

North Staffs Accordion Club Newsletter

January-February 2023



HI EVERYONE

IT MAY BE A BIT LATE IN THE DAY BUT I WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY AND FULFILLING 2023. SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER WE HAVE HAD FOUR NEW RECIPIENTS OF ACCORDIONS ON THE THREE-MONTH FREE LOAN SCHEME. THREE, BILLY BARLOW, HAYDON CARDEW AND RON RHODES, HAVE JOINED THE CLUB AND WE OFFER THEM A WARM WELCOME. SADLY WE HAVE LOST OUR DEAR FRIEND KEN HALL RECENTLY – HE WILL BE GREATLY MISSED.

LILY

ARRIVEDERCI 2022 - BUON 2023

by Steve Hughes

2022 ended miserably for two or three of our members suffering from ill-health, myself included. My first trip out for a while was with Tony Britton to the John Jones charity concert at Broken Cross, Macclesfield, meeting others from our club who had made the journey and friends from other clubs. The concert featured three sessions of the Stockport Accordion Club Band under MDs Marj Howard, Adrienne Sharp and latterly Brennan Wilson, solos by John Jones and the wonderful Helen Rich. There was a delightful performance by the Accordion Spice Quartet and the concert ended with carol singing to Stockport band accompaniment. I thoroughly enjoyed the event.

I later attended a performance by our club band at Middleport Pottery (see separate article) and was pleasantly surprised at how good the band sounded from the audience side. My place on bass was taken by Mike Richards who sounded good which gave me a fleeting thought of, “Is this a good time to retire?” - Swiftly dismissed.

As for the year ahead, we look forward to hosting the extolled Ukraine/London accordionist, Roman Voloshchuk at our March club night, duettists Julie Best and Jean Corrighan in July and Leonard Brown at our November club night. Roman, Jean and Leonard will be appearing at our club for the first time though Julie has been several times as a solo performer. The November club night will be brought forward a week to fit into Leonard’s tour.

Following the successful event held there in 2018, (the 2020 event was less successful in that it had to be cancelled due to the pandemic!) we are planning Knutsford Accordion Day at Marthall Hall, Knutsford on Sunday 14th May, 2023. The venue is chosen for its modern architecture in lovely country surroundings and, importantly, the fact that it has a central location between the Chester, North Staffs and Stockport Accordion Clubs. This year it will be led by Anita Bašić, MD of the Bradford Accordion Band, assisted by Anna Leskelä. Something to look forward to.

I was devastated to learn the sad news that our member and friend Ken Hall had died (see article). Not a good start to 2023.

FEBRUARY CLUB NIGHT

The theme for the February club night (on the 21st) will again be 'Love Songs'. Please try to include at least one love song in your performance. Not a big ask really as nearly all songs are about love one way or the other.

MARCH CLUB NIGHT



We are delighted to present accordion/vocal virtuoso, Roman Voloshchuk at our March club night. He is a sensational artist and musician with a unique cabaret style and has immense talent and charisma, adjusting his performance to the requirements of his audience. He promises world favourites to tap your feet to, from classical to swing to musette and does it all, accompanied by his rich, tenor vocals.

The impact of his enthusiasm and joy is infectious and will create a night to remember!

Roman has an impressive CV having studied the accordion from the age of seven and is a trained classical musician, folk musician & singer having a beautiful tenor voice. He studied for four years at a music college followed by five at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Kiev. He was conductor of the national Ukraine orchestra/choir giving over 500 concerts around the world including America, Canada (Olympics -17 concerts), France (26), Russia, Poland and several of the Soviet Union countries.

Since moving to London he has entertained in several of the London embassies and played for the Duke and Duchess of Westminster (as well as the accordion clubs and festivals). He also teaches piano, accordion and singing.

