

North Staffs Accordion Club

November-December 2025

No 521

Knuttsford Accordion Day
M.D. Shona Holmes
at **The Hall at Marshall**
Bring your accordion for a fun-tastic event

Accordion workshop for accordionists of all abilities
Music for all playing levels provided in advance

The Hall at Marshall
Sandwichbridge Lane
Knuttsford
WA10 7SB

Saturday
23rd May, 2026
10 am - 5 pm

Players' admission £20

Further information available from
www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com
Steve Hughes 07939 102294

light refreshments available

FEBRUARY CLUB NIGHT
LOVE IN THE TITLE
FEBRUARY 17TH

JANUARY CLUB NIGHT
POST CHRISTMAS MINCE PIE & SHERRY NIGHT & JAZZ NIGHT
JANUARY 20TH

NORTH STAFFS ACCORDION CLUB'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
BRADWELL WORKINGMEN'S CLUB ST5 6JA
FEATURING **ROMAN VOLOSHCHUK**
7.30PM
TUESDAY
16TH DECEMBER
2025
ADMISSION £15
BUFFET INCLUDED
AND **CAROL SINGALONG**
PLEASE TO
TOMMY BERTON
TRAVEL@NORTHSTAFFSACCORDIONCLUB.COM
(OR ORDERED) BY NAME
TRANSFER GIVING YOUR NAME
AS THE REFERENCE.

HI EVERYONE. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THIS - BUT IT'S TRUE! SANTA HAS AN OFFICIAL PILOT'S LICENCE. IN 1927 THE US GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY ISSUED SANTA WITH A PILOT'S LICENSE SO THAT IN THE EVENT OF NO SNOW, HE WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO DELIVER EVERYBODY CHRISTMAS PRESENTS!

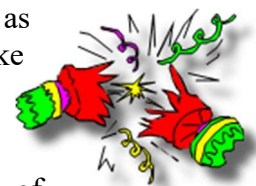


SO, WITH THAT THOUGHT - PLEASE LET ME WISH YOU A

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Christmas Party Arrangements

Christmassy attire is recommended for our Christmas party at Bradwell Workingmen's Club when we will start with carol playing and audience participation, as we do every year. All club players are invited to take part. If you can't play, then sing. Better still, do both if you can!



There will be a few special members' spots and, of course, our guest, **Roman Voloshchuk**. The popular London/Ukrainian accordionist last played at this club in March 2023, and we look forward to another treat. Also on the menu will be our quiz, selected performances and a super buffet to-boot.

Definitely a night to look forward to and enjoy. Join us! Tuesday, 16th December at 7.30 pm. Ticket details on poster on the front cover.

CAROLS AT HAYWOOD HOSPITAL

Christmas music to cheer up patients, relatives and staff Haywood Community Hospital, Burslem, 2 till 4 pm on Tuesday, 23rd December. All players are welcome to join in.

POST CHRISTMAS JANUARY JAZZ

Continuing our 'January Jazz' custom of the past we have, for the second-year running, the **Basin Street Jazz and Blues**, a group that went down so well with our members last year, and whose accordion/keyboard player, Brian Lightowler, is now a member of our club.



During the interval, we will also be maintaining our other post-Christmas indulgence, namely the consumption of mince pies, Christmas cake and sherry! All this for a fiver!

As well as Brian (of Rushton Spencer), the line-up comprises singer, Jules Scott, who has a lovely voice and stage presence, Mike Dale, saxophone and flute, and Adrian Sherwood, double bass, all of them very experienced and top-class musicians. We're in for another treat without the heavy, modern jazz that many of us can't get our head around.

BROKEN CROSS CHARITY CONCERT

Organised by John Jones MBE, this 25th annual charity concert supporting East Cheshire Hospice, will be held at its usual venue, Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield, at 2 pm on Sunday, 7th December 2025. It will feature Stockport Accordion Band, Accordion Spice quartet and soloist Helen Rich. Admission £8 - pay at door.



FEBRUARY 2026

The optional theme, once again, is 'Love in the title'. Extra brownie points if you can play a piece that you've not played in the past.

