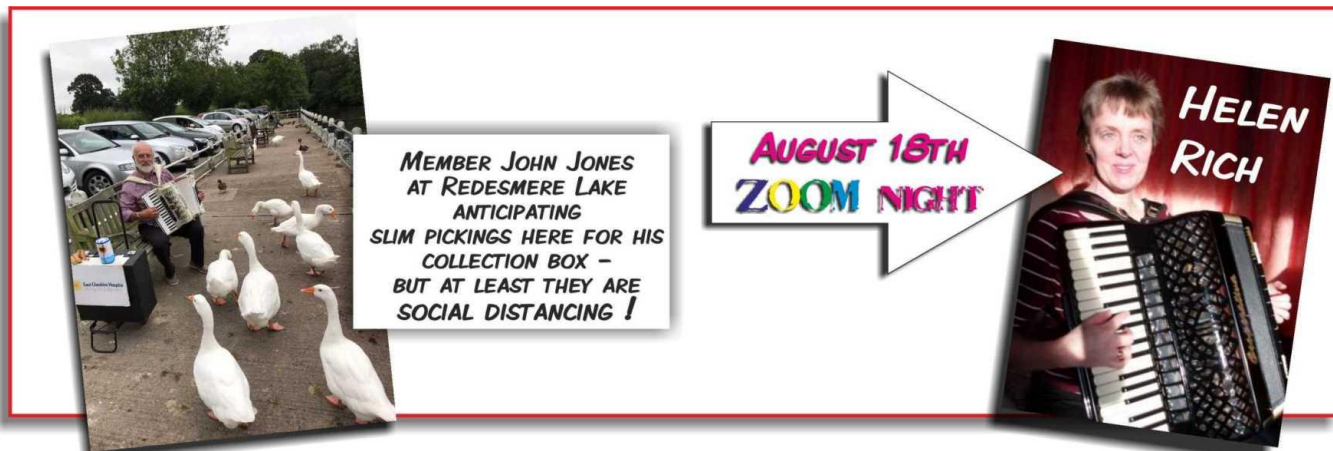


North Staffs Accordion Club

Newsletter

July/August 2020

No 489



MEMBER JOHN JONES
AT REDESMERE LAKE
ANTICIPATING
SLIM PICKINGS HERE FOR HIS
COLLECTION BOX –
BUT AT LEAST THEY ARE
SOCIAL DISTANCING !

AUGUST 15TH
ZOOM NIGHT

HELEN
RICH

HI EVERYONE. I HOPE YOU ARE ALL OK AND WELL AND HAVE STOCKED UP WITH PLENTY OF MASKS.

JUNE ZOOM NIGHT



by Steve Hughes

On an evening with thunder and downpours for some and blazing sunshine for others we had a good turnout to our June virtual club night with 24 of our members turning 'out' on Zoom. The themes for the evening – English and American music.



We were pleased to welcome as a guest a very closely cropped Stefan Andrusyschyn. He explained to us that with a slip of the hair clippers and losing the guide comb, he had had to continue without it, ending up with a skinhead cut.

Prior to the earlier start time of 7 pm, Mike Richards gave background music, playing *Dream*, *I Love Paris* and *Fly Me to the Moon*, enjoyed by the early subscribers to the event.

We started the night with some communal playing led by Paul Hobbs taking the 'live' role. We played *She's a Lassie from Lancashire* (Staffordshire actually), *Slow Boat to China* (but not until we are rid of Covid-19) and *Summer Holiday* (no chance this year) – comments by Ann Millward who chose the music of this month.

Tony Britton was number one on the list for the solo/duet session and played the *Titanic Theme* and *Phantom of the Opera*. As usual he had put a lot of work into the performance and had a suitable backdrop for each piece on this occasion - posters for the film and musical.



Moira Hague followed with *Leaving Lismore*, *The Rowntree* and *When the Battle is Over* on the Northumbrian Pipes, Geoff Capewell played *American Patrol* and John Jones gave us *Dambusters* and *Lipstick on your Collar*. Mike Richards continued with *Moon Dance* and *Sweet Georgia Brown* and Miriam Umpleby with *English Country Garden* and *What a Wonderful World*. For the latter she sang a duet with herself having pre-recorded the melody and singing the harmony live! Betty Nixon and Ken Hall also played *English Country Garden* and *Brahms Lullaby* which brought us to Stefan's first spot.

