

North Staffs Accordion Club

Newsletter

Sept-Oct 2022
No 502



HI EVERYONE. INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE ARE RECOLLECTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH ROYALTY. LIKE ME, MANY OF YOU WILL HAVE BEEN GLUED TO THE TELLY OVER THIS SAD TIME OF OUR QUEEN'S FUNERAL. GOD SAVE THE KING.

AGM NEXT CLUB NIGHT

Our AGM will be held on our next club night on the 18th of October at 7.30 pm at Bradwell Workingmen's Club. It is your opportunity to have your say on our performance to date and any ideas you may have for the future of the club. There will be no entry charge, but no attendant member's award either (charity commission rules where there is no entry charge). There will be a play/singalong and a performance by the band.

NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHT

Excellent entertainment is in store for us with our guest, **David Vernon**, from Edinburgh. David is a superb accordionist in a wide range of music genres and is a very popular guest at accordion clubs and festivals. Not only is he a good musician but he is a pleasant and humorous guy.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tickets will soon be available for the Christmas party, to be held on Tuesday the 20th December, which will feature the **Barry Schmidt Bavarian Band** (trio), a carol play-/sing-along and buffet. We hope to see you there.

AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

Whilst we were in Bradwell club for our August club night, what started as a dry but cooler evening turned into a cool but wet one to the delight of the gardeners amongst us but in no way was it wet enough to alleviate the drought being experienced nationwide. We had a good crowd for a summer month and gave a warm welcome on their first club night visit to Jacqui Flather, who joined last month, and husband, Jason.

Paul Hobbs (*right*) gave a ten-minute spot of background music whilst we were getting ready and then the evening, under the direction of Peter Cowie as MC, started with the usual playalong which has now evolved into a playalong/singalong, the audience having been given song sheets.



The theme for the evening was to play a piece relating to an ‘animal’ or ‘bird’ and, as can be seen from the list of players and what they played, the response was excellent. This also applied to our new member, Jacqui Flather, who, although she plays the piano, has only had three weeks to pick up the bass button and bellow techniques in our beginners /improvers group. She did an excellent job.

Barry Graham (*right*) really got into the spirit of things with his pig and chicken songs, singing the comic words with added grunting and clucking, and in the process getting the audience in stitches.

After a precision performance by Paul Hobbs, Miriam Umpleby brought the evening a close by separating the audience into soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and getting them to sing (chant) the backing to *Wimoweh* whilst she played the accordion and sang the lead.

It was, once again, a very enjoyable evening.

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| Steve Hughes | <i>Running Bear, Feed the Birds, Tarantella</i> (the dance of the spider), <i>Napolitana</i> |
| Betty Nixon | <i>Mockingbird Hill, Old Shep</i> |
| John Cordon | <i>Matchstalk Men and Matchstalk Cats and Dogs</i> |
| Jacqui Flather | <i>La Cucaracha</i> (the cockroach), <i>Bare Necessities,</i> |
| Derek Wilton | <i>Old Bull and Bush, How Much is that Doggie in the Window, Spread your Tiny Wings</i> |
| Barry Graham | <i>Glorious Mud, The Hens March Over the Midden, Ghost Chickens in the Sky</i> |
| Paul Hobbs | <i>La Vie En Rose, Misty, I Believe, Any Dream Will Do, Danny Boy</i> |
| Miriam Umpleby | <i>Wimoweh</i> – Audience participation with four part singing |



SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT



Although attendance was once again low we were in for another very enjoyable club night. Paul Hobbs, once again, gave us background music before the start which was followed by a group playing of half a dozen numbers from the 250 All-Time-Hits book. The music had been chosen by Viv and Pete Cowie who had also produced a songsheet for the audience (*see article on their visit to London*). The pieces they had chosen were :

I Believe, I Can't Believe that You're in Love with Me, I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby, I Left My Heart in San Francisco, and I'm in the Mood for Love with the singing led by Peter, who, by the end of the evening I'm sure needed throat tablets.



Steve Hughes, (*top left*) on his button accordion started the performances that followed with *Spanish Romance, Sound of Silence, Maria Elena, In the Summertime* and *Take 5*.

A duet featuring **Rosie Galley** and **John Corden** (*above*) followed with *MacDuff Maggie, Via Con Dios*, the beautiful Maggie's *Farewell to Odessa* and an Irish medley, John (English) having obviously lost out to Rosie (Scottish) on music selection.



Tony Britton teamed up with **Peter Cowie** to give us another duet (*above left*), this time accordion and song with *I Belong to Glasgow, I Love a Lassie, Keep Right On, My Love is Like a Red Red Rose, Bluebells of Scotland*, and *Skye Boat Song*. Peter did very well in stretching his vocal range to cater for some of the keys!

