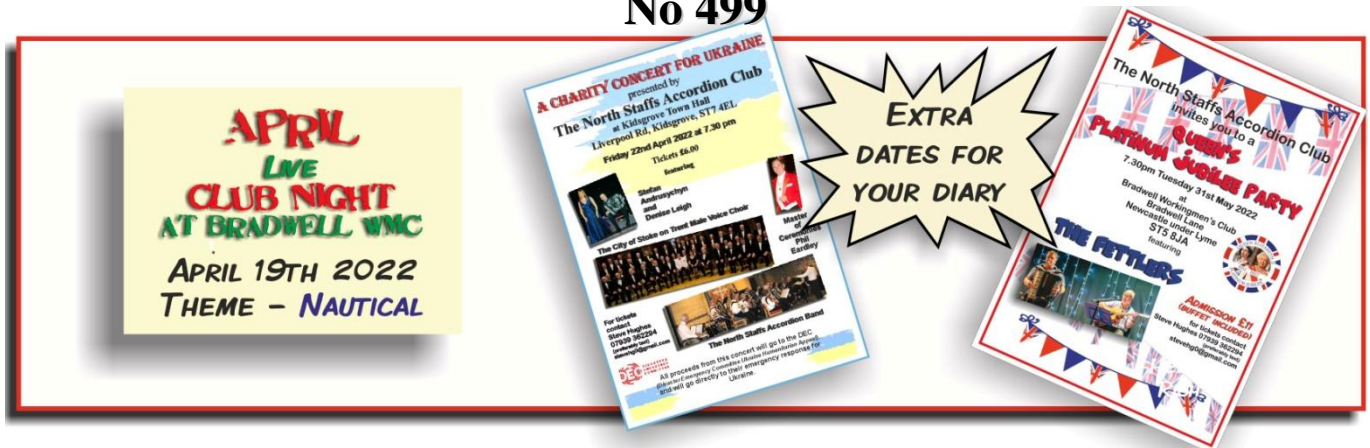


North Staffs Accordion Club

Newsletter

March/April 2022

No 499



Hi EVERYONE. I HOPE YOU ARE WELL. DUNCAN, LENI AND I ARE JUST WAITING FOR THE WEATHER TO MAKE UP ITS MIND AND FOR THE DAYLIGHT TO STRETCH A BIT MORE. THE CLUB DIARY IS NOW BEGINNING TO BUILD UP A BIT AND THE BAND MEMBERS ARE, I'M SURE, PRACTISING HARD IN THE BACKGROUND.

LILY

FUNDRAISING CONCERT FOR UKRAINE

On Friday 22nd April a concert will be held in Kidsgrove Town Hall to raise funds for the Ukraine refugees and all those directly suffering from this terrible war. All income from the concert will be donated to the DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee, Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal) who are in Ukraine and neighbouring countries trying to meet the needs of all refugees and displaced people.



The concert will feature our club band, the **City of Stoke on Trent Male Voice Choir** and **Stefan Andrusyshyn and Denise Leigh**.

Tickets are available from Steve Hughes at £6
tel **07939362294** or email stevehg0@gmail.com

This will be the first time that our band and the City of Stoke on Trent Male Voice Choir have teamed up for an event and this is due to the link through Barry Tunnicliffe who is a member of both. One wonders how he will cope with two quick changes in uniform on the night.

APRIL CLUB NIGHT

The April club night will be a live event at Bradwell Workingmen's Club at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 19th. It is a players' night with a **nautical** theme. Performances by members will be preceded by the communal playalong.

QUEENS JUBILEE PARTY

With the cancellation of our Christmas parties for two years running we have decided to have a mid-year party in the form of a Queen's Jubilee party.

Entertainment will be provided by the ever popular **Fettleers** and there will be a buffet included in the price of **£11**.