Stefan (above right), playing button accordion, the B system, explained that his main accordion had developed a fault and that he was having difficulty in having it repaired due to the lockdown. He reverted to his Zonta bayan which he has been trying to sell but was having difficulty in doing so. He gave

outstanding performances of *Vivaldi's Spring* and *Misty*, and these, together with the later ones he played, we have recorded and included on our YouTube channel, Accordion TV – North Staffs.

Following the short break Paul Hobbs (*bottom left*) began with *I Don't Know How to Love Him* and *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*, Steve Hughes played *Streets of London* and *Amarillo* and Peter (vocals + !) and Viv (accordion) gave us *I am Sailing* and *Rambling Boy*. For the last piece Peter surprised us all by accompanying on guitar. None of us knew that he could play an instrument other than band percussion ones!

Richard Millward continued with *Carolina Moon* and *Lambeth Walk*, Ann Millward played *I left My Heart in San Francisco* and *Winchester Cathedral* and Norman Brown played *Any Dream will Do* and *Schnewaltzer* Finally we had Greta Moseley with *American Patrol* and *Maggie*.



This brought us to Stefan's final spot and he gave a wonderful performance of the classical sonatina *Oblivion* and Rossini's *Largo Factotum*.

To end the evening all the club members present joined in to play *Apple Blossom Time*, *If I knew you were coming I'd have baked a cake* (if I could buy the flour) and *Obla de Obla da*. Paul Hobbs once more, did the 'live' playing and all the others joining in muted with any unlikely (?) mistakes going unheeded.



I wish to thank everyone who contributed in making the evening a success within Zoom audio parameters. Every report I have received suggests that it was thoroughly enjoyed especially with Stefan's brilliant playing as guest.

The following day I had an email from (Lichfield) Paul:

During the last 10 minutes of the club night, we had a massive thunderstorm and Chris said that the front door was actually rattling and moving. You may have noticed how the room 'lit up' from the lightning several times - the only reason the noise didn't disrupt was due to the mic being muted.

The storm went on till after 11.00pm



JULY ZOOM NIGHT

What a great boon Zoom has been in so many ways – it enables certain TV programmes to continue, families to keep in touch, meetings of multiple people to take place, including our committee meetings, and enables our club nights to go ahead. Of course it's not the same as being with our

friends but better than nothing.



Just a quick click of an email link and we are in. We have a good opportunity to have a peep in members' houses too – an added bonus. I have had struggles with my lighting up to now and it is not helped by my lovely son opening and closing the shutters all night and demanding cups of tea!



Our guest artist for this Zoom night was Julie Best. She hails from Cumbria and is always popular at our club. As I entered the meeting John Jones (*above*) was playing introductory music, a lovely medley of ABBA music. The Zoom night started with playalong pieces – *Our Love is Here to Stay*, *My Way* and *Strangers in the Night* led, as usual, with the very competent Paul Hobbs. Steve Hughes continued with *Caravan* and *Chattanooga Shoeshine Boy* playing his four-row Cavagnola button accordion. He was followed by Paul playing *Early in the Morning* and *Carrick Fergus*. Next was Miriam with *I'd Like to Teach the World* and *Yours* and then Ann Millward (*above left*) playing *The Entertainer* and *Wheels*. Finally duo Betty and Ken played *Have I Told You Lately that I Love You* and *May Dance*.

Then it was time for Julie Best to bring the first half of the evening to an end. She treated us to *Sharp Shooters, Croq Musette, Cavana* and *Adios Muchachos*.

After a short tea break Norman Brown continued with *Do You Want Your Old Lobby Washed Down (?)* and *Any Dream Will Do*. Mike (above left) was next with *Whip Jamboree* and *Ride On* with the added value of him singing the lyrics. Geoff followed playing *Sands of Islay* and *Answer Me*, then Richard with *Emperor Waltz* and *Bluebells of Scotland*.



