

North Staffs Accordion Club Newsletter

November-December 2022

No 503



HI EVERYONE.

I'VE FINALLY FOUND OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF XMAS. IT'S FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO CAN'T SPELL CHRISTMAS! – SO PLEASE LET ME WISH YOU ALL A

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

CHRISTMAS PARTY ARRANGEMENTS

We look forward to our annual mass carol playing at the Christmas party next month with a super buffet, a few special members' spots and of course our fabulous party guests, **The Barry Schmidt Bavarian Band**.

It takes place at our usual club night venue, Bradwell Workingmen's Club, and commences at 7.30 pm on the third Tuesday of the month, 20th December, 2022.

The tickets are going well at **£12**.

It will be wonderful to see everyone and to admire their best Christmassy attire.



OCTOBER CLUB NIGHT & AGM

As members gathered together for the October club night we were met with inspiring background music provided by Paul Hobbs. The evening then started with our AGM, presided over by President (and MD) Steve Houghton. With the unavoidable absence of Chairman Steve Hughes, the president read out Steve's report. This was followed by Tony Britton's treasurer's report, and he was pleased to report a recovery of funds post-pandemic. There were two resignations from the committee, Sue Edge and Barry Tunnicliffe. We thank Sue for her excellent work as minuting secretary and Barry for his contribution as MuseScore guru. We welcome three newcomers to the committee: Rosie Galley, Betty Nixon and Miriam Umpleby. It was pleasing to note that following the pandemic the various activities of the club are in steady recovery. Following a lively debate on the future of the club and the difficulties in getting youth interested (a subject probably echoed by many other clubs!); the meeting was brought to a close.

During the break we partook of some delicious home baked (Barbara Cole) cake – thank you Barbara - and the raffle was drawn. During the break also we listened to some background harmonica music from Derek Wilton after which the club players took to the stage to play a selection of singalongs.

They were joined by the audience suitably armed with song sheets, with singing led by compere Pete Cowie. The club band, minus one or two missing Covid patients and much missed bass player Steve Hughes, then closed the evening. Steve Houghton with customary panache led the band for their annual 'home' performance and provided a rousing selection from their rich repertoire. We wish the Covid patients and chair, Steve Hughes, a full and swift recovery.

NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHT

The November club night on the 15th inst. was well attended and those there were in for a treat, to be rewarded with a brilliant performance by our guest for the night, **David Vernon**. First up, though, were the club players, assisted by the audience armed with song sheets, with a selection of singalongs getting everyone to take an active, warm-up, part.



David Vernon then took to the stage and decided to 'start fast' with 'Accordion Roman' followed by a slow 'Firefly Waltz'. He had us mesmerized with his mastery of the treble keyboard and his deft bass work, laughing at his jokes and in awe of his memory trick. Miriam Umpleby put it well in her email the following day:

"Last night was a joy to be part of. David Vernon was a brilliant accordion player but so relaxed and informal, meaning he engaged so well with the audience with plenty of audience participation which always helps us, as the audience, to also be relaxed and enjoy the evening. I must say from a personal point of view that he was one of the best guest players that I have heard. I loved it and could have listened to him all night!!"

During the break we were treated once more to a large selection of lovely Barbara Cole cakes. We then had the raffle and the attendant member award with £20 going to Ken Marek when his number was drawn. drawn (£10 brought forward from the September event).

After the break Mike and Paul played some lovely duet pieces and Miriam Umpleby (*right*) played a selection of music where the audience were set a task to guess the theme. The theme was 'colours' of which there were nine (best audience guess, 6).



David then returned to the stage and carried on in full gusto taking us well beyond our usual bedtime! Thanks also to Geoff Capewell who put David up for the night. I understand that as soon as they arrived at his house Geoff was entertained to another session, first on an electronic keyboard followed by each of Geoff's accordions. There is no stopping this man, but who would want to!

An interesting point came to light when he told us that (though he can sight-read music) he learns his music by ear.

