there is only one person in Malta that he trusts to repair his acoustic accordion and that person is in his 80s and wants to retire from accordion repairs. Getting his Roland serviced is easy through the dealer.



Taking us up to the break we had our Wrexham member, Barry Graham, who played *España* and a medley he had put together of Austrian music. When he was a child his parents frequently

listened to Austrian music from records following family holidays there and the medley Barry played was entirely from memory.

Tony Britton (*above*) started the second half of the evening and in his usual manner he used Zoom backdrops to good effect. His first number was *Sealed with a Kiss* followed by the Shostakovich piece *Romance* from the film *Gadfly*. Nice pieces. John Cordon (*right*) gave us more French musical flavour with *La Mer* and *C'est Magnifique*. All that was missing was the beret and string of onions. Once more from Malta, Joseph Grima had kindly sent his music choice in advance, the first one listed as *The Sea*. It did not dawn on compere, Steve Hughes, that he was referring to *La Mer* and we listened to another interpretation of the song played by John. Both versions were well appreciated by the audience.



Tracey Middleton, kindly joining us once more, gave us a rousing performance of the *Radetzky March* which once again brought the tambourines and maracas out in the audience. Mike Richards brought the night to a close with fine performances of *Fly Me to the Moon* and *Corinne*.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2021 Annual General Meeting will be held on the October clubnight. We will assume, for the present, that this will be a live event at Bradwell Workingmen's Club, but who knows...!! With this assumption we expect to have the club band giving a performance which will include some new music. We will be seeking nominations for committee membership.

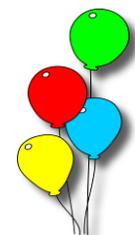
If you would like to nominate a member for committee membership or any of the officer positions, please put his or her name forward either by letter or email (addresses on the back of any newsletter) or to any of the current committee members, by or on the September club night, making sure that the person nominated is prepared to do the job. We are after people with new ideas who enjoy working as part of a team. Failure to come up with new names will mean that you will be stuck with the same 'old lot'! Who are the 'old lot'? – Names are on the back of each newsletter and mug shots are on our website.

## AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

It has been decided to hold the August club night as another Zoom session and see how well the coronavirus respects the freedom-day decision.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

Again, on the assumption that this will be live, the Christmas Party will be held at Bradwell Workingmen's Club on Tuesday night 21<sup>st</sup> December. A buffet will be available, and we will have the usual Christmas Carol mass accordion playing with song sheets for the audience. Why announcing this now? It is because we will be making our own entertainment and we want you, the members, to dream up a contribution, be it solo, group or both.



## PLAYING FOR PLEASURE (P4P) SEEKS LUNCHTIME VENUE

The Bradwell WMC will not be opening at lunchtimes on weekdays which means that unless we can find another lunchtime venue the P4P group will have to continue meeting on Zoom. Venue suggestions from our members are welcome. The P4P is a 'playaround' group with playing by ear encouraged to join in with others. It is not averse to joining with other instrumental groups. The motto is 'play for pleasure'.

## BAND REHEARSALS

The North Staffs Accordion Band has been meeting 'live' on Tuesday nights (other than club nights) at Bradwell Workingmen's Club since this was permitted by government guidance in May of this year. The seating is social distanced and we use face covering (which makes hearing the MD a bit awkward at times).

We also take part in a national survey jointly undertaken by Making Music and The Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD) where we weekly record in an app 'Well Rehearsed' whether we have had a rehearsal or not, and whether anyone has shown signs of coronavirus infection since the previous rehearsal. The aim is to establish evidence of how safe live rehearsing is.

## MAILBOX

### To the North Staffs Accordion Club

Since my husband (*Jeff Burndrett*) sadly has dementia now and cannot visit the North Staffs Accordion Club, I would like to say how he loved belonging to it, and though he could not read a note of music and could only play (very well), by ear, he always felt so welcome and appreciated.

Sincerely, **Mary Burndrett**

### From Malta

I really enjoyed Tuesday's evening..... If you or any of your members decide to hop over to Malta, please let us know, we will be more than happy to meet up.

**David Attard**

## MIDLAND ACCORDION FESTIVAL

The Midland Accordion Festival is taking place this year on Friday the 12th to Sunday the 14th November at the Mercure Hotel in West Bromwich. The festival costs £375 per person which includes Bed, Breakfast, Evening Meal, Concert Entrance, Workshops and Trade Stands.