Tickets are available from **Steve Hughes**
tel **07939362294** or email stevehg0@gmail.com



BEGINNERS/IMPROVERS

Beginners Begin

After what was almost exactly a two-year break our Beginners/Improvers section began on **Monday 28th March** in an upstairs room at Bradwell Workingmen's Club. The intention is that this is held on a fortnightly basis. Time was spent in discussing the direction we would be taking and the music books to be used and then we ploughed on with making music with some of the earlier Kenneth Baker keyboard books. Mike Beese and Ken Marek were brave enough to give us solo renditions of Country Garden and Mull of Kintyre respectively and we attempted joining in by ear (the new in-thing by many teachers). Good and constructive time was had by all, learners and instructors alike.

THE NORTH STAFFS ACCORDION CLUB ZOOM CONCERT

by **Rob Howard**

We are indebted to Rob Howard (left) of Stockport Accordion Club for giving permission to use his account of our February special guest concert:

On Tuesday evening February 15th, 7pm until 10pm, the very go-ahead North Staffs Accordion Club presented a free concert on Zoom, starring an all-female guest line-up: **Julie Best**, **Anne-Marie Devine** (Northern Ireland), **Helen Rich**, and **Tracey Middleton**. I was one of those doing a supporting spot, representing Stockport AC and the others on the undercard were **Paul Hobbs** (North Staffs AC), **Barry Graham** (Chester AC), **David Attard** (Malta) (*below right*), and **Janis de Ville** (Black Country AC) (*below left*).



All the players gave excellent performances, and the evening proved to be a great success, followed by lots of positive feedback. **Tony Britton** from North Staffs did a remarkable job keeping the technical side of things up and running throughout whilst **Steve Hughes** expertly compered the proceedings, keeping everything motoring along without any fuss and to time. The only technical hitch came early on when David Attard's link from Malta disconnected and his spot was delayed for half an hour.



The concert featured a broad range of music, including accordion classics, classical music, film music, polkas, musettes, Irish traditional, etc. Zoom is not ideal for playing music, and some of the performances were affected by dodgy sound quality. Having said that, when it is your turn to play you can have no idea how your music will sound to anybody else, and you just have to hope for the best. The programme in detail was as follows:

Paul Hobbs - *Don't Cry for Me Argentina* (A. Lloyd Webber), *Hymne l'Amour* (Marguerite Monnot), *Fly Me to the Moon* (Bart Howard)

Barry Graham - *Clarinet Polka* (Trad), *Czardas* (V. Monti), *My Florence* (Guido Deiro)



David Attard - *Tango Maestro* (Paolo Bagnasco), *Jerusalem* (Master KG)

Rob Howard - *Simple Gifts* (a.k.a *Lord of the Dance*), polkas - *Astley's Ride*/Swedish Rhapsody/*Jenny Lind Polka*/Waves of Tory, *Trumpet Voluntary* (Jeremiah Clarke)



Janis DeVille (*middle left*) - *I will always love you* (Dolly Parton), *The John Dunbar Theme*, from *Dances with Wolves*, *Is This the Way to Amarillo?*

After the break, the main guests (Anne-Marie, Helen, Tracey, Julie) performed:

Anne-Marie Devine (above left) - *Moon River* (Henry Mancini, arranged by Frank Marocco), *Irish Reels* (with Sean O'Neil), *Danny Boy* (with Sean O'Neil), *Jolly Caballero*, *Bel Viso*, *Cajun Ceili* & *Anne Marie Cajun Ceili*



Helen Rich (above right) - *Hand Grenade Throwers March* (G. Deiro), *Indifference* (Murena/Colombo), *Tarantella* (Fugazza), *Sicilian Serenade* (Frosini), *Amor, Amor, Amor* (Ruiz), *Quick Silver* (P. Deiro)



Tracey Middleton (left) - *American Husband in the Kitchen at Buzzards Bay* (Reels), *I Don't Know How to Love Him* (Lloyd Webber), *Paris Accordeon* (French musette), *Chestnut* (Playford), *Accordion Parisienne/Plaisance Fox* (Polkas), *Money Money Money* (Abba)

Julie Best (right) - *Style Musette* (Andre Verchuren), *I Got Rhythm* (Gershwin), *Accordion Samba*, *Bel Fiore* (Frosini), *Here comes the Sun* (George Harrison), *Toby* (Ivor Beynon).