CHRISTMAS PARTY



Our Christmas party took place at our usual venue, Bradwell Workingmen's Club, on Tuesday 20th December with guests the **Barry Schmidt Bavarian Band** (*right*) from the Black Country (and beyond) featuring Barry on accordion (of course), Eddie on tuba, and Roger on drums. Following our annual carol singalong to accompaniment by a group comprising all playing members present, the band entertained



us in true Bavarian style with all the 'moves' demonstrated by Eddie. A copious buffet followed during the break with quiz and sausage balloon sculpture competitions organised by Ann Millward. Artistic Alicia Flather, aged 14 (*top left*) the winner of the latter.



'sit up, sit downs' and taking the micky out of members of the audience, especially the Simkins family (*right*) with all six of them ending up on stage. Roger played a very clever percussion solo, leaving his drum set, and even the stage, using walls, banisters, furniture and the floor with his drum sticks and returning to the drum set without missing a beat of his rhythm throughout. The evening came to an end with everyone wearing a happy face and with tired limbs, having no need to exercise at home for a day or two.



JANUARY CLUB NIGHT

Tuesday January the 18th! Threats of severe snow storms with the lawns already turning white. With apologetic phone calls fearing the worst and others not wanting to spread coughs and colds, we seriously thought of cancelling the club night but fortunately decided against. It turned out to be really good night, thoroughly enjoyed by all present. We ended up with 23 people present and like to think they were attracted by listening to and playing music, not just by the post-Christmas sherry, mince pies and cake served during the break!



We received an email during the afternoon from a Shaun Johnson saying that he would be bringing his friend, Alex Morrison (*left*), to the club night having seen it on the internet. Alex, apparently, played the accordion but Shaun was going to surprise him by not saying where they were going. We were later to find out that he had his accordion in the attic and had not played for 5 years having moved from Scotland to Cheadle and not realising that there was local interest in the instrument.



Borrowing an accordion Alex entertained us with some brilliantly played Scottish music on Jacquie's Paolo Soprani. It was the performance of a person practising daily and not of one playing a strange instrument for the first time in 5 years.



We started the evening off with a gathering of the players present playing a selection from our in-vogue music book, 250 All-Time Hits - *Michael Row the Boat, Memories are Made of This, Moonlight Serenade, Song from Moulin Rouge* and *My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean*. This was followed by:

Miriam Umpleby	<i>What a Wonderful World</i> (with vocals and backing track).
Jacqui Flather (<i>above right</i>)	<i>The Black Velvet Band, Chim Chim Cheree</i> <i>Climb Every Mountain, O What a Beautiful Morning</i>
Viv and Pete Cowie (Vocals) Pete Cowie	<i>Putting on the Style, Innisfree, Que Sera Sera</i> <i>Reading from 'Dear Fatty' by Dawn French</i>
Derek Wilton (Harmonica)	Medleys including: <i>Darling I Won't Forget You, He'll Have to Go, Leaning on a Lamppost, Little Stick of Blackpool Rock</i>
Accordion Quartet (JF, RG, TB, VC)	<i>A' Team Theme, America the Beautiful, Anchors Aweigh, Go Tell it on the Mountain Greensleeves, Nearer My God to Thee</i>
Elizabeth Brixton & Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn (Accordion Duet)	<i>Heyken's Serenade, Schneewalzer, Tulpen aus Amsterdam, Pigalle</i>
Alex Morrison (Guest)	Scottish Medleys including <i>Dark Island</i>
Steve and Cathryn Houghton (Vocals) (<i>above left</i>)	<i>Miami Beach Rhumba, Winter Ride</i> (with bells), <i>The Holly and the Ivy</i> (with vocals)
Miriam Umpleby	<i>Run Rabbit Run</i> (with actions!)

The event was well compered by Peter Cowie and we all left happy, that is, until we were met with snow-covered cars in the car park!

BAND PLAY AT MIDDLEPORT POTTERY VICTORIAN MARKET by Ann Millward

The 10th December saw the band pay their annual visit to Middleport Pottery. The pottery was built in 1888 and is the last Victorian pottery still in operation. It is partly a museum and partly a working factory; producing the ware in the same unique manner as they did back then. It was rescued in 2010 by the then Prince Charles Regeneration Trust and £9 million was invested to bring it back to life. It now

survives in trust to an organisation called Reform by organising guided tours of the Victorian factory and heritage areas and holding events such as weddings and the Christmas Markets, which our band was supporting. It has also played host to the Great British Pottery Throw Down and episodes of Peaky Blinders, being a much sought after filming location.