JANUARY CLUB NIGHT

The January club night will be a players' night. There is no theme so you have carte blanche. You could call it a post Christmas Mince Pie and Sherry Night and we'll toast in the New Year !!

FEBRUARY CLUB NIGHT

This club night has the usual theme for February – **Love Songs**. As most songs seem to be about love one way or another you'll have a great choice.

MIDLAND ACCORDION FESTIVAL

By Elizabeth Brixton

I was lucky enough to have spent the last weekend at The Midland Accordion Festival and my feet are still tapping and my head spinning with the music which could be heard from the moment of arrival until late on Sunday night.

Accordions could be heard all over the hotel at all times of the day; in the restaurant, lounge, outside and in the bar at night after the concerts. The shop was a prime spot to listen to the professionals testing the merits of the many accordions on sale. Several browsing customers were given an impromptu performance by Leonard Brown and Gennaro Fiondella - fantastic!

There was plenty to occupy us all day with orchestra workshops and party piece performances to enjoy. Every evening we were treated to a huge variety of music and entertainment styles by many brilliant performers, from a delightful cowbell/accordion duet by Sue Bennet and Harry Hussey to a wide selection of glorious music by virtuoso Mario Conway; from David Vernon's unbelievable speed and hilarious '94 Beatles Hits' to Helen Newton and Nigel Pasby's beautiful, expressive duets. Familiar and much-loved performers Jovan Rnjak, Rosemary Wright, Helen Rich, Stewart and Anne Towe and The Northern Lassies were warmly welcomed and enjoyed.



It was a well-organised festival and, judging by the smiles on everyone's faces as they came out from a lively performance by the Master Butchers' Band, we will all want more next year.

Many thanks to Barry Smith and his team for all the thought and hard work they have put in, which has not only given so many of us a wonderful weekend but provided a generous amount for charity.

(Pictured above - Elizabeth with John Jones and David Vernon)

ANNUAL EAST CHESHIRE HOSPICE CONCERT

On Sunday December 4th at 2.00pm, the Stockport Accordion Club Band will perform their annual fundraising concert in aid of the East Cheshire Hospice at the Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield. This is always a great event and well supported and club member and organiser John Jones M.B.E. will have tickets available at £8.00.

Helen Rich, Walter Perrie, the quartet Accordion Spice and John will also be performing and light refreshments will be available.

If you would like a lovely afternoon and to give your support to the hospice, you can telephone John on 07871 767708 or see him (or me) at the November clubnite.

MUESCORE AND ME

By Elizabeth Brixton

When I first came to the North Staffs Accordion Club Band I thought it wouldn't be too difficult to play a 2nd accordion part using only my right hand, so I would be able to carry on playing my favourite tunes at home, whilst learning the many new pieces played by the band at the same time; how wrong I was.

It was a different kettle of fish from sitting alone in the living-room at home, leisurely tapping my foot and hitting random notes galore. I soon found that my timing was decidedly off, I had great difficulty counting to four and my geography was atrocious. It was off-putting for the people sitting near me at band practice. What was I to do?

I was advised to acquire MuseScore so, being a very obedient band member, I did, and then proceeded to ignore it for months because I have a very poor relationship with technology. Last week I caved in, bought a laptop of my own and bullied my patient and long-suffering husband into finding out how to use it.



Being heavy-handed and impatient because of my lack of ability on the computer, it was slow going with MuseScore at the start but I got the hang of it quite quickly. Viv, Tony and Steve have also been very helpful with advice when needed.

I wish I had started it months ago. It has helped enormously in many ways - with the timing, especially pieces such as Walk of Life, Gallop and Chattanooga Choo Choo; being able to play one part separately and then with the score, and best of all - being able to slow it down until one's fingers know where they're going.

MuseScore has made practice much more enjoyable and, although I know there is a long way to go before I can really feel I'm doing my bit, I'm sure it will help tremendously.

