

North Staffs Accordion Club

Newsletter

Sept/Oct 2021

No 496



POSING FOR THE PRESS



HI EVERYONE. I HOPE ALL IS WELL AND BOOSTERS ARE ON THE WAY! WE ARE PLEASED TO WELCOME NEW MEMBER GLENDA REID.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tickets are now available at £11 for the Christmas party which includes the pre-Covid carol play-/sing-along and other home baked entertainment. This year, if nothing changes, we will be live at Bradwell Workingmen's Club on Tuesday night, at 7.30pm on the 21st December. Contact Steve Hughes if there is a 'different' performance you would like to contribute, be it reciting, a different instrument, etc etc solo or group. The excellent menu can be seen on our website.

AGM NEXT CLUB NIGHT

Our AGM will be held on our next club night on the 19th of October at 7.30 pm at Bradwell Workingmen's Club. It is your opportunity to have your say on our performance to date and any ideas you may have for the future of the club. There will be no entry charge, but no member's award either though we will squeeze in the raffle.

The band will perform following the AGM and those players not in the band will also be given an opportunity to play.

AUGUST VIRTUAL CLUB NIGHT

by Steve Hughes



There is a possibility that we will organise something special in the future to include the friends from other parts of the world who joined our club nights over the past months, but other than that, or the occurrence of another lockdown, this August club night will have been the last held virtually. In September we go live at Bradwell Workingmen's Club!

The event was again well attended with a large selection of the music played having 'colour' in the title or lyrics, our theme for the night. Once more we had Tracey

Middleton and our Maltese friends, David Attard and Joseph Grimond present, and for the first time new member, Amanda Hillmarsson (*above right*). Amanda, who now lives in Lichfield, has recently moved there from Reykjavík, Iceland, where she has lived for several years.

Individual players were.....

Steve Hughes
Tony Britton
Joseph Grima
John Corden
Tracey Middleton

Mr **Blue** Sky
Green Green Grass of Home, **Blue** Danube
La Java **Bleue**, **Yellow** Bird
Moulin **Rouge** Waltz, **Green** Leaves of Summer
Cherry **Pink** and Apple Blossom **White**/Never on a
Sunday, Super Trooper



Paul Hobbs	Venus in Blue Jeans, Morning has Broken
Betty Nixon	Red Sails in the Sunset, Green Eyes
Ken Hall	Moonlight Bay, By the Light of the Silvery Moon
Barry Graham	Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (Verdi), Blue Streak
Norman Brown	Yellow Rose of Texas, Blue is the Colour, Lavender's Blue
John Jones	Medley - Song Sung Blue/Blue Bayou/ Blue Eyes Cry in the Rain/ Blue Moon
Greta Moseley	Blue Suede Shoes, Tangerine , Sweet Georgia Brown
Geoff Capewell	Blue Birds Over the White Cliffs of Dover, Dark Island
Viv and Pete Cowie	Five Foot Two Eyes of Blue , Singing the Blues
Amanda Hilmarsson	Pigalle, La Vie en Rose
David Attard	Noche Nera (Black Night), Loves Theme (by Barry White)

Last month Tony Britton had accepted a challenge from compere, Steve Hughes, to make his own backing track by live recording himself playing the harmony (a la Miriam style), This he did, giving us a nice SATB rendition of the pieces this month with him playing all parts. Well done Tony.

The other members pictured above are John Jones and Miriam Umpleby.

SEPTEMBER CLUB NIGHT – LIVE

by Steve Hughes

This was to be our first live club night for 18 months and first at Bradwell Workingmen's Club, Newcastle under Lyme. Government guidelines being followed, everyone spaced out in what is a large room, most opting to use face covering – it was a bit different but at least it was LIVE. Band rehearsals have been taking place at the venue since late May so many of us were accustomed to the 'new norm', but it was good to see everyone in the club night setting, especially those who we have not seen over the pandemic as they could not join us on Zoom.

Mike Richards welcomed those attending with some beautifully played background music taking us up to the start time. After some words of welcome from compere, Steve Hughes, some 15 players lined up for a playalong using the 250 All-Time Hits book that we now use.

Individual players were....