MARCH 2026 We look forward to welcoming the Black Country Accordion Band for the first time as guests. This should put our attendance up a bit!

APRIL CLUB NIGHT 2026 - COMPOSITIONS

Giving composers amongst our members plenty of warning, time will be set aside at our April club night, 2026, for performances of members' compositions, possibly including a repeat of those composed for 2025.

OCTOBER CLUB NIGHT - AGM

We started proceedings of the October club night with the 40th anniversary AGM under the chairmanship of President Peter Cowie. Chairman Steve Hughes and Treasurer Tony Britton gave their reports. The chairman made comparisons of performance in the year with the data for the previous year most of which was positive. Notably, seven new members had joined during the year, three others had left, all on health grounds. Take-up of the 'three-months-free-accordion-loan' offer was an increase to 10. He thanked the committee members and all of those who had contributed to another successful year.

The treasurer reported that the club had ended the year in a strong financial position though down on the previous year mainly due to anniversary expenditure.

The president thanked the committee for its work throughout the year.



Derek Wilton

President Peter Cowie stood down having served his two-year tenure. Mike Richards accepted the position for the coming term and was duly elected.

Joe Hill and Peter Cowie were elected to the committee, with Rosie Galley leaving. Rosie was thanked for her work during the year as minutes secretary. She was described as the ideal committee member, one who would turn her hand to anything when she saw that it needed doing.



Mike Richards

Following the AGM Derek Wilton gave us some medleys on his harmonica followed by Mike Richards, on accordion (of course). The second half, after the break, was taken up with a performance by the club band under MD Steve Houghton. Another (financial) year bites the dust!

LEONARD BROWN'S NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHT

(an extra club night to fit in with Leonard Brown's mini tour)

On our first club night of November, we opened our singalong with that great joiner in 'Que Sera Sera' which everybody enjoyed singing. Three more numbers and we then welcomed a member of the

beginners/improvers group, Ian Harris, who made his club night debut with a performance of considerable skill and confidence. Well done, Ian. It should be noted that Ian is a remarkable member of our club. He lives in Lowestoft!



Then! Our eager anticipation over many weeks came to pass. Leonard Brown took to the stage, and it was immediately apparent that we were in for a treat. Leonard's first set demonstrated great musical variety and the whole session seemed to be over in quick time. Doesn't time fly when you are enjoying yourself?

During the interval there was much conversation, the raffle and the members draw. Derek Wilton was pleased to win a tenner from the attendant members' draw.

So back to accordion playing.

Our second half was opened by Paul Hobbs and Mike Richards, we all enjoyed their polished and accomplished playing together. Next Joe Hill reported that he was handicapped by a thumb injury. The audience nevertheless were keenly impressed with the quality of Joe's performance. Joe is another long-distance member who journeys with his wife Mary, from Telford.

The final spot of the evening of course belonged to Leonard Brown. We were not disappointed. Leonard was truly exceptional and stirred the audience to participation, swaying along to a medley of Andre Rieu's favourite pieces. Leonard's mixture of popular music, Scottish music, tangos, cha cha, and music from the swinging 60's and 70's was remarkable. A highlight was his rendition of the Flying Scotsman – who knew that an accordion had such versatility! His finale, an ABBA medley brought the audience to their feet begging for more. Leonard is a thorough entertainer. His good-natured witty humour engaged us all. We will not forget to 'only sing the second time round'. Leonard – please come again soon.

Thank you to all who supported a unique club night.

Pete and Viv Cowie

MEMBERS NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHT

Having had the Leonard Brown guest night the previous week, we were unsure as to how many would turn up for the second club night in the month. We were not disappointed, however, and though the numbers were slightly lower it turned out to be a brilliant night, ably compèred by Steve Houghton and featuring 9 solos and 2 duets viz:

Steve Hughes	Begin the Beguine, Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves
Geoff Capewell	The White Cliffs of Dover, Dark Island, Ich Liebe Dich
Jacqui Flather	Loch Katerines Lady, Weasel Set, Ashokan Farewell
Derek Wilton (harmonica)	Swanee River, Campton Races, Alabama, Raindrops, Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White.
Tony Britton	Beautiful Days, La Paloma
Charlie Walker	The Nutting Girl, Danny Boy, Did Your Mother Come from Ireland
Rosie Galley and John Corden	Londonderry Air, Wooden Heart, Silver Threads and Golden Needles
Amanda and Elizabeth	La Cumparsita, Aloah Oa, 12th Street Rag
Joe Hill	Donkey Serenade, Theme from Game of Thrones, When I Need You (Rod Stewart)
Paul Hobbs	Only You, Stranger on the Shore What a Wonderful World



Charlie Walker

John Baranek

In Paris on the Seine, In Thirds and Sixths,
I Met You.

