

North Staffs Accordion Club

Newsletter

September/October 2023

No 508



HI EVERYONE. I HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL AND ARE ALL VAXED UP READY TO FACE THE WINTER GREMLINS (I KNOW I AM). AND DON'T FORGET - IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO BEAR IN MIND THAT HE'S MAKING A LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE!!
LILY



AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

The August club night on Tuesday the 15th of the month had a French theme and there was a good spattering of thematic attire in the form of striped t-shirts and berets on display including one (Barry Graham (left) complete with onions!

After the customary playalong /singalong, for which twelve members took part in the playing, the soloists took to the floor, ably guided by compere Peter Cowie.



'A-Team' Quartet (pictured below)

Tony Britton

Jacque Flather

Rosie Galley & John Cordon

Geoff Capewell

John Plumb (above right)

Derek Wilton (harmonica)

Dave Clowes (harmonica)

Betty Nixon

Brian Horbury (ukelele & vcls)

Paul Dickinson & Steve Hughes (duet)

Paul Dickinson

Steve Hughes

Barry Graham

Mike Richards

Pete Cowie (vocals)

Plaisir d'amour, McNamara's Band, Summertime

Under the Bridges of Paris, Somewhere My Love

Petit Fleur, Valse Continentale, **Can Can Polka**

Autumn Leaves, What Now my Love

White Cliffs of Dover, **The Poor People of Paris**, Where is Your Heart

I Wish you Love, **I Love Paris**, **Chanson d'amour**

Under the Bridges of Paris, **My Cherie d'amour**, Top of the World

Summertime

No Regrets, That's Amore

The Cat Came Back

Autumn Leaves

Can Can Polka

Le Bal De La Marine

The Accordionist, **Luci e Ombre**

Petite Fleur, **Under Paris Skies**, **La Belle**

Epoque

Will Ye Go Lassie



As a new member of the beginners' group, this was Brian's first club night performance, giving us the variety of having a different instrument and a humorous song.

Some keyboard wizardry from Barry in the 'Accordionist'

ALSAGER UNITED REFORM CHURCH CONCERT

Our September Indian summer gave us a sweltering Saturday afternoon for a band concert held at the Alsager URC church in aid of their church maintenance funds. The heat did not appear to adversely affect audience numbers and there was a healthy attendance in the slightly cooler interior of the church.



The concert began with a rousing rendition of an old favourite foot-tapper, recently brought back into the repertoire, *Searchlight Tattoo* by James Riley, and the programme weaved from the fast to the slow, such as the beautiful *One Moment in Time* to the furious *Shuffling Samuel* and *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, and finishing with another rouser, *Chattanooga Choo Choo*.



By request we had included singalongs in each half. These were provided by a new(ish) club member, **Brian Horbury** (left) on his ukulele with song sheets for the audience. A group of church members meet weekly for communal singing and joined in with gusto.

It was an enjoyable afternoon and our thanks to band members Elizabeth Brixton for travelling the distance from Lichfield and Glenda Reid from Warrington!



SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT

Paul Hobbs (left) welcomed our members in with some pleasant background music as they arrived and following this the evening started with our customary group playing of a selection from the 250 All Time Hits book led, again, by Paul.

First up after the playalong was quartet plus one, the A-team, with members Tony Britton, Rosie Galley, Viv Cowie, Jacqui Flather and newcomer John Corden. The group played *I Can't Help Falling in Love with You* and *O Sole Mio*.



One of two harmonica players, Derek Wilton (right) followed, playing *Jealousy*, *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*, *I Got Rhythm* and this was followed by 'Beginners' duo, Charlie Walker and Brian Horbury (left). They played an amusing set; the first was *Coney Island Washboard* with Brian on vocals and washboard and Charlie giving the accompaniment on ukulele and vocally joining in the chorus. Their second piece was called *Football Pools*, this time with both on ukulele. Mike Richards followed with renditions of *I Love Paris*, *Has Anybody Seen my Gal?* and *Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen*, and then Paul Hobbs with *Red Roses for a Blue Lady*, *Ranchera Argentina* and *Autumn Leaves*. David Clews took us up to the break with *Summertime* (his favourite).