It's a nostalgic place for me because three generations of my family worked there: my great grandfather, my grandmother and my mother. My father also worked in the bottle ovens, but not at Middleport, so for me it's where I pay homage to my roots by conducting some of the factory tours and outlining the rich history of the Potteries.

It was an ideal opportunity for some of us to do last minute shopping at the stalls, between playing, and I am assured by our 'roadie', Geoff, that he had one of the best pies he ever tasted. We were cheered on by our 'groupie' choir who did us proud especially with their rendition of O Holy Night. We definitely made our presence felt. A really enjoyable event in my opinion.



Ken Hall RIP by Steve Hughes

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Ken Hall aged 89 at the University Hospital of North Midlands, Newcastle, on the 18th January, 2023. He will be greatly missed as one of the friendliest members by all he knew at the club. Our condolences go out to his son Kelvin and his close friend, Betty Nixon.



His father was a newsagent and at the age of 11 Ken delivered newspapers to the coal pits for the miners for his dad. After service in the RAF, which he enjoyed, and of which he was very proud, he worked as a salesman and then a long-distance lorry driver, and driving was his great passion. At the age of 48 he suffered a heart attack

and had to give up work.

Ken joined the beginners' section of our club in 2018 after seeing an article about it in a local newspaper. He was not new to music having had piano lessons as a youngster up to the age of 13. He became a member of the club band and also duetted with close friend, Betty Nixon, on club nights or with the 'Playing for Pleasure' group. He was also a valued member of the committee, contributing many a word of wisdom. In February 2022 he suffered a stroke since which he has not been well and has been unable to play the accordion.

Ken, you will be greatly missed. RIP

2022 IN THE COMMUNITY

by Tony Britton

We're pleased to have supported numerous community organisations throughout the year ending with a busy period leading up to Christmas.

As well as our traditional playing in small groups for our local care homes, we've played in larger groups for worthy organisations like 'Headway' – the brain injury association, who help improve life after head injury. On a bright but blowy June day, we played outside their premises near the entrance to Cobridge park. Their members enjoyed this Jubilee celebration with lots of flag waving, food and much singing



along to our playing.

There are many support groups across the Potteries providing activities for the elderly, for example, the Goldenhill residence who meet regularly at their village hall. We must be popular, because having played for them earlier in the year we returned for their Christmas party. We look very orderly, but a picture can lie.



With Pete whipping up the villagers, their community hall was rocking with Christmas music and festivities. Their organisers led by Pauline do a great job of bringing the residents together. Here are a few of our players enjoying a well-earned cup of tea/coffee and cake.



One of our favourite events was playing for the u3a Stoke South's open get together, at their Longton headquarters based in the Methodist Central Hall.

And, finally to round off the year, Tony Britton and Ann Millward entertained the residence of the Farmhouse Care Home in Red Street Village.

Club Nights

Third Tuesday of month 7.30 pm	Bradwell WMC ST5 8JA
February 21st	Theme Night – Love Songs
March 21 st	Guest – Roman Voloshchuck
April 18th	Players' Night
May 16th	Theme – song accompanied by singing
June 20th	Players' Night
July 18th	Julie Best and Jean Corrighan

Other Events

Weekly Tuesdays 7.30 pm except for 3 rd Tue	Band Rehearsals, Bradwell WMC
Monthly 2 nd Tuesday 2pm	Playing for Pleasure
3 rd to 6 th Feb	Eastbourne Accordion Festival
Monday 6 th Feb 7.30 pm	Beginners/Improvers, Bradwell WMC
Monday 27 th Feb 7.30 pm	Beginners/Improvers, Bradwell WMC
Sunday 14 th May	Knutsford Accordion Day



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, Betty Nixon,
Miriam Umpleby**



Web address - www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com
Editor Lily Lynch **email -** editor@northstaffsaccordionclub.com

REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528