

North Staffs Accordion Club

January-February 2024

No 510



HI EVERYONE. I HOPE YOU ARE ALL REFRESHED AFTER THE FESTIVE SEASON, AND HAVE GOT BACK TO A HEALTHY DIET – ALTHOUGH I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT I STILL HAVEN'T PUT MY XMAS TREE AWAY YET. I BLAME THE DOG – HE LIKES THE LIGHTS. LILY

HERE ARE A FEW WORDS FROM OUR LEADER.....

Greetings all

This is our first newsletter of 2024 so a (though belated) Happy New Year to all of our members and friends of the club. I am quite excited about the year ahead with a concert arranged at Endon in April, the Knutsford Accordion Day in May and other irons in the fire. We are gearing up our advertising of the 3 month free loan of an accordion with the hope of getting new members as a result. The 'Community Players' have repeat bookings and 'Playing for Pleasure' have yet another new venue. The 'Beginners' group have given their first club night performance and their enthusiasm is strong. We are in a good place at the moment but still need your input with suggestions and ideas.

Steve Hughes (Chair).

FUTURE CLUB NIGHTS

Continuing our custom for February club nights, the theme once again is Valentine related; to play a piece with 'love' in the title. The additional challenge, as always, is to play something that no one else plays. Not to worry – we'll have different interpretations. There must be thousands to choose from but no doubt there will be duplicates played. For those attending there should also be a Christmas cake left from the January mini-party.

The March club night will be a celebration of St David's and St Patrick's Day with a theme of Welsh or Irish music.

In April we welcome back the ever-popular Richard Adey as our guest. Richard's last visit in person was in 2019.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our annual Christmas party took place on Tuesday 19th December with Bradwell Workingmen's concert room decked out in Christmas decorations and members gathering with Christmas apparel. We looked forward to being entertained by Alton Towers Oktoberfest player Robert Burton (*right*) with his first visit to our club. Robert is Scottish, a fact that he advertises with his tartan trousers (sorry, trusers) but now lives fairly locally at Stafford.

First on the programme we had our club players playing carols and Christmas songs to accompany carol singing by the appreciative audience. These were interspersed with jokes from conductor, Steve Houghton.





Following this, and a short break to clear the floor, Miriam and hubby Eric (*left*) gave a performance, singing in harmony, with club related lyrics, to the tune of *On Ilkley Moor Baht'at*, and to Miriam's accordion accompaniment.

Robert Burton then took the stage and kept us entertained playing and singing a mixture of

popular and festive songs with his electronic accordion and associated amplification. Steve and Cathryn Houghton (*right*) enjoyed a polka on the dance floor, encouraged by the audience.

Extended break. On cue, the buffet was set out by the caterers and the queuing began by the pre-starved. Whilst we were partaking of the food we took part, in groups, in an anagram quiz prepared by Ann Millward.



During the break John Corden strangely disappeared but our numbers got back when Santa



arrived to help Steve out with the Christmas raffle. Our £10 attendant members award was won by Mike Richards. The Flather family won the quiz prize following a flip of the coin against visitors Val and Jim Chapman. No one seemed

to notice Jason Flather's 'heads we win, tails you lose' but fortunately he got heads or there might have been a battle on our hands!

After the break we had an amusing mimed sketch featuring five of our members, Jacqui Flather, John Corden, Tony Britton, Rosie Galley and Mike Richards (*below*) who were all 'visiting the cinema'. Unfortunately, there were no adjacent seats for last in, 'lovers' Mike and Jacqui, so they had to be separated by the other three to have their amorous communication by actions conveyed down the chain of those between them. As they all left there was a twist when the last two to leave, Tony and John, left hand-in-hand.



The party continued with Robert Burton returning for his last spot keeping us all entertained with his accomplished accordion playing and singing, and with audience participation.

It was a lovely party and was a fine end our 2023 club events.

JANUARY CLUB NIGHT

The January club night took place on a night with post-Storm Henk snow on the ground and



more forecast. We agreed on a 5pm decision time as to whether to go ahead or not and, in the event, decided it should carry on. Only 14 members turned up, but it was sufficient to give us a full programme for the evening, and an enjoyable one at that.