After the break, we set out all players in a semicircle and the following played taking us up to home time:

Viv and Pete Cowie (<i>vcls</i>)	Sway (<i>duet</i>), Lock Katrine's Lady (<i>solo Viv</i>)
Mike and Paul (<i>Duet</i>)	Dream, Medley – Westering Home, Over the Sea to Sky, Rothesay Bay. Medley – After All These Years, Bunch of Thyme, Maggie
Rosie Galley	John McDonald's March
Betty Nixon	Lichtenstein Polka
Norman Brown	Fields of Athenry, Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen
Jacqui Flather	Sounds of Islay, Kilgarry Mountain
Geoff Capewell	Francis Wright Waltz, Under Paris Skies
Steve Hughes	Chattanooga Shoeshine Boy, In the Summertime

Altogether a very pleasant evening of music, and it was quite nice to have the different instruments giving some variety.

OCTOBER AGM AND CLUB NIGHT

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at Bradwell Workingmen's Club on Tuesday evening, the 17th October, chaired by president, Steve Houghton. This will be followed by a performance by the club band. We hope to see as many members present as possible.

NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHT

We look forward to hosting **Leonard Brown** from South Shields for the first time at our November club night (**which we have had to bring forward a week to Tuesday 14th**).

Leonard started piano lessons at the age of 4 achieving Grade 8 when he was just 15 and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in classical music at Newcastle University in 2012.

He was taught the accordion by Norman Brown of Pershaw, Co. Durham and now plays extensively across the United Kingdom as a soloist and with bands.

He did a tour of theatres with **The Leonard Brown Show** which featured The All Star Band and many special guests from all over the U.K and Ireland. We are in for a good club night; don't miss it!

leonardbrownaccordion.co.uk



CHRISTMAS PARTY TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER.

Following our customary Christmas carol mass member playalong/singalong we will be entertained by **Robert Burton** of Stafford. Multilingual Robert has been a professional accordionist from leaving school and is an excellent 'party' choice with his playing styles 'for every occasion', ranging from singalongs, restaurants and the Alton Towers Oktoberfest. He has also played in Spain and Italy.

MULL MUSIC FESTIVAL – MY HAPPY PLACE!

by Jacqui Flather



I first went to Mull Music Festival in 2012. My husband, Jason, has been going since 2001 (way before we met!) with a bunch of dare-devil deep sea divers who thought it was great fun to live on a boat for a week, go diving, drink too much beer and whisky, dance all night till 3am, sleep for a couple or three hours, then go diving again. Unfortunately, the annual dive trip tailed off due to costs – which was great for me because I was invited to go!

The drive from Stone to Oban is a long one – and that first year in 2012 we were travelling in style in an aging Fiat Scudo van – with an airbed in the back and a camping stove. We set off in good spirits early evening, up the M6 and into Scotland, carried on up the motorway to Glasgow – then across the Erskine Bridge, and then the drive got really pretty, as we drove along Loch Lomond in the dead of night with a full moon and a clear sky – where we encountered many red deer in the road. We arrived in Oban at 3am and parked up on a hill where we slept a bit!

I woke up in the morning in a heap by the back door of the van, which was being driven down the hill to the ferry port – which was literally yards away! We caught the 7am ferry and had a hearty Scottish breakfast on the boat with some weird square meat they called a sausage and some triangle things they called scones – they were nice though. The crossing to Craignure on the Isle of Mull was beautiful, and only took about 45 minutes, so we were soon getting ready to disembark.

Once on the Island, we were both really excited to get to Tobermory,



Jason couldn't wait for me to see it! It is about a 20-mile drive – along a road that is very twisty and single track in parts – but wow, what stunning scenery! We dropped down into Tobermory a little while later and pulled onto the harbour car park – which was to be our campsite for the weekend. I was amazed to see camper vans, caravans, and even tents already there. It's not a big car park, but somehow, we managed to bag a fabulous space – where when we opened the back door of our salubrious home, we had the most fantastic view across the bay



and the town. I fell in love with the place right there and then.