Stockport Accordion Club Charity Concert
in aid of the East Cheshire Hospice

on

Sunday December 4th 2022 at 2pm

Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield, SK11 8TU



Featuring the Stockport Accordion Band, Helen Rich, Walter Perrie, and the quartet Accordion Spice



Tickets £8 each, including refreshments

Contact John Jones MBE on 07871 767708



BAND TO PERFORM AT MIDDLEPORT POTTERY

The band will be performing at the Middleport Pottery Christmas Market on Saturday 10th December. Starting at 10 am the band will be doing three spots during the day, finishing at 4 pm. Entry to the public is free and support from members would be greatly appreciated.

Middleport Pottery has been the location of The Great Pottery Throwdown, and also some scenes from Peaky Blinders. It will be the location for an auction on the Travelling Auctioneer TV programme next year.

FUN AT THE FAYRE

You know Christmas is coming when the first Christmas Fayre springs up and out come all the decorations. We were pleased to be invited back to Berryhill Village complex for their 2022 Christmas



Fayre on Saturday 12th November.

They put on a really good show of festive tables laden with goodies, arts and crafts and

seasonal nibbles. Perhaps the band's favourite part is being treated to 'hot dogs' and drinks during our break. Mind you, we earned it because we were there for over five hours, playing for probably three without repeating a single song! A mixture of traditional medleys, band pieces and lots of carols/Christmas songs kept us going. As well as our regular players it was great to have our latest recruit Jacqui (*pictured right*) with us.



This is one of my favourite events. The venue is perfect, with ample and comfortable space for the players, a family audience of children, parents and grandparents enjoying the fayre and music, and a most appreciative group of organisers. Looking forward to 2023.

Tony Britton



Roy Hulme RIP by Steve Hughes

It is great sadness that we announce the passing of member Roy Hulme at the age of 87. Roy died of lung problems after a five week spell in hospital. Pre-pandemic, Roy regularly attended our beginners' group who met at Holditch Miners Club. Following lockdown he suffered ill health which prevented him from continuing with his passion of playing the accordion.

In his earlier days Roy was a fitness fanatic and into his 80s he used to do between 100 and 200 press-ups a day. He once told me that in his younger days he walked round a hall, up stairs onto a stage and down again **on his hands**

Lorna Davies RIP by Steve Hughes

Lorna Davies sadly died on the 7th October, 2022. She was the indefatigable author of twice-weekly e-newsletters mainly for the folk fraternity, not only in the Moorlands and Stoke on Trent area but also including folk clubs in Derbyshire, Lancashire, Wales and the Midlands. I'm not sure how many were on her mailing list but it must have been well over 1000.

She was very supportive of our club and not only published a weekly advert for us, she also included posters for our special events and also, on one occasion, a video of our band playing Vienna City of Our Dreams, one of her favourite pieces. It was a pleasure for me to have met her in person at one of the folk events and I know that others from the club knew her well. She was a member of the Peace Through Folk Choir (dedicated to peace, friendship, reconciliation and a better, kinder, more sustainable world) which reflects her personality.

It would be a big undertaking for someone else to carry on her work and if this does not happen it will be a massive loss for the folk fraternity. She will be sorely missed.

Club Nights

Third Tuesday of month 7.30 pm	Bradwell WMC ST5 8JA
December 20th	Xmas Party – Barry Schmidt Bavarian Band
January 17th	Players' night
February 21st	Theme Night – Love Songs

Other Events

Weekly Tuesdays 7.30 pm except for 3 rd Tue	Band Rehearsals, Bradwell WMC
Sunday 4 th December, 2 pm	Annual East Cheshire Hospice Concert, Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield.
Monday 5th December 7.30 pm	Beginners/Improvers, Bradwell WMC
Saturday, 10 th December	Band playing at Middleport Pottery Christmas Market
Wednesday, 14 th December	Group Playing at Goldenhill Community Hall

Club Management

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

**John Corden, Rosie Galley, Ken Hall, Betty Nixon,
Miriam Umpleby**

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REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528