

# North Staffs Accordion Club

May - June 2024

No 512



HI EVERYONE.

I HOPE YOU ARE ALL WELL. WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER MICHAEL PETER FROM STAFFORD.

MY DAUGHTER PHONED ME TODAY TO SAY THAT SHE HAD JUST SEEN ON THE WEATHER FORECAST THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE 55 DAYS OF RAIN THIS SUMMER. IT SEEMS THAT LAST TIME THAT HAPPENED WAS IN 1912. WE ARE CERTAINLY GETTING READY FOR IT TODAY. LILY

## JUNE CLUB NIGHT

We look forward to the next monthly gathering of members for our June club night on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> June. We will have our customary playalong and following this, the theme for the night will be **Means of Transport**. Quite a challenge. Roll up and enjoy.

## JULY CLUB NIGHT

Guests - **Accordion Spice**

Accordion Spice is a quartet of lady accordionists who are based in the Lymm, Altrincham and Warrington areas. The original members all met through Stockport Accordion Club but when some left the club they agreed to form a quartet. The quartet has been meeting over 'a cuppa and cake' since April 2016 and the current members (Chris Green, Glenda Reid [who is also a member of our club and band], Helen Rich and Diana Tonge) have been playing together since July 2022.



They like to play a mixture of upbeat accordion marches and easy listening popular tunes but have been known to spice up their programme with the flute and violin too. They routinely play at concerts organised by Stockport Accordion Club including their annual Broken Cross Charity Concert.

They are looking forward to playing for the North Staffs Accordion Club in July.

## APRIL CLUB NIGHT (Lily Lynch)

I was really looking forward to the April club night as one of my favourites, **Richard Adey**, was our artist for the night. He had not visited since 2019, for various reasons, including the Covid lockdown and we last saw him live at Goldenhill, where he had an excellent reception. We did have him as guest on Zoom however in 2020 during lockdown when he gave his performance from his soundproofed music room at home, a ten-minute spot at the end of each half. His playing was amazing showing such agility, and responding to requests with no hesitation.



This time Richard wanted to come as part of a duo, and brought along Frenchman, **Michaël Lacoult**, on double bass. There was

an extra interest here for me as I play double bass and am always keen to listen to other bass players.

The evening began with some background music provided by Jacqui Flather and then a short playalong from club members.

Richard and Michaël then took the floor for their first set. I love Richard's gentle sensitive style and he is clearly influenced by Jazz, French music and other genres, and beautifully weaves them into an exquisite programme. His playing technique is fascinating, very fluid and full of wonderful jazz chords.

I was also interested, as a bass player, in listening to the double bass accompaniment. I was not disappointed – as accompaniment is an art in itself. Michaël's playing was sensitive and slotted well into Richards's style peppered with interesting bass solos. I was knocked out at the beginning of the set with the beautiful *La Javanaise*. It took my breath away. Other pieces which stick in my memory are *Indifference*, *Laura*, *St Thomas*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Autumn Leaves*, *In a Sentimental Mood* and Duke Ellington's *Caravan*.

Following the interval Mike Richards and Paul Hobbs started the second half as a duet playing *Highland Cathedral*, *Electric Carousel*, *Under Paris Skies*, *Our Director* and *Les Bicyclettes de Belsize*.

Midway through the second-half performance Richard brought his friend, a harmonica player, up to the front to join in with a number called *Chitlins Con Carne*.

Other music from Richard and Michaël:

*Einbahnstrasse* *R Carter*, *Bossa Dorrado* *Smiht*, *Au Privave*, *La Foule*, *Spring is Here*, *Tango Pour Claude Galliano*



## **MAY CLUB NIGHT** (Jacqui Flather)

North Staffs Accordion Club met at Bradwell WMC on the evening of Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May for our monthly club night.

The evening was very relaxed – and we had slightly fewer members turn up this time – due to holidays and the fact that so many of us attended the great day at Knutsford for the workshop. We missed our chairman, Steve Hughes also, as he was taking care of his wife Beryl, after a stay in hospital. However, Tony Brittan stepped up to the challenge!



