

North Staffs Accordion Club

July/August 2026

No 525



HI EVERYONE.

I HOPE YOU ARE COPING WELL WITH THIS CRAZY WEATHER, ALTHOUGH. I AM GLAD IT IS FINALLY HOT ENOUGH TO COMPLAIN ABOUT HOW HOT IT IS! LILY

Future Events

AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

Player's night with no theme follows our usual play/singalong.

SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT

Guest **Bill Nisbet**

Bill says: I've been playing the accordion since the tender age of 5. I had several teachers in my early years before being taken under the wing of Bert Shorthouse, of the Glenlondond Scottish Dance Band. I was always interested in the benefits of the electronic accordion and particularly now with the advances in modern technology.

I later worked alongside Paddy Neary and performed alongside him at the Highlander Hotel, Newtonmore. Paddy really introduced me to the electronic side of the accordion and the advantages of what it brought and opened up a vast array of music that was previously overlooked, being always aware that the instrument had to be mastered first.

In 1994 I was fortunate to be able to perform alongside the late John Cairney of "Robert Burns" fame and provided the music for his shows at the Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy. I was also fortunate to be signed by Donside Records and recorded four albums with them. I later had successful tours including the USA and Ireland along with broadcasts on BBC Radio Guernsey on a tour of the Channel Islands. I've also been privileged to have been able to teach and always try and showcase the modern capabilities. I believe more than ever that we need to encourage youngsters to take up the instrument and by using modern electronic techniques it can be much more attractive and diverse.



Recent Events

Full details of what was played, by whom, with photos, and videos of some of the pieces are available on our website.

JUNE CLUB NIGHT

Helen Rich has played at our club in the past but always as part of a group, either the Northern Lassies or Accordion Spice. This time she was our solo artiste guest, and, once again, we had quite a night in store. She also attracted one or two of Stockport Accordion Club members to support her.



As usual, the club players started off the evening with a selection from our appointed book, 250 All Time Hits. It was then Helen's turn, and she followed with her first spot, mesmerising us with the speed and dexterity of her fingers on the keyboard as she played numbers including *Marches des Accordionistes* and *The Gay Picador*.

After the break club members Paul Hobbs, Joe Hill, John Baranek and Mike Richards gave performances before Helen came back for her final spot, which included *Besame Mucho* and *American Patrol*. It was a great evening, well-oiled by Peter Cowie as compère.

JULY CLUB NIGHT

With Peter Cowie as compère, it was a great night with over 30 (good for us) in attendance including 16 participating players.

It was a night of two distinct halves. Prior to the break we had a playing circle with a difference. Each of the 14 players played a solo piece in each of the two rounds, repeating it so that the other players could join in, playing by ear. It was good to have players from the beginners' group taking part.



Charlie Walker

Following the break, individual players and one duet got up to perform. Charlie Walker started the ball rolling including with his now customary vocals to stradella accompaniment. Elizabeth Brixton and Amanda Himarsson-Dunn gave individual performances and a duet, and other soloists were Moira Hague, Paul Hobbs, John Baranek, Tony Britton, Derek Wilton (harmonica), Jacqui Flather, John Jones and Mike Richards.

Trying to fit a quart into a pint pot, the event overran by 30 minutes or so. The response to the circle 'experiment' appears to be varied from both players and audience, with some of the purists against the 'playing by ear' part, but others regarding it as good fun.



Elizabeth & Amanda



Jacqui Flather

CONCERT AT ENDON VILLAGE HALL

Friday 20 June 2026 by Viv Cowie

As the second heatwave of the year threatened, we set off along the pretty Moorlands lanes to Endon for our first band concert of the year, to be held in the welcoming village hall at Endon. The concert had been several months in the planning by our club member Yvonne Wilton. On the night anxiety was high - would it be swelteringly hot? Would the audience turn up? Would our MD manage not to fall off the 'dangerously high' stage when all the band members were crammed in?

Relief! There was room for the band to be seated at floor level leaving the stage free for the wonderful **Stefan and Denise**. The audience sat comfortably behind small tables and our MD Steve Houghton had plenty of room to entertain us with his expert conducting and variable jokes!

Our band opened the first half with a varied programme which contained several 'new' pieces, including *Gallop*, a lively piece written by Ken Farran, depicting a horse race, along with all the sound effects – great

fun to play. The first half set concluded with *American Jazz*, arranged by band members Lily, Steve and Tony and featuring an effective bass guitar part played by Lily.



Stefan then took the stage and wowed the audience with his breathtaking skill and dexterity. He performed five pieces in his first set: *Holberg Suite Prelude* by Grieg, Scarlatti's *Sonata in E major*, Albeniz Asturias, *Misty* and concluded with Frosini's *Carnival of Venice*. Wow!

A welcome break followed with tea, biscuits and the raffle. Raffles seem to have reached a new level in the Moorlands with lavish prizes and camaraderie! Glasses were replenished at the bar, and the band started the second half in style with a beautiful arrangement of *Bella Romantica* by Steve McMilan. This piece was introduced at a Knutsford accordion workshop and has now become a favourite. The set concluded with the popular *Abba Gold* medley. What a great way to end! Who doesn't love an Abba Medley and it was good to hear the audience singing along.