Elizabeth Brixton (*left*) showed her prowess on the English concertina with *Teddy Bear's Picnic, Sarah's Song, I've got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts*, and

Autumn Leaves. Two firsts; having previously played in a duet on an accordion, it was the first time for her to play solo at our club nights and a first for the concertina. The instrument drew quite an interest during the break by the curious audience.

Another duet, with Peter in demand again; husband and wife performers **Peter and Viv Cowie** who gave us **World of Our Own, Banks of the Ohio** with very impressive accordion accompaniment by Viv. Peter's vocal cords had suffered no damage and he was in fine voice.

Mike Richards (right) with backing tracks gave us **C'est si Bon, Blue Bossa** with improvisation, **Bye Bye Love, Don't Blame Me**, and, dedicated to his late grandfather, **Working Man** which he sang to his accordion accompaniment.



Paul Hobbs played **What a Wonderful World, You Raise Me Up, Where is Your Heart, Highland Cathedral, Answer Me, Ferry Cross the Mersey** in his highly technical style, all the more impressive in that he only uses four of his right hand fingers.

Another lovely evening came to an end.

STOCKPORT CONCERT 10TH AUGUST

On Wednesday 10th August, with members Derek and Yvonne Wilton and their next-door neighbour, Liz, I drove up to the lovely Stockport Accordion Club venue at Woodley Methodist Church for their concert featuring the **Kyiv Duo**. The hall was full and it was great to see so many friends; members of the Stockport club, accordionists who we have featured as guests at our club and others, some of whom, like Black Countryman Barry Smith, had travelled a great distance.



Full details of the programme will no doubt be included in the Stockport newsletter, available to our members so my account is deliberately brief.

Prior to the appearance of the Kyiv Duo there were some support performances. Taking the first spot, and introduced by M.C. for the night, Rob Howard (who then took his place in their ranks) was the Stockport Accordion Band conducted by Adrienne Sharp. I was very impressed with their tuning and precision and they gave an enjoyable performance. Also performing was the brilliant Helen Rich, the quartet, Accordion Spice, led by Helen (and including our member Glenda Reid who appears to be in great demand these days having recently played with the Craven Accordion Band in a joint concert with a twinned German accordion band), John Jones MBE, and two young girls in appropriate attire, who gave us some lovely Scottish dancing to accordion (of course) accompaniment.

The Kyiv Duo, **Oleksiy Kolomoiets and Igor Sayenko**, took to the stage to resounding applause and after an opening number Igor explained how the nightmare of the pandemic became trivial when the real nightmare started on the 20th February with Putin's Russia invading Ukraine without cause. The duo had, he said, been given permission to leave the country for a three-week tour with an obligation to return thereafter.

During the concert he made several references to the war and also the gratitude felt by his countrymen to the support given by the British. For the first half of the concert the duo played music composed by Ukrainian composers, and in the second half, British.

They finished the concert with **Pomp and Circumstance**, aided by audience singing of **Land of Hope and Glory** (notably soprano Denise Leigh who was in the hall). After a prolonged standing ovation, they played a 'comic' encore, a variety of interlaced classical and Scottish traditional music.

It was an extraordinary concert and I'm sure that, like us, everyone went home both happy for the entertainment we had received, and sad thinking about the war in Ukraine and what faces Igor and Oleksiy when they return.

Thank you to the Stockport Accordion Club for putting it on.



RECOLLECTIONS OF ROYALTY

Following the sad death of our Queen, Elizabeth II, and the spectacular TV coverage of the funeral, here are a few recollections of royalty by our members:

John Plumb

Courtesy of my boarding school headmaster, I was privileged to view the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 via his study TV.

I have followed her subsequent reign of 70 years with great interest and have admired her smiling, ongoing sense of duty not-with-standing the horrendous Aberfan disaster [116 children/ 28 Adults killed] and her personal sadness's/ 'Annus Horribilis Years' of too many family breakups, Lord Louis Mountbatten with his grandson murder by the IRA and Windsor Castle devastation! She can now rest in peace.

Miriam Umpleby

Memories of a dear devoted queen....where do we start? My first memory begins in the dining hall of my local primary school and the girl eating her dinner next to me crying and not understanding why. The school had just announced that King George VI had passed away so that was the reason for her tears! Sadly I do not remember much of his funeral but about 18 months later was the coronation of a new monarch to be known as Queen Elizabeth II. At that time I am sure that there was much trepidation about what kind of a monarch she would turn out to be. There was no need to fear as she has been to us a constant and very gracious lady who has fulfilled her vows with grace, fortitude and love.