MARCH GUEST NIGHT

After three months of virtual club nights once again we were to meet in person. The gears of the club are not yet fully operational and the attendance was disappointing with only twenty-four members present, more so in that we had such a brilliant guest in **Gennaro Fiondella**. Gennaro had a five-and-a-half-hour journey from Surrey to get to us and also a similar return. For those who attended it was a wonderful night of entertainment.

The concert hall of Bradwell Workingmen's Club was set out with a table of accordions for sale, the results of the accordion refurbishing team (*see separate article*), a table of help-yourself-to music with a Douglas MacMillan collection box for donations, and a display of books by Rob Howard.



We started the evening with the usual playalong giving all player-members of the club an excuse to bring their accordions and the opportunity to flex their fingers. On this occasion we started with the *National Anthem of Ukraine* in support of the brave people of that country.

Derek Wilton on his harmonica was the first solo player up and the audience enjoyed the performance, joining in by singing the words. Derek and his wife, Yvonne, are members who have missed out over the pandemic years, unable to join in the virtual gatherings.

Following Derek, Gennaro took to the stage with a beautifully decorated piano accordion bearing his name. He later explained that it was custom made to his own specification in the Italian Cooperativa factory. Throughout his two spots his playing was fast with impressive bass rhythms, many of his pieces he had arranged or appended himself. Compere, Steve Hughes, called his performance 'dazzling'.

In a Q & A session Gennaro said that he started playing the accordion at the age of five, before coming to England at the age of eight, and that only his grandfather, a singer, was musical in the family. He formed a music school 6 years ago but had been hit really badly by the pandemic, the business just starting to get back to normality. His wife, Collette, normally plays duets with him and would have accompanied him for this booking had she not, herself, been the guest at Guildford Accordion Club.



In the second half 'new' member, Barry Graham, (*right*) gave an excellent rendition of complex and long Kosak music. This was the first physical appearance by Barry at the club, having made the long journey from Wrexham.

All previous 'visits' were virtual during the pandemic. Mike Richards then played three numbers, the last of which he added singing to his playing. We then had Viv (accordion) and Peter (vocals – no microphone needed). All of these spots were well received by the audience.

The pieces played were:

Derek Wilton *Sound of Music, Edelweiss, Do-Re-Me*

Gennaro Fiondella *C'est ci Bon, Juanita, Indifference, O Sole Mio, Fools Rush In, Fiesta, Come Prima (Right First Time), South American Joe, Besame Mucho, Luci e Ombre (Light and Shade), Anna Polka, Fly me to the Moon, Flight of the Angels*

Barry Graham Variations on a Ukranian Theme

Mike Richards *Sorrento Thoughts*, Medley (*After all Those Years, Bunch of Thyme, Maggie*), *Galway Girl* (accordion and vocals)

Viv and Pete Cowie *Streets of London, Rambling Boy* (accordion and vocals)

Genaro Fiondella *My Florence, Dinah, Te Te Pepe (Italian Polka), Mystery Polka!, Flavours of the Sea, Crazy Accordion*

ACCORDION REPAIR GROUP

During the last few weeks two of our members, **John Corden** and **Peter Cowie** have met in John Corden's garage on occasional Thursday afternoons to check over the club's accordion stock, most of which have been donated to the club. Steve Hughes and Tony Britton have also been involved.