Betty Nixon  
R & J Duo - Rosie Galley &  
John Corden  
John Plumb

Steve Houghton  
Jacqui Flather

Miriam Umpleby

There was no theme this month – just the player choice of music. There was however a tribute to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings – with a selection of music chosen by Bombardier John Plumb. John (*right*) looked very dapper (as always!) in his shirt and beret – and he brought along with him a selection of his memorabilia from when he visited the site of the landings over the years after the war. John had also celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday over the weekend and we all played/sang Happy Birthday as our celebration.



*My Way; Never on a Sunday*  
*Cara Mia; Oh! Mio Bambino Caro;*  
*It's Time To Say Goodnight.*  
*We'll meet again; Rule Britannia;*  
*Land of Hope and Glory.*  
*Medley of music from Camelot;*  
*The Boys of the Blue Hill Hornpipe;*  
*Harvest Hornpipe; Furrows End;*  
*Kavana Tango*  
*Trumpet Voluntary*



Joe Hill (visitor)

Moira Hague  
(Northumberland Pipes)

Charlie Walker

Derek Wilton (Harmonica)

John Jones

and sang *What a Wonderful World*.  
*Theme tune to Game of Thrones*;  
*Under the Bridges of Paris*;  
*When the Battle is O'er*;  
*The Rowan Tree*; *The Wild Mountain  
of Thyme*  
*The Parting Glass (with vocals)*;  
*Ashokan Farewell*.  
*Wind beneath my Wings*;  
*The Sunny Side of the Street*  
*Medley of Edith Piaf songs*

A few special mentions -

Steve Houghton's tune, a medley from Camelot, was excellent, a real challenging piece, expertly executed.

Moira Hague (*above left*) brought along her Northumberland Pipes – these look really difficult to master – so well done to her.



Charlie Walker (*left*) is quite new to the accordion, and his rendition of the *Ashokan Farewell* was really well done.



Joe Hill (*right*) was a visitor to the club – speaking to him before the evening started, he told me how nervous he was – but he was absolutely superb! No need for the nerves! I, for one, really hope that he joins our club!

It was a good evening overall, with cakes during the break – not just any cakes, M&S cakes!

## ENDON CONCERT (Lily Lynch)

On the evening of 19th April I went along to see our band concert at Endon Village Hall. I could not play myself as I have not been able to attend practices for some time for various reasons. I was very impressed with the concert room and learned that it had had a recent refurbishment. Richard and I found ourselves a nice comfy sofa and sunk into it before anyone else spied it. Brilliant!

Also sharing the bill were **Stefan Andrusyschyn** and **Denise Leigh** - Stefan in the first half and together with Denise after the interval.

The band kicked off with *Searchlight Tattoo* and played a short set, performing well without me, under the direction of MD Steve Houghton. It was followed by Stefan who began with Rossini's *Largo al Factotum* from **The**



**Barber of Seville** demonstrating some wonderful bellows shakes. He then played Grieg's *Holberg Suite :Gavotte* and Semionov's *Bulgarian Suite Finale*.

After the break Denise and Stefan began with Bizet's *Habanara* from **Carmen**, a Welsh song - *Suo Gan*, **Bernstein's Somewhere** and finally something that always gets me crying buckets – **Lehar's Vilja-Lied** from **The Merry Widow**..



The band then finished the night, rounding off with the lively *Liberty Bell*

A great night and the band did us proud with a varied programme

and Denise and Stefan were wonderful as usual.

## KNUTSFORD ACCORDION DAY 2024

(Rosie Galley)

The day had finally arrived for the Knutsford Accordion Day. The sun was shining, and I was excited and a little apprehensive about how the day would go. We had received the music we would be playing some weeks ago; *Casey Jones*, *Blue Tango* and *Black Orpheus* and I knew I couldn't manage to play a run of notes in Blue Tango and I had no idea how I was going to manage bellow shakes!

When we arrived at Marthall Hall it was already a hive of activity, chairs were being laid out according to the seating plan and ladies were busy in the kitchen preparing for the welcome



cup of tea. Once we had our cuppa 33 players took their seats. Our leader for the day was Andrew Purkiss. We started with some warm-up exercises, a clapping exercise and then some practice with the bellows shakes, which turned out not to be so difficult after all. We were encouraged to become aware of the different parts the other players were playing and to be able to keep our eyes on our music and seeing the conductor in our peripheral vision. This is something our own MD has been telling us for some time.