MIDDLEPORT CAROLS

Halfway through November, we thought it was a bit early for Christmas jumpers and hats, but we had been invited to play at a Christmas Fayre, so on they were donned. We had been booked to play at Middleport Pottery, Burslem, the one often featured on TV, where they were expecting massive crowds and had arranged to use the car park of nearby Steelite factory to cater for the overspill.

At 4 hours it was going to be one of our longest bookings. With Steve Houghton on the baton, we kicked off at noon, mainly Christmas songs and carols but with a few of our standard repertoire included. We had a good transient audience who enjoyed the event.

One of our 1st accordion players, Ann Millward, works at the pottery as a volunteer guide, and had access to the volunteers' room to which she invited us during the breaks. She is also an excellent pastry baker and treated us to delicious, and plentiful, cakes, tea and coffee during our breaks. It was worth coming just for that! Unfortunately, some of us had to guard the instruments during these breaks but there was a substitute offering from the bar – hot chocolate laced with Baileys, rum or other liqueurs. I think MD Steve must have had a backhander; he was so in praise of the Baileys version that many of us followed his lead.

Altogether, it was an enjoyable day. I hope we get a return invitation next year.

Steve Hughes



THE MAGIC OF MUSICALITY

by Steve Houghton

Musicality refers to a fondness and sensitivity to music, or to having musical skills. My use of the term means the former, because the latter is still a work in progress! However, this is how my musical fondness developed.



Steve Houghton

At St. Thomas's Primary School in my hometown of Kendal in 1968, I passed a musical aptitude test at the age of 10 and began to learn the violin. I was upholding a family tradition as my dad had played at school, and my granny had played in a chamber orchestra. My first violin teacher was Christine Price, who later hit the news for giving birth to sextuplets in 1976.

Starting Kendal Grammar School in 1969, I began private violin lessons and entered the Mary Wakefield music festival in 1971. I placed well down the field in my first and only entry as a soloist in a music festival to date! I progressed to a second teacher, who suggested that I enter for my first music exam at grade 4. However, I got cold feet and, scared by the prospect of an exam, I stopped playing at age 14 after 4 years. However, my parents encouraged me to continue with music if I found interest in another instrument.

My Eureka moment came whilst watching Yorkshire TV's Junior Showtime series. I was intrigued by several young accordion players and thought I'd like to try the accordion as it looked easier than the violin (but then, what isn't?). I'd love to know who my inspirational players were; many years on, they're probably now amongst the accordion elite. My dad tracked down a well-used gold-sparkled Settimio Soprani 80 bass with a single wrist coupler and set about finding a teacher. After a few disappointing leads, a tip-off led him to contact Peter Barcock who played in a local dance band, the Hi-Lites, and coincidentally worked in the office block next door to my dad. A deal was struck and Peter



Steve & Roy Degg 1960

graciously came to my house, free of charge, for a Tuesday night lesson every week for the next 4 years until I left for university in 1976. Armed with the Sedlon Accordion Method tutor books, from Mamelok's in Manchester, Peter taught me the basics plus his own preferences for fancy bass runs, a light bass touch, and of course the classic 3, 2 fingered bass (not the trendy 4, 3, 2 fingers used today). Together we visited National Accordion Organisation (NAO) festivals at Perth (1973) and Brighton (1974), plus the local Carlisle festival, where Peter himself entered the Entertainment section and was subsequently featured on Border TV local news.

Having an enthusiastic teacher listening, we now felt the Settimio Soprani sounded rather rough, so Dad taught himself how to improve it; replacing, tuning and sealing reeds with hot wax, plugging bellows leaks etc. Fortuitously a better quality Hohner Verdi V 120 bass came up for sale around that time, which we eagerly snapped up for £80. Dad then took over the Settimio and taught himself to play along with me.