Amongst others they have worked on a Bellini, a very ornate Maugein Freres, a lightweight Hohner Verdi IV and a Scandalli. All of these are 120 bass instruments, play well and would be a good buy at a competitive price. It is remarkable how a touch of spit and polish and a few minor adjustments can improve appearance and function and any of these would be more than adequate as a starter instrument. There are

more to do and more expertise to acquire but with half time tea and cake from John's wife, Jenny, the project is not the only attraction!

The results of this group will be on display at the 'Ukraine' concert. In an effort to boost club membership there will be an offer, agreed by the committee, for the free loan of one of the instruments to accepted members of the public. The offer will be for a period of three months, with support provided through our beginners/improvers class,

'ACCORDIONLOVE.COM' AFFAIR!

By **Viv Cowie** (pictured right)

I came across the site 'accordionlove.com' some time ago having followed advice to play along to songs on YouTube, to practise playing by ear as I am keen to lessen my dependence on sheet music. I was hooked! The site has a multinational community of accordion enthusiasts of all ages and stages and is run by Ronen Segall (*below left*) who lives on Vancouver Island. It consists of two areas – a teaching/learning resource and a members' forum. Ronen is a committed and enthusiastic teacher who is more interested in the 'process' of learning than the outcome.



Each week Ronen emails members with, amongst other things, a video of himself learning then performing a new song by ear from scratch, warts and all, often uttering his stock comment when making mistakes, 'that's ok'! He then produces a step-by-step teaching video and publishes basic sheet music for those who need it to get started. Over time these videos have built into a large learning resource of music from all round the world and much of this work is freely available on his website or via YouTube.

The Forum element is an interactive site where members can communicate with each other and take part in the Monthly Challenge by uploading videos of themselves completing the Challenge. Six consecutive entries earn participants an accordionlove T shirt!

Having watched the site for a month or two I decided to join accordionlove. Watching members' responses to the monthly challenge became addictive and I could stand it no longer when one month the challenge was to improvise over a given set of chords from a blues scale. I had to pluck up courage to enter and video my entry. I am now on my 11th consecutive entry, having got the T shirt (apron in my case) and heading for the 12 month prize!



In addition to the teaching resource and Forum, Ronen sends a weekly link to his Livestream on Sunday nights. This is a highlight! Members can request songs to be played and ask for advice and friendships are fostered. It is fascinating to watch him work and demonstrate any new bit of kit acquired for looping and recording. Ronen

performs on all sizes of accordions from 12 bass to full size and throws in jazz accompaniment on his keyboard and a range of percussion instruments for good measure. I was inspired to write a song about the Livestream for the December Challenge which Pete sang.

Diary

Tuesday, 19 th April 7.30pm	Theme Night (Nautical Related)
Friday, 22 nd April 7.30 p.m.	Band Concert with City of Stoke on Trent Male Voice Choir and Stefan Andrusyschyn & Denise Leigh Kids Grove Town Hall
Saturday, 14 th May 12 noon	Band Play at Bethesda Chapel, Hanley
Tuesday 17 th May 7'30 pm	Players' Night
Tuesday, 31 st May 7.30 pm	Queens Platinum Jubilee Party Bradwell WMC with the Fettleers
Tuesday, 21 st June 7.30 pm	Theme Night (theme tba)
Tuesday 19 th July 7.30 pm	Players' Night

Accordion Tuition

John Romero John Romero jr@carillonstudios.com 01606 240148
 Tony Watterson tony.watterson@virginmedia.co 07732 263938
 Richard Adey (Jazz) richard@richardadeymusic.com
 Ingrid Gould 0121 458 2781

For Sale

Hohner Atlanta IV accordion previously owned by member Wilf Bailey, deceased, is being sold by the family. It is shown in this newsletter prior to going on the open market. Excellent condition, straight tuned 120 bass. Offers around £1100. Contact details available from Steve Hughes



President	Steve Houghton	01270 768178
Chairman	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Secretary	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Treasurer	Tony Britton	07923 580760

John Corden, Susan Edge, Ken Hall, Paul Hobbs, Barry Tunnicliffe

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