North Staffs Accordion Club

September/October 2026

No 526



Hi Everyone. Wow! What with David Vernon in November, the Master Butchers in December and jazz with Christmas cake, mince pies and sherry in January – I think we've got musical and gastronomic feasts coming up!
Lily

Future Club Nights

OCTOBER CLUB NIGHT – AGM AND BAND PERFORMANCE

by Steve Hughes

Our Annual General Meeting takes place at our next club night on the 20th October. No charge will be made for admission (and hence no members' attendance draw will take place). Subject to the time available one or two solo performances will take place after that taking us up to the break. Following the break the club band will be strutting its stuff. We hope to see you there and contribute to discussions and decisions affecting our future.

This will be the last AGM for me as chairman as I will be stepping down as a committee member and will continue my membership as an ordinary member. With the backing of the committee, and subject to formal election at the AGM, Peter Cowie has agreed to allow his name to go forward for election as chairman, with Jacqui Flather as secretary. Tony Britton is stepping down as treasurer, and John Goodwin has agreed to take over that role.

NOVEMBER 10TH (2ND TUESDAY) CLUB NIGHT

We have an extra club night in November with popular accordionist, David Vernon of Edinburgh, appearing as our guest on November 10th, the second Tuesday of the month. David will also be appearing at the Midland Accordion Festival on the previous weekend. Performing acoustically, he has a wide range of music, appealing to all tastes and has a humorous presentation. He may even give us a tune on his bagpipes; he is a regular piper on the streets of Edinburgh. He has appeared at our club several times both at our venue of the time and Audley Theatre. His last visit was in November 2022. Don't miss it.

NOVEMBER 17TH THEME NIGHT – ENGLISH (PROMS-ISH)

Following our practice of recent years, we are arranging a second November club night, giving our members the opportunity to perform as the following players' night will not be until February 2027. The theme for this night will be music from Last Night of the Proms, and we look forward to a lively event.

December 15th Christmas Party

with THE MASTER BUTCHERS

Barry Smith and Roger Armstrong duo as **The Master Butchers** – the ideal entertainers for a Christmas party.

JANUARY 19TH
JANUARY JAZZ CHARITY NIGHT WITH AQUAVIT

Continuing our customary 'January Jazz' evening, with Christmas cake, mince pies and sherry included, we have the entertainment from the Aquavit jazz trio featuring Alan Hess from the Isle of Man on accordion, Danish vocalist, Charlotte Foster and a repeat visit by drummer Roger Armstrong.

Past Events

Full details of who played what is available on our website from menu News & Events/Latest News, with photos and/or videos in the gallery.

AUGUST CLUB NIGHT

There was no guest for this club night. Paul Hobbs serenaded us in with background accordion music as members entered, with Peter Cowie taking over as compére at 7.30 sharp. Our normal routine was set in motion of playing a selection from our music book, playing each piece as an instrumental then repeating it with the audience joining in from song sheets.



This was followed by individual players, 12 in total, and this number including three from the beginner's group (*see photo*), Ron Rhodes (*left*) who played ***Rakes of Mallow***, Mike Petter (*middle*) – ***Under the Bridges of Paris*** on a C system button accordion, and John Gwin (*right*) – ***Charlie Chaplin's Smile***. Tony Britton ended the evening playing ***Beautiful Days*** and ***Waltz No 2***. It was a lovely evening of music by members, even with a few warts, having given all who wanted to play that opportunity, not available to the same extent when we have a guest.

SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT

Our guest for the evening, for the first time at our club, was **Bill Nisbet** of Fife in Scotland, on route to London where he was to give an orchestral backing to a vocal recording with his midied Crucianelli accordion. He arrived early and was all set up in Bradwell club when we arrived.



Peter Cowie, as compére, got the ball rolling at 7.30 with our regular playalong. Unfortunately, the song sheets had been forgotten, and it was left to Peter to sing solo for most of the pieces, others joining in when they knew the words.



Mike Richards

Bill Nisbet then took to the stage, warming up with a Scottish medley after introducing himself and explaining his acoustic and midi setup, and the fact that his backing was a recording of his own playing. For the rest of this, in his first spot, he switched between electronic and acoustic playing with pieces including ***Swinging Safari*** and the ***Flying Scotsman***. We were impressed.