For More Information and to book contact Barry Smith on 07831 354863 or email [accordions2010@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:accordions2010@hotmail.co.uk)

## BOVINE MOOOOIVING CONCERTS



### When the Cellos Play, the Cows Come Home

Steve Hughes messaged me about an article he had seen from the New York Times about collaboration between a cattle farmer and a Danish music training programme bringing regular cello recitals to his pampered livestock and giving them great pleasure. Steve said it reminded him of an experiment which he did years ago with the field of cows

where he walked his dog. He wrote an article in our newsletter at the time (2006!!) and I managed to dig it out of my old files. I thought you might enjoy reading it again (or for the first time if you've not seen it).....



### AN EXPERIMENT

You'll probably think I'm nuts – to those that know me this will confirm the fact! Opposite our house there are fields where there is a herd of cattle. I usually take the dog for a walk through these fields. Somewhere in my distant memory I recall hearing that cows love music so last Sunday (of July) I took my mouth organ along. The herd was in a far field so I had quite a walk to get to them. When I was fairly close I



started playing *Summertime*, *Italian Suite* etc).

They started looking at me and then after the second or third tune began to come towards me. Fortunately they stopped about 15 to 20 feet away and I had an audience of about 50 or 60 cows/heifers/bulls whilst I continued playing, my dog trembling at my side. I couldn't think of any 'cow' numbers and only afterwards thought of *Mooooonlight Serenade* and *Moooooooon River*.

It's good to have an appreciative audience for once.

**Steve Hughes July 2006**

*Editor: I wondered why he didn't take his accordion – but maybe a mouth organ would have been safest the first time in case he needed to bid a hasty retreat - especially if he had 'treated' them to **Old Shep** !!!!*

## THE MALTESE CONNECTION

by Steve Hughes

At the July club night Mike Richards played *Corinne* by Charles Camilleri.



Camilleri was born in Malta and contributed massively to the music of the island and abroad. I'm sure that few of us present made this connection except for, of course, our visitors from Malta. I had an email from Joseph Grima who said that prior to Camilleri's death in 2009, he used to see him around the island.



He gave a link (*below*) to a mass of very interesting information about Camilleri (some of it written by our friend Rob Howard of Stockport Club).

**In brief:**

**Born:** 7 September 1931 in Hamrun (a town in the Inner Harbour Region of Malta, with a population of 9,513 people).

**Education:** The Lyceum and the University of Toronto. He was the first professor of music at Malta University.

**Has lived and worked in:** Australia, UK and the USA, as well as his native Malta

**Well-known for:** Writing the first opera in Maltese, **Il-Weghda** and his interest in Maltese folk music, which led to wider scientific research in music of the Mediterranean

**Also:** Over 300 works. Wrote his first march at the age of 11

**Married:** To Doris Vella **Children:** Two; a son, Charles (also a composer) and a daughter, Anya (worked in the film industry)

**More information on:**

[http://www.accordions.com/memorials/mem/camilleri\\_charles/](http://www.accordions.com/memorials/mem/camilleri_charles/)

Corinne (Mike Richards)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-uhHCZRVSg&t=15s>

CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME 2021/22			
August	17th	Theme Night (Colour)	Zoom
September	21st	Players' Night	Live
October	19th	AGM, Band and Players	
November	16th	Theme Night (Place Name)	
December	21st	Xmas Party	
January 2022	18th	Players' Night	
February	15th	Theme Night (Love Songs)	
March	15th	Players' Night (St Patricks 17 <sup>th</sup> ) Guest	
April	19th	Theme Night (Sea Related)	
May	17th	Players' Night	

#### Accordion Teachers

John Romero jr@carillonstudios.com 01606 240148  
Tony Watterson tony.watterson@virginmedia.co 07732 263938  
(also teaches guitar, ukulele & keyboard)  
Richard Adey (Jazz) [richard@richardadeymusic.com](mailto:richard@richardadeymusic.com)  
Ingrid Gould 0121 458 2781

**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**

Alan Fernandez, Sue Edge, Ken Hall, Paul Hobbs, Barry Tunnicliffe,

Newsletter Editor Lily Lynch

Web [www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk](http://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.co.uk)  
Email [northstaffsaccordionclub@gmail.com](mailto:northstaffsaccordionclub@gmail.com)