We welcomed two extra visitors to this Zoom night, Rob Howard (right) from the Stockport club with his wife Marge. (Another benefit of Zoom – they could just zoom down to Stoke travelling on their settee!) Rob had brought his accordion and played *I Will Wait for You* and *Windmills of Your Mind*. John Jones then returned to play *Who's Sorry Now, Lipstick on Your Collar* and *Roses are Red*.



Finally, before the return of Julie came a production number from Tony who is really delving into all the possibilities of Zoom these days. This time, possibly inspired by the famous revolutionary video treatment of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody, Tony (left), with split screen, appears playing multiple instruments accompanying his own live

vocal, giving us *My Way*. After a false start he gave an impressive performance although he assures me that he is not giving up the day job just yet.

Finally Julie (right) closed the evening with *Summer Holiday, Mexican Hat Dance, Take Me Back to Sorrento*, the *Jimmy Shand Polka, Hungarian Dance no. 5*, and a couple of encores – *Clarinet Polka* and *12th Street Rag*. It was an absolute pleasure to have Julie as our guest. She had a varied and enjoyable programme and had a great rapport with the audience. We look forward to seeing her next time soon. Lily



GUESS WHO !

Here are pictures of four of our members taken in the last century with compliments of Paul Hobbs from his photo archive for us to identify - **the clues are here**



To the left, often erroneously called the 'chairman' and a master of organisation, our mystery person cuts a suave figure in this picture. Although he has a lot of silver threads among the gold these days, his style is still there, as is his mastery of the chairs.

To the right we have a mysterious looking fellow who has spent much of his life behind prison walls and apparently a moustache (jobwise of course). These days he fills his spare time developing his improvisational skills.



In spite of rumours over many years with regard to toupees, wigs and hair dye, this gentleman (left) seems to career through life in defiance of male pattern baldness. We could therefore assume that he *might* have a picture of himself in the attic.

Finally (right) is a man who is undoubtedly the longest standing club member in living memory and holder of many offices. He entertains us often but in this picture he has yet to discover the existence of his unbelievable singing ability.



Lily

(answers at end of newsletter)

THE LIMERICK COMPETITION

Thanks to all of the members who entered the limerick competition and also the majority of our members, who voted. There were seventeen entries with some excellent inclusions.

The challenge was to write a lockdown limerick with 50% of the marks based on the result of a vote by member and the other 50% split between accuracy of the meter and relevance to the subject.

The resulting first and second position got the same number of votes with the winning entry first past the post on the 'relevance' mark.

Well done Steve Houghton and Lily Lynch. The winning limericks were:

1st

"Stay at home", Boris said, "if you please",
"That's the plan for this virus to ease".
So we closed the club room,
And subscribed onto Zoom,
Where we still can enjoy a good squeeze.

Steve Houghton.

2nd

There was a young lady from Stoke
Who started her life as a bloke
In lockdown he changed
Had his parts rearranged
And 'he' became 'she' when he woke.

Lily Lynch

AUGUST ZOOM NIGHT

We are very pleased to be welcoming Helen Rich as our guest for the August 'Zoom night' to take place on Tuesday 18th August. Helen last appeared at our club last November when she shared the stage with Walter Perrie. What a great evening that was!

As has been the case for the last couple of months' guests, Helen will give two ten-minute spots, one before the break and one at the end of the evening. The rest of the evening will be taken up by our club players, usually about 14 of us, giving a couple of numbers each. We hope to see you there.



MY MUSIC

-or something close to it! by **Barry Tunnicliffe**



Chairman Steve asked how we set about trying to choose/arrange music for our male voice choir.

Good point. First let me say I have sung male voice for about 50 years. I always had an interest in singing back from the earliest days as my mum always sang at home, we went to church each Sunday and she came from a musical family. My granddad was a flautist and bandleader and all his family played piano/violin/accordion/sang. I would, when young, frequently sing with friends and harmonise in sheds, entries, kitchens, anywhere we could find, until someone's mum told us to clear off.