The music – so each year the music festival (and there are loads of these all over Scotland – it is well worth going to one) starts gently on the Thursday evening, and then there is music playing from 12 noon to 3am in the 5 pubs/hotels in the town throughout Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Each pub or hotel may have more than one room – so the variety of music is amazing – from your very traditional Gaelic folk tunes – fiddle players, ukulele players, accordionists, keyboard players, guitarists, vocalists – to some very good cover bands – with music of all types. And each group / band is excellent. During the daytime, many of the band members, who might also be camping on the car park, just set up and play tunes on the car park – no agenda – they just play because they love it.

Since that first visit in 2012 – I was hooked, and we go every year – we have even upgraded the accommodation to a caravan – which is so much nicer!

In 2018 we got married there – in our favourite hotel in Tobermory, The Mishnish. They were thrilled as nobody had ever got married there before, and they made it really pretty for us – we had one of the festival bands called the Mad Ferrets playing for us, we had the registrar come down to the hotel and do the deed at 11am – we had a few close friends and family there – and loads of festival goers – most of whom we know – watching us make our vows – then after the ceremony and some food – we carried on with the festival. It was so special, and exactly what we wanted. We even made the Oban News!



BUT let's talk about accordions – this is an accordion club after all!

We have seen many fantastic accordionists at the music festival over the years. Some traditional – and some 'extreme' One year we saw a young lad, Ruairidh MacLean, he was about 16 at the time, playing AC/DC's Thunderstruck on his accordion. It was the most amazing thing I had ever heard and seen. I was Thunderstruck! He is pretty famous now – and goes by the name RuMac – he has loads of stuff on YouTube – look him up he is

fabulous!

In 2017 I first saw an artist who goes by the name Jock the Box (*above left*), his name is John McMillan and he plays a set with his band partner Dunky – they play at the top of the hill in the Park Lodge hotel – it is a VERY steep walk up there – but it was Jock who inspired me to want to learn to play. I watched him and Dunky with my mouth open! Dunky plays every instrument going – he is an incredible musician, and Jock just plays his box – but the sounds he can make with the electronic midi unit he has is

incredible. There is not so much of his music on YouTube, you will find a bit – but he played on stage with the Stranglers a few years back – so you will be able to find him playing Golden Brown.

It was after COVID when we went back to Tobermory, in 2022 that we saw Jock and Dunky again – and I said to Jason – I NEED to get one of those things – I am sure I could play something. When we got home – about a fortnight later – a very large parcel was delivered. I left it by the front door thinking that it was a car part or something that Jason had ordered. Anyway, when he got home – he gave it to me and said – it's for you, open it. I had NO IDEA what it might be – even when I got the case out. I would know now what an accordion case looked like – but back then I had no idea, until I undid the clasps and opened it up! It was a small 32 Bass Worldmaster that he had bought off Jock for me. I was hooked.

When we went back to Mull this year in April, I took my 120 Bass Paulo Soprani 'Box' with me – and I played music on the car park by myself – and joined in with a few of the others 'jamming'. I took it to the Mishnish on the Sunday night – where all of the bands come together in a big jamming session on the stage. I was invited up to join them.

I RAN A MILE! Maybe next year!!!!

Diary

Club Nights at Bradwell WMC ST5 8JA (normally 3rd Tuesday of the month)

October 17th AGM and Band Performance
November 14th (Second Tuesday) Guest Night - Leonard Brown
December 19th Christmas Party with Robert Burton

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

Mondays October 9th and 23rd, November 6th and 27th

Playing for Pleasure

at Basford Lawn Tennis Club 2 pm on 2nd Thursday of month.

Other Club Events

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC Every Tuesday except 3rd of the month 8 pm

Inside the Box Workshop

7 pm Monday 30th October at

Bradwell Workingmen's Club Function Room

A workshop presented by the Accordion Repair Group showing the interior of an accordion, and repairs that can be made. The group are responsible for bringing to life some of the accordions donated to the club by our members or members of the public.

Community Playing at Longton Methodist Hall for u3a, Thursday Nov 30th.

External Events



Midland Accordion Festival, West Bromwich November 10th-12th

Stockport AC's charity concert, Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield. Dec 3rd, 2pm

Club Contacts

President Steve Houghton

Trustees:

Chair Steve Hughes 07939 362294

Treasurer Tony Britton 07923 580760

John Corden, Rosie Galley, Betty Nixon, Miriam Umpleby

Web address: www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com

Club Email: info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com

REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528