Stefan opened his second set with the valse musette, *Indifference*, followed by a moving rendition of a Ukrainian composition, *Skoryk Melodya* which is often used to accompany images of war but stands on its own as a beautiful piece of music.

The technically impossible *Monti Czardas* followed, then the second star of the evening, Denise, joined Stefan on the stage. Denise had recently been discharged from hospital and we were privileged that she was willing and able to sing three songs starting with, *And This is My Beloved*, Freddie Mercury's *You Take my Breath Away* and her finale - *Climb Every Mountain* from The Sound of Music in which the audience was invited to sing along. What a beautiful and powerful voice she has. No surprise that with Stefan's wonderful accompaniment on the piano, she has performed with distinction on Britain's Got Talent. Denise and Stefan certainly have talent in abundance and North Staffs Accordion Club Band were privileged to perform on the same billing.

Thank you, Yvonne and team for a most successful evening!

BEGINNERS/IMPROVERS WORKSHOP!

By Tony Britton

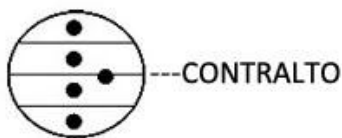
The Beginners/Improvers on Monday 27th July were so engrossed in the accordion workshop being given by Paul Hobbs that we forgot to take a photo of the event. Hence, this is a 'stock' photo taken from a couple of months ago.

Paul Hobbs is a highly respected member of the North Staffs Accordion Club with a wealth of knowledge of musical theory, especially when applied to the accordion bass and embellishing treble melodies with chord notes.



Paul Hobbs

One of Paul's key messages was, while there is no substitute for PRACTICE, PRACTICE and more PRACTICE, our playing can be greatly enhanced by developing a GOOD UNDERSTANDING of the use of chords in both the bass and treble side.



This was a fascinating workshop with much thought-provoking information. Who would have thought that when we say we're playing a solo note in the bass, subject to the registers available, it could result in as many as 5 reeds sounding, as in this diagram, covering four octaves and an overlapping contralto range.

The Red Accordion

by Glenda Reid



I have a red accordion,
From Italy it came.
It cost a lot of money
And it has a well known name.

We played together in a band.
For 10 years we did meet,
With other folk and boxes.
It was a weekly treat.

For 40 years the band played on.
Then came the final day.
No more Weaver Valley.
No where left to play.

My box and I were lonely.
And then we looked online.
We joined a Worldwide Forum,
Which helped to pass the time.

Here we met a lady.
She said her name was Viv.
She wanted us to join North Staffs
But it's far from where we live.

Hubby and I set off next day,
Going South on the motorway.
'Twas 35 miles to Bradwell
Where the Box and I could play.

We joined the Club directly,
And met folk in the Band.
They had a great Conductor
And everything was grand.

The Red Box seemed to smile a lot.
We'd found a place to be.
A place where we could play a part
And join in music'ly.

As time went by we travelled,
With the Band, to play afar.
We had to use the Sat. Nav,
Located in the car.

But as things seemed idyllic,
A problem came to light.
As darkness fell, the motorway,
Closed it's routes at night.

The journey home on Tuesdays
Became a stressful plight.
Finding routes in darkness
And travelling late at night.

Once home I stored the Box away,
And swore no more I'd go.
The Box had another plan,
And wanted me to know.

I picked the Squeezebox gently up.
I swear it spoke to me.
"Please don't hide me out of sight.
I want to be with thee".

I want to share with others,
The music I can play.
I want to shine and sparkle.
Not hide myself away.

Take me back to Bradwell.
Let's play our vital part.
You know that we are needed.
Come on let's make a start!".

So one more time we travel,
To play another day.
The Squeezebox sat behind me
Beaming all the way.

Knutsford Accordion Day 2027

MD Romano Viazzani

at
The Hall at Marthall

Bring your accordion for a memorable event

Music for all playing levels
provided in advance

Accordion day
for accordionists
of all abilities

Light refreshments
available

The Hall at Marthall
Sandlebridge Lane
Marthall
Knutsford
WA16 7SB

Further information available from
info@northstaffsaccordionclub.com
www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com
text: 07939 362294

Saturday
24th April, 2027
10am - 5.30pm

Players' admission
£20



Diary

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

August 18th Players' night
September 15th Guest – Bill Nesbit
October 20th AGM and Band
November 10th (2nd Tue) Guest: David Vernon
November 17th Theme: English (proms-ish)
December 15th Xmas Party Guests: Barry Smith & Roger

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

August 10th, 24th
September 7th, 21st

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC

Tuesdays except 3rd

Band Performances

August 9th – Buxton Bandstand
August 23rd – Congleton Bandstand
August 27th – Nantwich Square

Playing for Pleasure (P4P) at the Boat Club, Endon Second Thursdays 2 pm.

External Events

November 6th to 8th Midland Accordion Festival, West Bromwich
December 6th Stockport Accordion Club Charity Concert, 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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