It was time to start, and off we went with *Black Orpheus*. After our first play we were encouraged to open our eyes and ears and listen to the other players, we had to sharpen up on the accuracy and clarity of the triplet notes. Andrew then spoke to us about bellow stops. Our leader was good in demonstrating on his own accordion what he wanted us to do, which was really helpful.

The next tune we tackled was *Casey Jones*, which I really enjoyed. Andrew tried to get us to keep the tempo up, while my fingers thought they were running a 100 metres race. In this tune we got to try out our bellows shakes.



Finally, we played *Blue Tango*. Andrew spoke to us about how to play the many grace notes that are in this piece. The grace notes are to be added to the first notes, blurring them together. Our final play of this tune was very, very fast and I never mastered the run of notes in this tune.

I enjoyed meeting new people. Brian Caldecott was sitting next to me, and he was from the Weaver Valley Group and the Chester Club. He told me he had started playing the accordion when he was seven years old and, once in his twenties, he played in clubs around the area. However, when he was twenty-five his father made derogatory remarks about his playing and because of that he sold his accordion and never went back to playing for forty-five years. Behind me sat Chris Hampton from Liverpool. He was not part of any accordion group or club and was happy to be playing with others.





We gave a mini-concert performance of the three pieces in the afternoon to close the event and then it was time to take off our accordions and sit back, relax, and listen to lovely performances by Helen Rich, Julie Best and Andrew Purkiss who finished off a lovely day of making and listening to music.

When I asked Andrew what his highlight of the day was, he said it was when we played Blue Tango, he felt that we had all taken in what he had been saying and it had all come together well. He said he thought it was a light bulb moment for both him and the players.

This was my first Knutsford Accordion Day event and I'm already looking forward for the next one.



## Obituary Mary Clews. (Steve)

It is with sadness we heard that one of our longstanding social members, Mary Clews, died in hospital on the 14th May aged 85 having been diagnosed with cancer in February this year. Mary enjoyed the music and the friendships, and was a regular attendee at our club nights until she found it difficult to drive in the dark over the winter. Her funeral will take place at 12 noon at Bradwell Crematorium on Friday 21st June. RIP

## STEFAN AND DENISE ON BGT

Lovely to see Stefan and Denise appearing in Britain's Got Talent last week. They brought the house down with their very moving performance of *Climb Every Mountain* and went forward to the semi finals where they came second in the public vote. Sadly, unlike the other contestants who came second in *their* public vote, the judges did not put them forward to the final.

Typically, like many other setbacks they have endured in their lives, they looked for the positive and said they were very pleased for the exposure which the show gave them for future performances.



### Diary

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

June	Theme 'Mode of Transport'
July	Guest – Accordion Spice quartet
August	Player's Night
September	Guests - Anne-Marie Devine & Sean O'Neil
October	AGM/Band
November	Guest – John Morgan

#### Beginners/Improvers at Bradwell WMC

May	13th	
June	3rd	24th
July	8th	22nd

<b>Band rehearsals at Bradwell WMC</b>	Tuesdays except 3 <sup>rd</sup> of the month
<b>Playing for Pleasure at the Boat Club, Endon</b>	Second Thursdays 2 pm.
<b>Band Performance, Biddulph Moor</b>	Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024
<b>Band at Congleton Park Bandstand</b>	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> July, 2024
<b>Community Performance, Kingsley</b>	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024
<b>Band at Potteries Centre, Hanley</b>	Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024

### External Events

**Stockport AC's charity concert, Broken Cross Club, Macclesfield. Dec 1st, 2pm**

**Midland Accordion Festival**    November 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

**Club Contacts**

President

Peter Cowie

Trustees:

Chair	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Acting Secretary	Steve Hughes	07939 362294
Treasurer	Tony Britton	07923 580760

John Corden, Jacqui Flather, Rosie Galley, Betty Nixon, Ron Rhodes

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