

North Staffs Accordion Club

March-April 2024

No 511



HI EVERYONE.

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME NEW MEMBER MICHAEL ROSS, WHO HAS JOINED THE BEGINNERS' GROUP AND WHO HAS ALREADY PROVIDED AN INTERESTING ARTICLE IN THIS NEWSLETTER. LILY

OUR NEXT CLUB NIGHT

The April club night on Tuesday 16th April hails the return of one of our favourite players, **Richard Adey** of Birmingham, who these days performs with double bass player Frenchman **Michaël Lacoult**. Richard last entertained us at our Goldenhill venue in April 2016.

They will present a programme which they hope we will find as varied as it is interesting - with their newly formed duo inspired by the music of Duke Ellington, Astor Piazzolla and the classic accordion repertoire, they hope that we enjoy their arrangements for accordion and double bass.

As Michaël is from France, they will certainly be offering some of our favourite musette waltzes too!



BAND TO PLAY AT ENDON

The club band will be performing at Endon Village Hall on Friday April 19th 2024 supported by accordionist **Stefan Andrusyschyn** and soprano, **Denise Leigh**.

The concert will begin at 7.00pm. Tickets are £5.00 and there will be a bar available.

There are just a few tickets left as this newsletter goes to press. These can be reserved by phoning **Yvonne** on **07790 843482**.

KNUTSFORD ACCORDION DAY

It's not long to go now for the **Knutsford Accordion Day**, our gathering of North West accordionists (and anyone else who wishes to join in) on Saturday the 18th May. It takes place in the stunning **Hall at Marthall**. The hall was built in 2009 funded with the aid of a lottery grant and sports under floor heating and a living roof. After our successful event last year under the direction of Anita Bašić, our MD this year is **Andrew Purkiss**. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Cancer Research UK charity.

Andrew is a retired head of music and has 23 years' experience in music education. He managed large music departments in secondary schools and produced regularly scheduled

celebration concerts and musicals and has been commissioned to write schemes of work for local music services.

Andrew started playing the accordion at 8 years old under the tutorage of Mr Colin Whitfield.



He went on to gain the LBCA Performer diploma as well as grade 8 ABRSM Distinction in both clarinet and voice. His progression to a professional accordionist was further developed through tuition from Graham Romani and John Leslie who managed his conversion to B system button accordion and free bass. He competed annually at NAO national finals.

His career as a professional musician has included theatre work as both a musician and director for European tours with the Scala Theatre Company and the West End. Andrew still performs regularly in folk ensembles and really enjoys the genre of traditional music because of its use of the aural tradition and improvisation.

Andrew has delivered workshops and courses at both residential music centres and folk festivals around the country. Specifically, he has experience in ensembles performing with the Southampton Youth Orchestra, Rufus Return and Solent Accordions as both player and director.

Andrew's teaching is focussed on musicianship, instrument control and a robust pedagogy that centres on the needs of individuals, ensemble playing and performance skills.

FEBRUARY CLUB NIGHT

The February club night was a bit different in that there were so many players booked to play that we didn't have time for our usual 'warm-up' playalong and we were also scheduled to have a late ending. In the event three members had to drop out for various reasons so we got to bed at a reasonable time thanks also to the control of compere, Peter Cowie.



Having navigated the one-hour-plus drive to get to us from his home in Lichfield with wife, Chris (our cashier for the night aided by Yvonne Wilton), Paul Hobbs (*right*) played some lovely background music as members were entering.



As it was Valentine month, the theme for the night was 'music with **'Love'** in the title' and there was no shortage of takers with 20 out of the 31 pieces played qualifying.



Ron Rhodes (*above left*) of the beginners' group gave his first performance, or rather two performances, the first on the accordion with *Du liegst mir im Herzen* (You are Forever in my Heart) and later on ukulele with *I Will* which he also sang. Our MD, Steve Houghton, played *Perfect* and *Perhaps Love*, the first accompanying his daughter, Bethany (*left*), and the second, his wife, Cathryn, both of them singing to his accompaniment. What a truly musical family. As ever, a full list of players

and what they played is on the members' website.

MARCH CLUB NIGHT

By Rosie Galley

What a treat we had this March club night, which all kicked off with some lovely tunes played by Norman Brown. While Norman played it was good to see folks getting organised for the night and others catching up with friends.



Peter Cowie was the compere and the theme for the evening was Welsh or Irish tunes. The club night began with eight super players playing a selection of tunes which the audience all joined in with, singing along.



Many players took to the stage. The highlights for me were Jacqui Flather (*above left*) playing *Delilah* and Paul Hobbs playing *Alone Again Naturally* by Gilbert O' Sullivan. Both Charlie Walker (*above right*) and Haydon Cardew (*left*) from the beginners' group gave their debut performances at this club night and both did really really well, Haydon playing a button accordion. Another beginner, Ron Rhodes, gave a nice rendition of *I Belong to Glasgow* on a penny whistle and Welshman Tony Britton (*right*) giving us *Land of my Fathers* with others.



I met two very interesting men at club night, the first, Norman Brown, has been mentioned already, and the second was Geoff Berks.

