

North Staffs Accordion Club

May/June 2026

No 524







HI EVERYONE CONGRATULATIONS TO BEGINNERS RON ALLCOCK, JOHN GWIN AND MIKE PETTER WHO HAVE STARTED LEARNING THE BAND PIECES WITH A VIEW TO JOINING THE BAND. LILY

Stop Press: £400 DONATION TO BE MADE TO CANCER RESEARCH UK FROM KNUTSFORD ACCORDION DAY.

FUTURE CLUB NIGHTS

JUNE

Our guest for the June club night on Tuesday will be 'local' accordionist, **Helen Rich**, originally from Cumbria but now firmly entrenched in the Greater Manchester area and is vice president of Stockport Accordion Club. In addition to her dexterity on the accordion keyboard, she may even give us a rendition on her second instrument, the violin.



JULY

A different arrangement is proposed for the June club night which has a theme of 'Open Mic Songs'.

The intention is that, for the theme, we play songs that we would play if we were playing at an open mic, i.e. nostalgic pop songs, or the like, that the audience could well sing along to (or whatever your interpretation of an 'open mic song' is) WITH A DIFFERENCE.

The difference is that after our playalong, we will have a playing circle. Players wishing to join in will go round in turn, playing their piece twice, once as a solo, and the second time with the rest of the group joining in playing by ear, if they can. This system has been adopted by the 'Playing for Pleasure' group from time to time and does help in developing the desirable skill of playing by ear.

LAST CLUB NIGHTS

APRIL

A section of this club night was reserved for original compositions. In the event two members brought their excellent endeavours to fruition. The first was Michael Ross who had travelled the one hour+ journey from New Mills, Derbyshire. He said that he had played for a morris dancing group and had composed (though not written yet) two pieces in that idiom. The first *New Mills Song* followed by *Red Lion*.



Pete

The second composer was Viv Cowie with a piece entitled *Dance with the Breezes* with lyrics sung by hubby, Pete.



Michael Ross

DANCE WITH THE BREEZES

In the wood there is a feeling tree, one branch for you, one for me
One for our sorrows and one for our tomorrows
Branches full of memories of times we were free
They sway in the wind to the music in me

Chorus

So dance with the breezes and dance in the sun
Dance in the forest before life is done

As we wandered to the woods one day, our tree had gone
Gone were the memories that we had treasured once
In its place there were new houses that block out the sun
The young ones now stay indoors they think it's more fun

Chorus

Now folk have travelled many miles as far as they can
Searching for sunshine to top up their tan
But planes they seldom fly now they've run out of fuel
The earth is getting hotter we need to stay cool.

Chorus

Viv Cowie 2026

Charlie Walker (on accordion) played **Darktown Strutters Ball** and **Coal-Black Mammy**. After playing the pieces, he sang the lyrics whilst harmonising on stradella bass. Also singing, unaccompanied, our compère, Pete Cowie gave a rendition of **It was Pleasant and Delightful** (an English song for, and reminding us that it was, St George's Day)



Charlie Walker

Other players, whose pieces are listed on our website, were Derek Wilton, Joe Hill, John Baranek, and Mike Richards.

Special mention must be given, however, to an accordion/violin duet featuring John Baranek and his wife, violin teacher, Anna, on her first visit to the club. It was beautifully played music. **Barbara's Waltz**,

Sonata op.12 no.5 in G minor (JM Leclair) and **Sonata op. 2 no.7 in C minor** (Vivaldi).



MAY



This club night was organised as a special 'Pie and Pea Supper' night with performances by some of our players and by the club band. There is a debate as to whether it was the pie and peas or the band that drew the crowds in as the attendance was approximately double the usual. We settle for both!

John Jones and drummer Phil Hodges enjoyed themselves giving background music before the start and three newcomers from the beginners' section, Ron Allcock, John Gwin and Mike Petter, joined the playalong which started proceedings.