I still had an interest in my early teens and would seek out 'gospel' meetings which often had 'quality singers'. They would let young people in free but you had to listen to a preacher first. Later, when moving around the country in my career I always joined the local operatic/musical group to socialise with my wife. The number of times they were doing Gilbert and Sullivan's Iolanthe, and the number of rehearsals for it was unbelievable – I reckon I knew everyone's lines.

Moving to Stone to establish our printing business, I joined the newly founded Stone Male Voice Choir. The musical director was a police superintendent with good musical knowledge, piano skills, and the ability to mould a group of men who had no musical training into a choir, was fantastic. Great times. Great experiences. Great friendships and memories.

We had a number of MD's following the superintendent's death and I became chairman of the choir. Music selection was very much the prerogative of the MD. He chose what was suitable and within the members' scope from the material available for male voice choirs. Before subs were introduced the music had to be purchased by members themselves as all concerts were for local charities.

MDs regard the choice of music is theirs or they will not take it on. They often have concerns when joining massed choir concerts which means taking on pieces not of their, or the choir's, choice, especially when it has to be purchased.

I am now with the City of Stoke on Trent Male Voice Choir (*below*). We have a music committee and do offer suggestions, but still the MD has the main say. Changing MD is a major disruption and once we had a younger, very musically qualified conductor but his style did not suite the majority of the established choristers, many of whom had years of experience but not a great deal of reading ability. He thus 'left' and the prior MD stepped back in to refill the role. I am sure that a new MD with a 'new style' will cause many retirements in an aging choir, a dilemma for future progress of the choir.



As a member of the choir music committee I owe a great debt to North Staffs Accordion Club for my music development, and particularly the use of MuseScore. This has enabled me to produce choir pieces with 4-part sound files for learning by the more 'progressive' choristers.

All our music has been purchased or licensed and therefore legal – rightly so.

I have started conversation/mailed the Music Publishers Association about how to approach music production/arrangements of published pieces and when agreement/payment should be established. I have had some very helpful 'guidance' from them, quoting the law and how it applies, and the best way to tackle what we are trying to do without contravening the law. Basically, one should purchase a copy, arrange/make your software copy/mp3, present this to your committee, and then approach the publishers for a licence. Some will oblige, some may not. Recently our choir acquired a lovely Welsh piece, with Welsh lyrics. I made a translation into English and changed the music in MuseScore to inject more harmony in places, to show to the committee prior to purchase. We agreed to a fee of £70 for the licence with the publisher and, as a printer, I could get the music printed for £75 – about £1 per copy. Try to get past the 'agency type' publishers, who act on behalf of the original publishers. You would more than likely have to cover the cost as if they sold you their version in quantity, and may be asked that they take over your arranged script for their own distribution. You may have to print on the version '*supplied strictly for the use of.....*' which often happens when they supply it free. Whatever happens talk to them. Establish that you are not a commercial profit-making organisation and raise monies for charities, but have regard to the fact that they are in the business of supplying sheet music for profit.

In conclusion I have, particularly during this lockdown period, found great interest in 'arranging' possible new pieces for the choir. In that I am not a qualified musician I work by ear and logic and the experiences of the many years ago when I used to sing in harmony with my friends.

Thanks to the accordion club I have this new ability to write and print music using MuseScore, all this happening at the right time now my voice and breathing are on the wane and I need to be at home, caring for my wife. Living in an apartment one has to be aware of noise so I have a Roland reedless accordion with headphones. I now usually arise about 6am and have a squeeze before getting breakfast at 8ish. I can play as loud as I like and they all sleep on! Mike Richard's backing tracks have been great for a new approach and I play the melody to the harmony track but I must say, with my limited talent I find some of the pieces 'a bit tricky'. To overcome this, I have downloaded a free app called 'WavePad' which allows me to reduce the speed. It's great. My lovely wife sometimes finds me asleep with my head on the accordion (must put a pad on it). But I enjoy it.

Club Management

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Committee

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Secretary Steve Hughes 01782 787935
Treasurer Tony Britton 01782 563088
Safeguarding Steve Hughes 01782 787935

Helen Brown, Ken Hall, Paul Hobbs, Barry Tunnicliffe, Alan Fernandez (co-opted).

Newsletter Editor Lily Lynch

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