Norman Brown (*below*) told me that he and his sisters all went to piano lessons when they were young, but his sisters were much better players than him. One night when he was alone in the house, he sat down at the piano and realised that he could play tunes without reading music. He took up playing the accordion when he was around seventeen. Norman has played in many clubs over the years and in different parts of the country. He didn't just play his music to people but being a farmer he had a piano in the cowshed and played music to the cows! Music was so much part of family life that Norman's daughter Kate can't go to sleep to this day unless there is music playing. Norman and his wife, Joan, attended a band concert and got speaking to member Betty Nixon who told them all about the club and that's when they started to attend club nights and became members. Norman is now 86 years young and continues to entertain as he did tonight with his music.



Geoff Berks (*right*) told me that his father played the melodeon by ear and his favourite tune to play was *Underneath the Lamplight*. Geoff has not one, but two melodeons and has a list of songs that he tries to play, his favourite at the moment is *When the Saints go Marching In*. Geoff has always enjoyed accordion music and started to come along to band practices when the band met in Chesterton, enjoying the music and the company. Although Geoff does not play in the band, he is an invaluable supporting member. He helps many band members carry their accordions in from the car and he is also a great help to Phil with his drums and equipment. I was astonished to hear that Geoff will be 90 later in the year. Thank you, Geoff, for all that you do for us.



Our evening ended with a lovely vocal solo from our compere Peter Cowie (*left*) who sang *Will you go Lassie go*. If you missed the March club night, it would be great to see you at the next one in April where we will enjoy our special guests, Richard Adey and Michaël Lacoult.

BOOST FOR BEGINNERS

Together with a competitive price and subsidy from the club 6 of our beginners have taken up a scheme whereby they get professional Zoom one-to-one tuition. The scheme is for a trial period spanning 2 months in conjunction with Up-Beat Music Tuition and may be extended to other club members if successful.



MICHAEL ROSS

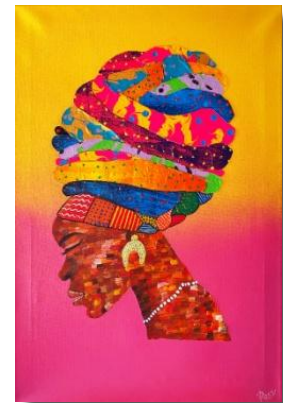
'Imagine, as a very small child, being whisked away from the North West of England to the Northern reaches of Nigeria, West Africa, to a completely different culture, language, food... and weather! Imagine also travelling around the borders of Nigeria on a railway coach built for a family of five that travelled as far North to the beginnings of the Sahara desert. This is what happened to me!



But it wasn't just that, there were the sights, the sounds, smells and colours of deepest Africa. From the hypnotic African drummers and colourfully clothed dancers, the 'JuJu' men, and where the local children, who had never seen white man before, who simply came out of the bush to play with me.

They had nothing! Nothing materialistically, but were happy! I remember the handsome black faces and perfectly white teeth, and I am sure they remember my blonde hair and blue eyes. They would pick up and stroke my blonde hair with open mouths, as if the colour was a figment of their imagination. This is where my creativeness, my imagination, had a kickstart.

*Then came the brutality of the Biafran war, the tribal massacre of men, women and children and we escaped back to England to lick our wounds. Boarding school and art figured in my life, and much later on I became a successful actor and sportsman, then subsequently an author, but only after being told by a clairvoyant that I must write! And I did, and 27 successful books later, some best sellers, mainly children's and fantasy, wrote my greatest work, the trilogy, *The Wand Chronicles*, which is shortly to be made into a major TV series. www.thewand.me*



And then, many years after my 'A' level art, I picked up a paintbrush, some cheap acrylic paints and started to paint...and haven't stopped! Now having numerous commissions and sales of my paintings under my belt, although I will explore all sorts of styles, I am drawn back again, and again, to paintings that are sometimes abstract and heavily influenced by the deep, rich, colours of Africa.'

Extracted from Michael's website – www.micharlrossart.co.uk

My inspiration for taking up the accordion was my mother who used to play it when I was a small boy. I remember it being red, and one tune stuck in my memory: The Happy Wanderer. So I'm on a mission to play that song at some stage. I started playing piano at 4, and then later on played tenor sax and Irish tin whistle. I got to know of the North Staffs Accordion Club through club member Mike Beeze and I have found everyone very helpful and friendly, lending me an accordion (free of charge) till I got mine, and very affordable membership.

(Michael also has an award-winning fitness brand and is kept busy with 2500 instructors throughout UK and Europe www.kettfusion.com)

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
 Sandiebridge Lane
 Marthall
 Knutsford
 WA16 7SB

Saturday
 18th May, 2024
 10 am - 5 pm
 Players' admission £20

light refreshments available
 Any surplus funds will be donated to
 Income to Cancer Research UK

Further information available from
 info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com
 www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com
 Steve Hughes 07939 362294

THE MIDLAND ACCORDION FESTIVAL
 Don't miss it Don't miss it
8th, 9th and 10th November 2024
WORKSHOPS - TRADERS one to one TUITION FEATURED ARTISTS
 Venue:
THE MERCURE BIRMINGHAM WEST HOTEL
 BIRMINGHAM ROAD,
 WEST BROMWICH
 B70 6RS



MIDLAND ACCORDION FESTIVALS
 41 Siviters Lane, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 8DP
 Telephone: 0121 649 5351 Mobile: 07831 354863
 Email: accordions2010@hotmail.co.uk

BOOK NOW!

Diary

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

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

March	11th	25th
April	8th	22nd
May	13th	

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC	Tuesdays except 3 rd of the month
Playing for Pleasure at the Boat Club, Endon	Second Thursdays 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
Midland Accordion Festival	November 8 th , 9 th and 10 th

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