John Plumb started the solo section with copies of the lyrics for the



John Baranek



John Plumb

audience. He played *It's a Wonderful World* in recognition of Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday and *Fly Me to the Moon* commemorating the recent flight around the moon. We then had *Od Siewierza*, a Polish regional waltz from the town of Siewierz in the South of Poland, jazz waltz *At the Last Minute* (Heinz Waldvogel) and his brilliant take of *Monti's Czardas* on his beautiful Cavagnolo C system button accordion by John Baranek. This was followed by Joe Hill on his Galanti with his own arrangements of *When I Need You* (Leo Sayer & Rod Stewart) and *My Heart Will Go On* (Titanic).



Joe Hill

We then had an extended break for the pie and pea supper which was followed by a club band performance of repertoire pieces under the baton of MD Steve Houghton. This brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

A full list of players, what they played, photos and some videos for each club night is available on our website

KNUTSFORD ACCORDION DAY

'What a Wonderful Day'

This year, the Knutsford Accordion Day can be summed up as, 'What a Wonderful Day'.

Gosh, is it eight years since the first event in 2018? COVID played its part resulting in this year being the fifth event, with the general consensus that it was outstanding.

So many things were great about the day including the venue, the weather, the preparation, the musical direction, the attendees, the helpers, the refreshments, the selected music, the activities throughout the day, and the resulting orchestra performance and concert solos/duets.



Steve Houghton



The day started early at around 8.15am, with the usual challenge of using the security codes to get into the Hall at Marthall, near Knutsford, Cheshire, chosen as a central location between the North Staffs Accordion Club, Stockport Accordion Club, players from Weaver Valley and the Chester area.



We are absolutely blessed by the support of players from much further afield including Carlisle, London, Surrey, Black Country and from Watford (home of the

Watford Accordion Band and where I was born!).

The pre-event organisational activities conducted by Chairman Steve Hughes, MD Shona Holmes with a little help from me, Tony Britton, were very effective. We loved Shona's choice of music which included *Bella Ciao* (a traditional piece) arrangement Bernd Gluck, but especially the three movements of the piece celebrating the London Olympics, called **2012** composed by Ian Watson, MD of the LAO (London Accordion Orchestra). The day supports a full range of players from beginners all the



way to the outstanding, represented by our concert performers. Under the guidance of Shona, Steve and I prepared easier parts for the beginners. **Shona Holmes**, MD of Watford Accordion Band, was excellent in her interpretation and musical direction, throughout the day.

They say an army marches on its stomach. Well, after Shona had worked us hard in three long sessions, the refreshments laid on by our wonderful helpers, including Rosie Galley, Ann Millward, Glenda Reid and all the cake makers were very much appreciated. A few more helpers that spring to mind were Ron Allcock, John Corden, Richard Millward, and Lydia Houghton (our expert photographer/video recordist). Many thanks to all who contributed to the raffle, music and charity donations. All profits will go to **Cancer Research UK**.

Our compere for the event was the charismatic Steve Houghton, MD of the North Staffs Accordion Band. Together, Shona and Steve led a day packed with warmth, camaraderie, renewing friendships and new ones, while being focussed on preparing great music.



Our orchestra section leaders, (*see these pictures*) were Acc 1 – Julie Best, Acc 4 – Jean Corrighan, Acc 2 – Helen Rich, Acc 3 – Wendy Farran, Bass – Maia Smart, Percussion – Ethan Kerrison and Wood Blocks - Cathryn Houghton



The day wasn't all hard work. Here we are enjoying the lunchtime sunshine.

We all went home happy at around 5.30.

Diary

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

June 16th	Guest: Helen Rich	October 20th	AGM and Band
July 21st	'Open Mic'	November 10th	Guest: David Vernon
August 18th	Players' night	November 17th	Theme: English
Sept 15th	Bill Nisbet	December 15th	Barry Smith & Roger

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

June	1 st	8 th	22nd
July	13 th		27th
August	10th		24th

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC

Tuesdays except 3rd

Band Performances

June 19th	Endon Village Hall
August 9th	Buxton Bandstand
August 23rd	Congleton Bandstand

Playing for Pleasure

(P4P) at the Boat Club, Endon

Second Thursdays 2 pm.

External Events

St Audries Bay Accordion Week, Somerset	July 4 th to 11 th
Midland Accordion Festival	November 6 th to 8 th
Stockport Accordion Club Charity Concert	December 6 th
Broken Cross, Macclesfield	

Contacts Club

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.

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