John Corden	The Sound of Silence, Somewhere Over the Rainbow
Greta Moseley & Ann Millward (accordion duet)	A Fair Isle Waltz, Dark Island, Unity March (with some nifty bass playing) (<i>pictured</i>)
Steve Hughes	That's Amore, Those Were the Days
Derek Wilton (harmonica)	Swanee River, Camptown Races, Oh Suzanna, Saints go Marching In, Turkey in the Straw (<i>pictured</i>)
Geoff Capewell	Sounds of Islay, Ich Lieber Dicht
Miriam Umpleby with backing track	Colours of the Rainbow (with audience participation), What a Wonderful World
John Jones	<i>Frank Sinatra medley</i> : You Make Me Feel So Young, Strangers in the Night, Something Stupid, My Way
Viv & Pete Cowie (duet – vocals and accordion)	All I Have to do is Dream, Don't Fence Me In (<i>pictured</i>)
Tony Britton with backing track	House of the Rising Sun, If You Were the Only Girl in the World (with piano accompaniment by backing track)
Mike Richards	Sorrento Thoughts, Under Paris Skies, Dark Island

The evening was very enjoyable and hopefully we can avoid any future lockdowns.



PUBLICITY FOR THE CLUB

On the 23rd August, Staffordshire Evening Sentinel published an article about the North Staffs Accordion Club with photos.

In the preceding week ten of our members met at Ann and Richard Millward's house where the newspaper's photographer got us to pose in a nearby green for the photos (*pictured in top banner*). The 'Icing on the cake' was a delicious cream tea, a masterpiece of home baking by Ann.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Our band drummer, Phil Hodges, who had a painting of Winston Churchill accepted as a gift by Boris Johnson, will be exhibiting in the **Castle Art Gallery, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5 2RE**
<https://www.castleartgallery.co.uk/>

His work will be on display between 2 and 5 p.m. on Saturday 23rd October and from 12 noon to 5 p.m. on the following Sunday to Tuesday. To be selected for this exhibition is an achievement and a half. Well done Phil.



EAST CHESHIRE HOSPICE

BROKEN CROSS CHARITY CONCERT by Tony Britton

Congratulations to John Jones and Stockport Accordion Club for organising a very successful and enjoyable concert on Sunday afternoon 26th September in Macclesfield. Members of our club travelled through the lovely Cheshire countryside to support the event and we weren't disappointed. We were royally entertained by soloists Helen Rich and John Jones, duo Rob Howard/John Jones, trio Accordion Spice and the Stockport Accordion Band and over £1000 was raised.

The Broken Cross Club is a comfortable and photogenic venue, and the afternoon was rounded off by excellent refreshments and a nice journey home.

'WELL REHEARSED' APP

This app has feedback from Making Music/abcd member organisations on the number of live events reported and how many have Covid infections reported in the following week. As at the end of September there were 2549 rehearsals with 80 reports of infections (3%).

MAILBOX



From Glenda Reid (*left*) following her first visit from her Warrington home to a band rehearsal of ours on a night on which the North bound side of the motorway was closed due to a fatal accident:

My journey home was a nightmare. I got totally lost and my sat nav sent me down dark lonely roads, no signs or lights and on one road another unkind motorist was pushing from behind and flashing his lights at me as he obviously wanted to go faster. When I eventually found Junction 18 on the M6 it was wall to wall lorries and I got hemmed in on the inside lane doing 50 mph all the way to 1 mile from Junction 20 where the two outside lanes were closed and traffic filtered to the inside lane. It took 20

mins. to do a mile. I arrived home at 11.50pm. Hubby was panicking.

However, the music part of the evening was great. So nice to play again with other people after so long in isolation.

Regards, Glenda

Wilf Gotham 1934 -2021 by Steve Hughes

It was with sadness that we heard of the death of one of our longstanding members, **Wilf Gotham**, who died of cancer on the 31st July, 2021.

An architect by profession Wilf has been a member of the club from its early days and was secretary for several years, also producing the newsletter. He travelled widely to accordion events and was well known in these circles. He loved folk music and for a spell played for Six Towns Morris. He was one of the few Englishmen known to me (in England) who had learned to speak Welsh and he often used to test me out on words or sayings.

Following is an article Wilf wrote for our July 2006 newsletter.....

LIVING LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN (OR SO IT SEEMS)

Those of you who have been with the club for any length of time may recall that when Aubrey was editor of the newsletter he printed my story around this time in 1994. My introduction to music was a matter of hearing it through the wall from next-door's wireless. We had one of our own but were afraid to switch it on, as dad might be annoyed. As a result I'm familiar with many melodies but know the name of very few, (brickwork has a dampening effect on speech), and even less who was the composer. My sister was brave enough once, which worried mother, but my sister was insistent and switched it off when dad's footsteps were heard in the entry as he came home from work. He took off his cap, put down his workbag and sat down to listen to the evening news. "Who's had this wireless on?" he demanded. You see in those days radios had valves which heated up and so the wireless was still warm. She didn't do it again!