For our family it was a turning point as, along with many others in the country, my parents bought their first television.... a 9 inch, one channel, Bakelite, black and white set where, on coronation day, we all gathered, surrounded by other relatives, in our little prefab to watch this momentous occasion. As I look back and honour this gracious lady, who was never afraid to speak of her faith in God and His help in her life I am conscious that we have once again witnessed a monarch's death and the prospect of another coronation, we now wait with the same trepidation how the reign of King Charles is going to pan out and pray that he will take on this roll with the same devotion as his mother. We, as a family pray he will and so take this opportunity to honour and thank Queen Elizabeth II for the last 70years of true faithfulness. (God save the King!!)

Steve Hughes

My only brush with the Royals was when I was a police cadet and there was a royal visit to Caernarvon Castle a few years before the investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales. I was on office duty at the police station, opposite the castle, during the visit. There were throngs of people and it was a busy time for the police with bombings at the time by Welsh national extremists and the presence of Special Forces to help deal with this. During the event I had an urgent message for a police superintendent who was at the castle. Pushing my way through the crowds, this I delivered, giving him the customary salute, when he told me sharply not to do that. Apparently there had been an instruction that the police, other than seniors in the presence of the royals, should not salute. This instruction had not filtered down to the mere cadets! I'm sure it was from that day onwards!

Peter and Viv Cowie (A Day to Remember)

On Wednesday 15th September we had been watching the superb TV coverage of London, filled with crowds and flowers for the Queen's lying in state at Westminster Hall and Pete and I were moved to be there, not to join the then 5 mile queue to file past the Queen's coffin, but to pay our respects and lay flowers.



So, Thursday morning we were up early and off to Derby Station. I was informed that I had booked the last 2 tickets to St Pancras station and was surprised to find that there were plenty of spare seats! We settled down at a table and guess what? Probably to the horror of the busy girl sitting opposite, out came the 250 Song Book and iPad – yes! accordion club business followed us and a precious hour could be used to type up song words for the forthcoming club night. Pete commenced stage whispering - Pete can't whisper. I typed and soon the job was done. Time to relax!

We arrived at St Pancras. Having made friends with a lady and her niece who headed for the tube, we parted company and set off to find a bus to Hyde Park Corner.

At Green Park clutching our sunflowers we were overcome by the sight of so many people. The air was heady with perfume and thousands of people of all ages were quietly meandering to lay and view the seas of flowers, cards and messages of love and thanks to the Queen and condolences to the Royal Family. What a sight! Photographs cannot convey the depth of the scene or the atmosphere. No-one could fail to be moved by the outpouring of quiet and respectful emotion.

Where to lay our flowers? Strolling through the carpets of colour we chose a small space in the sunshine and laid them with our thanks and prayers.

We walked on, amazed at the sheer scale of the organisation – police, medics and security from all over the country obviously enjoying their work. Camaraderie and good humour abounded. We asked directions from a young police lady from Longton in one of the underpasses. She was lovely. We chatted to an off-duty security dog handler whilst enjoying our picnic lunch on one of the few available benches. His dog had only found one person carrying drugs amongst all the many thousands and no evidence of explosives. Phew. All were honoured to be doing their bit for the Queen. We walked to Buckingham Palace and down the Mall and adjoining streets. We viewed Westminster Hall and the Houses of Parliament, enjoying the sounds of a lone piper on the bridge. We chatted to many folk and eventually made our way back to the bus at Hyde Park Corner, exhausted after our 8.5 mile walk and marvelling at the stamina of those who had queued and walked for 12+ hours.

On our arrival home at 9pm our son sent a message to say his mother-in-law had just arrived in London and we had a message from a past pupil to say she had just joined the queue. It was good to be able to picture the unforgettable scenes and to have been a very small part of it.

John Jones MBE

Like most of the population, I was totally engrossed in watching the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Although I never met the Queen, I felt quite emotional remembering when I visited Buckingham Palace to receive the MBE from Princess Anne in 2012, for raising funds in support of charities, by playing my accordion.



I feel total admiration for Princess Anne in the way she carries out her royal duties, with the same total dedication and commitment of her mother, the Queen, and felt her deep sadness whilst following her mother's coffin from Balmoral to Edinburgh, and carrying out her duties at the lying in state, and the funeral.

Club Nights

Third Tuesday of month 7.30 pm	Bradwell WMC ST5 8JA
October 18th	AGM and Band Performance
November 15th	Guest Night – David Vernon
December 20th	Xmas Party – Barry Schmidt Bavarian Band
January 17th	Players' night (no theme)

Other Events

Weekly Tuesdays 7.30 pm except for 3 rd Tue	Band Rehearsals, Bradwell WMC
2 nd Thursday of month, 2.00 pm	Playing for Pleasure (monthly at various venues)
Monday 10 th October 7.30 pm	Beginners/Improvers, Bradwell WMC
Monday 24 th October 7.30 pm	Beginners/Improvers, Bradwell WMC
11 th – 13 th November	Midland Accordion Festival, Wolverhampton

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John Corden, Susan Edge, Ken Hall, Paul Hobbs, Betty Nixon,
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