It happened to be the eve of Mike Richards' 80th birthday and we were treated to a selection of different cakes baked by his other half, Barbara. This made it a rather special break in proceedings. Bill was very generous in donating one of his CDs and a bottle of whisky to the raffle. Thanks Bill.



Paul Hobbs

It is always refreshing to hear pieces that have not been played in the club before, and this was the case for the player taking the floor after the break, Jacqui Flather. She played ***Ali's Waltz*** and ***Woodland Flowers***. Lovely. She was followed by birthday boy, Mike Richards who included in his set a Jack Emblow arrangement of ***Sweet Georgia Brown***, incorporating, also, his own improvisation. ***Sorrento Thoughts*** and the demanding ***Gypsy Dance*** were also in his set. He recounted that he had been introduced to this last piece by fellow club founder, George Karklins, and they had played it together at a Caister Festival with George 'playing around' the tune. The last of our members to play before the



Jaqui Flather

return of Bill Nisbet was Paul Hobbs, who arranges the pieces he plays to include clever countermelody. We can't work out how he manages the complexity having lost the use of one of his 'treble' fingers. He played ***I Believe***, ***More*** and ***Stranger on the Shore***.

Bill returned for his closing set with a medley which included ***Green Glens of Antrim*** and for the rest of the spot we were given a feast of music which included the themes of ***Chariots of Fire*** and ***Black Beauty***, rock-and-roll pieces and Scottish and Irish medleys. He certainly made an impression on the audience and enjoyed himself in the process. Thank you Bill.

COMMUNITY PLAYERS' PERFORMANCES

by Tony Britton



The last update for the North Staffs Community Players was in January when we introduced our new music stand banner and were looking forward to a great 2026. Well, 2026 has already been a great year, and there's lots more to come.



We are slowly developing our colourful attire and think hats could be part of the answer. Perhaps we should take inspiration from our visit in April to the 'Parkinson Group' at Red Street Village.



Our next events, also in April, included 'Congleton Less Able', and the 'Young at Heart' at Cross Heath, Newcastle, making good use of our banners.

'Young At Heart' is the brainchild of the Father Hudson's Young at Heart Project and covers four or more groups across Stoke. We have recently played for a second of their groups, the 'Young at Heart', Hanley, near the Sacred Heart Church.

Our fame is starting to grow, through networking of community groups. Two events, in quick succession, were the one at Audley Pensioners Village Hall organised by the deputy mayor of Newcastle, and councillors from other wards of Newcastle (check out our hats), and one for the Milton Ladies Fellowship. Both have resulted in enquiries for other events.



Many of our events are return visits, and we'll be at **Berryhill Village** and **Rowan Village, Meir** residential communities in the coming months. We'll have another three new events before Xmas, at the **Methodist Church - Cross Heath**, **St Michael's and All Angels – Cross Heath**, and **St Luke's Clayton**. TIME TO BREAK OUT THE XMAS MUSIC

BANDSTAND PERFORMANCES



Buxton

On a sweltering Sunday afternoon, the 9th August, having navigated through the crowds of visitors and dropped off our instruments and tackle at Buxton Pavillion Bandstand, we made sure it was guarded by one of our colleagues

The next problem we encountered was where to park. Some of us got space on the 2-storey car park but for others it was searching for a space in the surrounding roads. By 2 pm, however, everyone had been accounted

for and was set up to go for our debut visit to this venue.

It was the largest audience we had had with what must have been over a hundred people overlooking us from the elevated grounds opposite. Steve Houghton took the baton and took us through our programme starting with ***The Lion Sleeps Tonight*** (Wimoweh). Not only does Steve conduct the band but he also has rapport with the audience and gives our club, and the 3-month free accordion loan scheme a plug. The audience, throughout the event, showed their appreciation and we responded with enthusiasm. It was nice to see Rob and Marj Howard of Stockport Accordion Club in the audience having, wisely, travelled by train. It was a lovely day out making music in the picturesque Peak District town of Buxton.

Congleton



Sunday 23rd August: another bandstand booking, this time in Congleton Park, our third visit to this venue. Once again, we had a bright and sunny day with a good audience for the town. We enjoyed it, and the feedback from the audience was all positive.

Nantwich

Our scheduled performance for Nantwich Town Square on market day, 27th August, had to be cancelled owing to atrocious weather conditions.