Dad had a very good voice and was often called upon to demonstrate it when neighbours had parties, (thinking back it was probably get-togethers after the pub had shut). Mostly in those days many men worked all week except the Saturday afternoons. Dad claimed his double time on Sunday was all for the taxman. The free afternoon was mostly spent at the Victoria ground watching Stanley Mathews, far from today's football mania when just one match was reported on the wireless and the Saturday papers had the back page reserved for sport. So another musical interlude was the band playing on the pitch, which we could also hear, again with no idea of the name of the tune or its creator.

Then came school where we had cymbals and triangles and the teacher on the piano - more music? Well at least here we learned that the tune was called *Jack and Jill went up the Hill* or some such. Eventually dad bought a piano from a neighbour - but you read about that 12 years ago so I'll not labour it again except to repeat that my proper training only lasted a matter of weeks, maybe a month or two. As was common in those days, various members of the family had some musical ability, able to entertain the less discerning with a song, a mouth organ or a one-fingered tune on a piano. We had no TV of course and the cinema was only an occasional treat except for kids' weekend matinees of Flash Gordon or some such.

A variety of instruments were tried and the belief that having had some piano training at around 10 years old duped me into thinking that it was no big deal playing an accordion, being another keyboard instrument and so, when a friend had one for sale at the time I retired, it was 'just the thing' to stop me from vegetating into an early grave. Well even the right hand wasn't easy, as you look along it not down on it, and the buttons - a bit like the first time at a computer, too scared to touch in case you do irreparable damage! Eventually tunes began to emerge, (after about 12 months), on the right but it was a few years later before the buttons began to give up their secrets, thanks in the main to some tuition in the form of workshops run by Steve Hughes and the beginners group run by Peter Burton.



Along the way it was felt that something ought to be put back so, when the usual AGM plea was made for members to join the committee, I took the bait and later became the secretary after Aubrey and also produced the newsletter for a while on the basic Amstrad which I was then running.

By now I'd also joined **Ryknild Rabble** based in Lichfield, which is another morris dance team, and when **Six Towns Morris**, my first team, folded I then went, (along with others including Beth and her friend Shirley), to join a team called **Black Dog**. Here it must be pointed out that morris dance comes in various styles, North West is the style of the first team, Border the style of the second and Molly the style of the third. There are other styles but these are outside the remit of this story. Again, something was put back doing the newsletter for the first, being secretary for the second. Because of age advances and not having attended practice or 'dance outs' for either of the latter groups for some time, it was decided to hang up my raggy jacket, and so the 'kit' has been given to the group for use by others.

Would I change anything? One has to be careful here - a dad who didn't mind us using the wireless when it cost 6d (proper money) to recharge the accumulator each week (much more if we HAD used it) maybe? Perhaps more time practising the piano in those formative years? How about music training at the St Petersburg Conservatoire instead of Arts at a redbrick university? How about staying single and being celibate, dedicating all my waking hours to music - oh don't get bloody stupid now! No, I think that regardless of the usual tribulations I'm pretty happy with the way things have gone. It could have been so much worse. You see a tramp and think, "There but for the grace of God go I", but the same applies when

you see the businessman in his Roller, grimacing with the early ulcer from the stress of his greed. We have a good club, a dedicated committee and the best editor* of any accordion club, producing copy which is up to the standard of any club and as good as the national mags. Yes, along with other blessings retirement is good. So would I change anything? Well it is not the best venue I've been in.

Wilf [the other one!] **Gotham** (July 2006)

(Wilf has sent a picture [see above] of three of his vast collection of accordion memorabilia with a promise of more to follow.)

* *Modesty almost prevented me from printing this bit--- but not quite. Lily*

For Sale

96 Bass Hohner Bravo accordion serviced and tuned 17th September 2021. In excellent condition with Hohner gig-bag. Collection only (Stockport). **£860**. *(pictured right)*

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/543581260208495/> Mike Beese **07976 893528**



120 bass Hohner Carmen II accordion for sale *(left)* in nice condition with soft case **£250**. Contact Jean Austin **01782 866091**

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