Following our customary half-hour warm-up playalong we had a group performance of our **Beginners** (Billy, Charlie, Haydon, Jacqui and Ron) (*pictured above*) who, for their excellent first public performance, played two seafaring numbers, *Cockles & Mussels* and *My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean* followed by the Palmer Hughes *Echo Waltz*, and *Schneewaltzer*. Below is a list of the performances that followed:

John Corden & Rosie Galley: *Drink to me Only, Banks & Braes, God Bless America*

Derek Wilton (*harmonica*): *Coffee in Brazil, I Got Rhythm, Wheels Cha Cha, Close to You*

Tony Britton: *Frances Wright Waltz, Waltz no. Two*



A-Team (*above*) (John, Tony, Rosie, Jacqui): *Anchors Away, Air on a G String, Habanera, Loch Lomond*

Betty Nixon: *Isle of Innisfree, My Love is Like a Red Red Rose, Will ye no Come Back Again, I can't Stop Loving You*

Geoff Capewell: *The Oslo Waltz, Dark Island, The White Cliffs of Dover, Ich Liebe Dich*

Steve Hughes: *Yes Sir That's my Baby, La Partida, Bei Mire Bist du Schon*

COMMUNITY PLAYING

Three enjoyable community events in December.

Here are some of the twelve Community Players (*below*) who performed at the u3a Stoke-on-Trent South just before Christmas. They say we do it for the music and a little money. What do you think?

Next up was playing for the Ipstones villagers (part of the Staffordshire Moorlands). Many thanks to Viv and Pete Cowie for setting up this gig and keeping the snow from returning. Wow! What amazing refreshments. Betty and Geoff declare, (*right*) "Can we come again!"



And the last event of the year, a trio of players, Ann, Tony and Greta (*left*) at the Farmhouse Care Home, Red Street Village, a very caring home.

Here's to a musical 2024.



HOW I TOOK UP THE ACCORDION

by Rosie Galley

I had a wonderful childhood, having been brought up in a tiny village in Dumfriesshire called Wanlockhead. The village is the highest village in Scotland and beautiful in the summer but very dreich (*gloomy or dreary in Sassenach speak*), but we did do a lot of singing. However, it was different at home; my mum loved music and played records such a lot. She also played the organ, and both my brothers played the guitar. When I was around 10 years old, I started piano lessons with a lovely gentle lady, but when I went to High School I started with another piano teacher, he was also my music teacher at school. We were all rather afraid of him as he often belted pupils for minor misdemeanours. Quite often I also felt his belt on my hand, and it will not surprise anyone that it was always for talking!

When I went to his house for my first lesson and played him a tune, he roared at me, "McCall (my maiden name), you are like a cart horse going up and down these notes!" The first thing I said when I got home was that I didn't want to go back. I did go back but eventually wore my parents down and they relented and that was the end of my piano playing.



I do remember a friend of my dad's visiting one day who had an accordion and it sounded amazing. My dad tried to get me interested in playing but to me it looked too hard.

I left school at sixteen and left home to get a job. I trained as a nursery nurse and later as a learning disabilities nurse. I met Keith on the internet and after about 18 months, married him and found myself in Stoke on Trent, which was a far cry from the wee village of Wanlockhead! I soon made friends at our church. One day I was listening to Radio Stoke at home, the man being interviewed was called Mike Richards and he was talking about an accordion club. He explained that the club ran a beginner's group which met at Holditch Miners Welfare Club. For years I had always worked shifts and was unable to get involved in



groups or clubs. However at the time I heard Mike on the radio I was working in a 9 to 5 job and so decided to take my courage in both hands and turned up at the Holditch club one Monday night.

Geoff and Greta ran the group, and I was made to feel so welcome. Of course I didn't have an accordion, but Greta soon gave me a loan of one of hers. When purchasing an accordion, I know now, it's best to try before you buy but, in my naivety, I bought one over the internet and fittingly it came through the post all the way from Edinburgh. I was fortunate that it sounded good and it is the one I still play today. Geoff and Greta were so patient in

teaching us all how to play, although listening to Geoff's terrible jokes every week was another matter! The 'Beginners' group at that time were all so friendly and after some years it was Greta who suggested I come to the band practice, which I did one night.

I decided there and then that this was not for me and didn't stay to the end but quickly scarpered home. However, after some weeks, I gave it another try and decided to stay. I'm so glad I did as I really enjoy playing in the band. I enjoy it when we get a new piece of music to play, my initial reaction is always 'I'll never be able to play this, but it is great to be able to work as a band under the direction of our conductor to master a new piece.