My Grammar School celebrated its 450th anniversary in 1975 during my lower sixth year, and a student teacher who danced with the Kendal Morris Men hatched a plan to form a celebratory school Morris team of 6th form boys. I was roped in to learn a few tunes ranging from Bean Setting (Bampton) to Constant Billy (Adderbury). Our team duly performed at the school's summer fete, the chairman of governors' garden party (not as posh as it sounds!) and the 450th celebration Medieval Banquet in the school hall, complete with jesters, jugglers and serving maids.

I moved to work in Cheshire in 1983 and joined North Staffs Accordion Club in 1989, after seeing an advert in Newcastle library. George Karklins invited me to join the recently formed band, where I played 3rds alongside Ron Slack and later Roy Degg and Joan Bamford, still using my Hohner.



Peter & Mike - Hempstalls

If you were around in the 90's, you may have heard Peter Barcock playing as a guest artist in the club in 1991 and again in 1995. As the band developed, I moved to 1sts, took over the MC role after Dennis Wakefield retired from the band, and became band MD in 2012 when Geoff Millward took a well-earned rest after 19 years at the baton.

My family had an interest in folk music and had taken me to ceilidh dances, which steered me towards dabbling with folk tunes and eventually forming a ceilidh band of musicians from my local church, in 1990. We were an 8-piece band called Fiddlestix, with ages from teens to middle aged, including my future wife Cathryn playing guitar. I trained up a couple of callers, and we performed around 6 – 8 gigs per year, ranging from church events, to weddings, birthdays and WI meetings. The group disbanded around 2001 as younger members left for university or work elsewhere, and two older members moved to South Wales, where they formed their own ceilidh band. Cathryn, now my lovely wife, learnt to call a few dances to teach to her school pupils, which led on to the two of us forming a calling duo for recent ceilidhs, but using recorded music only. In true folk tradition our youngest daughter, Bethany, has now assimilated the English folk dance knowledge and has run several ceilidhs for her fellow students at the University of Manchester.

I used the Hohner Verdi V for many years while I saved for my first brand new instrument and bought a double cassotto Paolo Soprani Super Paolo 120 bass from Gina's Accordion World in 1993. Despite being a fine instrument, its straight tuning didn't lend itself to ceilidhs, so another trip to Gina's in 1995 added a double cassotto Guerrini Classic 96 bass with a sweet musette to my collection. I still play both instruments, depending on the style of music.

After taking the baton for the band, I don't play as much as before, although I used to have a burst of activity after hearing the young players at the annual NAO festival in Liverpool each Spring; sadly, these events haven't resumed since the Covid pandemic halted them.

I am deeply indebted to my mentor, Peter, without whom I would never have developed my current skills and understanding of accordion technique, nor would I now appreciate the ensuing magic of musicality.

Thanks Peter!

Snippet

Our *repetitive practice* should lead somewhere meaningful – to greater ease, higher beauty, and deeper feeling.

(Musician's Way)

Diary

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

December 23rd	Xmas Party – Roman Voloshchuk
January 20th	Basin St Jazz & Blues
February 17th	Theme – Love in title
March 17th	Black Country Acc Club Band
April 21st	Player/Composers night
June 16th	Helen Rich

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

December	08	22
January	12	26
February	09	23
March	09	23

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC

Tuesdays except 3rd

Playing for Pleasure at the Boat Club, Endon

Second Thursdays 2 pm.

External Events

Stockport Acc Band Charity Concert, Macclesfield	3 rd December 2025
John Kirkpatrick at Fenton Folk Club	12 th December 2025
Knutsford Accordion Day, Marthall Hall	.Sat. 23 rd May, 2026

Club Contacts

President	Mike Richards	
Trustees: Chair	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Acting Secretary	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Treasurer	Tony Britton	07923 580760
	John Corden, Peter Cowie, Jacqui Flather, Joe Hill, Betty Nixon, Ron Rhodes	

Web address: www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com

Club Email: info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com

REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528