Carols at Haywood

On Tuesday 1st December at 2 pm, player-members will be playing Christmas songs and carols in Christmas attire in Haywood Hospital, a repeat of the very successful event held there last year for which we were rewarded with a lovely buffet (promised again). Although the audience is not plainly visible, people occupying the waiting rooms and wards can hear the music, with song sheets to those joining us at our location.

Norman Brown 1938 – 2026 RIP

It is with sadness that we heard of the death on Monday 21st September of our member, Norman Brown. Norman, a stalwart of this club, died unexpectedly in Macclesfield Hospital on Monday 21st September. He was due to go for a two-week respite that day and then go home, so his death came as a shock to the family. Our hearts go out to his wife, Joan, and daughter, Katy, and the rest of the family.

Although he had piano lessons in his youth, he still enjoyed playing by ear. He played the piano at the farm where he lived in Bosley near Macclesfield when the rest of his family were out and found that he could play the popular music of the day without music. In time he played pianos and organs in pubs and old people's homes throughout the Staffordshire Moorlands and East Cheshire – from Ashbourne to Knutsford to Scholar Green, with regular Saturday night spots spanning 11 years in some, always by ear. He joined the keyboard and organ club in Wolstanton.



At a concert in Meerbrook Village Hall where the North Staffs Accordion Band was performing, he and Joan got talking to one of our members, Betty Nixon, and expressed an interest in the accordion. He ended up joining our club and purchasing an accordion. The rest is history.

Norman has not been well enough to attend our club nights in recent years but has managed to attend, accompanied by Joan and Katy, some of the afternoon Playing for Pleasure daytime sessions where he delighted us with his playing and really enjoyed himself. It will be a big loss.

RIP

'THE RED ACCORDION'

The missing last verse

In the July / August newsletter you will have seen Glenda Reid's 'commute' poem. Unfortunately, and with apologies to Glenda and the readers, the poem was without it's coda (*tail*) with the last verse missing. If you missed the whole, see it from https://www.northstaffsaccordionclub.com/latestnews
Here it is:

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

COUPE MONDIALE

The Craven Accordion Orchestra is based in Crosshills, near Skipton in North Yorkshire. They have about 25 regular members and several more very competent players who join them on special occasions. In July they were asked to play in Howarth as part of the music festival there. The concert was a huge success and was appreciated by an audience of tourists visiting the town and festival. Some of the items performed were put on Facebook and were seen by the organisers of the Accordion Coupe Mondiale (World Cup to those who don't know). The orchestra was contacted and told that they were good enough to enter this world class competition in the category 'Amateur Orchestra'. This was to be done by video so not necessary to travel anywhere. The committee chose three items from the programme to submit. These being, Welcome to Venice, Waltz no 2 and Pirates of the Caribbean. And then they sat back and waited until late September when all entries were in and judging began.



Tuesday 29th September was 'D' day with the result to be announced in the early evening. It was possible to watch this live, and excitement rose as it all unfolded. Craven were in the last two. It was between Spain and UK. The Spanish entry was Accordion Vivo. A nail-biting moment came at 6.05pm as the scores were announced …… Spain - scored 22.58 and……UK scored……22.92 with Pirates of the Caribbean. Wow! They had only gone and won it!

The Craven WhatsApp was alive and buzzing. And then all the congratulations started coming in from interested parties such as The London Accordion Orchestra. The committee then set about broadcasting their success on social media, North Yorkshire radio, local newspaper etc. A special memo went to the local council who had recently awarded £1000 grant in recognition of the work done bringing music to the local schools and the community.

Well, where do Craven go from here? World Tour maybe! (Craven's next concert is on Saturday 17th October 7.30pm in Gargrave, just outside Skipton. It's Movie Night and they are raising money for MND, a charity close to their hearts as their much-beloved drummer died last year of this disease.) Tickets available from Glenda Reid, member of North Staffs Accordion Band and Craven Orchestra.

by Glenda Reid





DIARY

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

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
January 19th January Jazz with Aquavit

Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

October	12th	26th
November	9th	23rd
December	7th	21st

Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC Tuesdays except 3rd

Band Performances

October	20th	Buxton Bandstand
December	1st	Haywood Hospital

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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REGISTERED CHARITY No 1180528