I also find that playing my accordion lifts my mood. I enjoy playing Scottish tunes and am presently trying to master a tune called Sandy Campbell's Homecoming. Music is so good for our souls and I'm so glad of the opportunities that the accordion club has given me through its teaching, training, all the advice and of course the friendships that have been made as well. I'm so glad I was listening to Radio Stoke on the day that Mike was speaking.

HARRY HUSSEY

AND CHANNEL 4'S 'THE PIANO AT CHRISTMAS'

In the last newsletter we published an article about Harry Hussey and his achievement in gaining a doctorate at the age of 94. Harry, who has been a guest player at our club several times, played the piano on the Channel 4 'The Piano' series last year and was once again selected to take part in 'The Piano at Christmas' last December.



Harry teamed up with previous competitor, Fiona (*right with Harry*), and they won the event with a jazzy rendition of 'The Christmas Song', Fiona singing to Harry's piano accompaniment. Congratulations once more, Harry. See the performance on: <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-piano-at-christmas>

ANOTHER VENUE FOR

'PLAYING FOR PLEASURE' (P4P)

In July 2023 we were delighted to find a new venue in Basford Tennis Club for the daytime P4P sessions. Unfortunately, a problem has cropped up that would have been difficult to foresee. A couple of the new chairs in the venue suffered scratches to the smooth back-padding which we believe was caused by the accordion back strap buckles or clasps. We have offered to pay for repair of the chairs but have decided that we have to leave to avoid repetition.

Through member Ken Marek, we have been fortunate in getting a new venue in the Stoke on Trent boat clubhouse, Endon. Though further out of town, this again is an excellent venue and has better parking facilities. The first thing we did when we first arrived was to examine the chairs, fortunately finding them perfectly acceptable!

We now look forward to another year of playing and eating trifle (though not at the same time). Bring it on!

CONCERT AT ENDON VILLAGE HALL STATION ROAD, ENDON, ST9 9DR FEATURING THE NORTH STAFFS ACCORDION BAND



AND
SOPRANO
DENISE LEIGH
WITH
ACCORDIONIST
STEFAN
ANDRUSYSCHYN

AT 7.00PM FRIDAY 19TH APRIL 2024
(DOORS OPEN AT 6.30PM)

ADMISSION **£5.00**
(NO CONCESSIONS)

BAR AVAILABLE

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
ENDON VILLAGE HALL OR
MRS YVONNE WILTON ON 01782 502004 OR
NORTH STAFFS ACCORDION CLUB

Knutsford Accordion Day MD Andrew Purkiss at The Hall at Marthall Bring your accordion for a fun-tastic event



Accordion workshop for accordionists of all abilities

Music for all playing levels provided in advance

Andrew Purkiss is an experienced MD at accordion events and comes with excellent credentials

The Hall at Marthall
Sandlebridge Lane
Marthall
Knutsford
WA16 7SB

light refreshments available

Any surplus funds, donations and coffee income go to Cancer Research UK



Saturday
18th May, 2024
10 am - 5 pm

Players' admission **£20**

Further information available from
info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com
www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com

Steve Hughes 07939 362294

Diary

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

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|-----------|---|
| February | Theme Night 'Love in the Title' |
| March | Theme 'Welsh or Irish' (St David's, St Patrick's) |
| April | Guest Night – Richard Adey |
| May | Player's Night |
| June | Theme 'Mode of Transport' |
| July | Guest – Accordion Spice quartet |
| August | Player's Night |
| September | Theme – Latin rhythm |
| October | AGM/Band |
| November | Guest – John Morgan |

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

Monday February 5th, 26th March 11th, 25th

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| Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC | Tuesdays except 3 rd of the month |
| Community Playing at Rowan Court, Meir | Thursday Feb 1 st 2 pm. |
| Playing for Pleasure at the Boat Club, Endon | Thursday 8 th February 2 pm. |
| Band Concert, Community Hall Endon | Friday 19 th April, 2024 |
| Knutsford Accordion Day | Saturday 18 th May, 2024 |

External Events

Stockport AC's charity concert, Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield. Dec 1st, 2pm

Cambridge Accordion Day Sunday 3rd March

Club Contacts

| | | |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| President | Peter Cowie | |
| Trustees: | | |
| Chair | Steve Hughes | 07939 362294 |
| Acting Secretary | Steve Hughes | 07939 362294 |
| Treasurer | Tony Britton | 07923 580760-- |
| John Corden, Jacqui Flather, Rosie Galley, Betty Nixon, Ron Rhodes | | |

Web address: www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com

Club Email: info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com

REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528