

A CHRISTMASS MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year, now nearly ended, has brought with it many tribulations, and disappointments on the national scale, and many of us in our private lives have suffered set-backs, or have been asked to endure painful bereavements. I think particularly of one of our most distinguished members, who was a good and generous friend to me personally and to our Association.

I refer, of course, to Hubert Kennedy, a very gentleman indeed, who loved and served his God and fellow men. He is, no doubt, already enjoying the fruits of his devotion while among us in this world. And now Christmass comes to bring his widow and family, and indeed us all, consolation according to our needs, to remind us that we are on this earth for no other purpose than to strive to make ourselves more worthy of God's love through eternity.

Christianity started, I would remind you in Unity - the common worship of the Holy Child by the Angels, the poor shepherds, and the Kings at Bethlehem; it developed through the unity of the Church which Christ founded through Saint Peter, and although this unity has been fragmented down the centuries it is now a happy thought that One Blessing for which we can thank 1967 is that the movement to restore that unity is gathering strength and direction. May this Christmass we are so soon to celebrate help to make full union in the Spirit of Christ a possibility.

This is, after all, a time which brings out the best in most of us. For a while, at any rate, we are ready to think less of ourselves, and more of others. When that happens all must tend to go right with the world - injustices vanish, the true spirit of charity begins to permeate everything we do and think, and loving our neighbours is, somehow, less difficult than it seemed to be.

However, if we are to capture the true magic of Christmass, we must look deeper into it than the song writers do. We must give thought as to how this season of goodwill to all men started nearly two thousand years ago in Bethlehem - a little town not very far from Jerusalem, which I have twice had the privilege of visiting - once on Christmas Eve - where the state of innocence in which God created the world was restored by the birth to the Virgin Mary of His Only Begotten Son. Our Lord Christ, destined to redeem us all from our sins by his death on the Cross at Calvary 33 years later.

This is the most stupendous act of love mankind can know. That it was initiated in such a humble setting speaks its own message of the virtues which God calls upon all Christians to do their best to practise. The Magic of Christmass is that it makes these virtues so clear and shining again, and somehow, enables us to see that once we have let goodwill into our hearts and minds how very much more simple life becomes, and how quickly true values assert themselves.

How true all this was of Hubert Kennedy!

I send you, every one where ever you may be, at home or abroad, my love and my blessing with all best wishes for a very happy Christmass and New Year.

Kenneth Loveless

REPORT OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING HELD IN DECEMBER

Difficulty in securing accommodation deferred the meeting, and as it was approaching Christmas, a good proportion of the time was devoted to carols. It was indeed Christmas outside, with shops decorated for the season, and snow everywhere. Snow that kept many away, and delayed those that did turn up. But one of the most delightful evenings for those who came.

Frank Butler used the folders of music made up for the concert at Ashmount School, which provided a ready-made programme. Of course, his set of carols originally arranged for Father Loveless were again in use, and we may say, borrowed by members for use elsewhere, as is usually the case.

Mr. Mudel aptly chose Mary's Boy Child as the first solo, and he also had the pleasure of playing it later with the full crowd. Tommy Williams followed some stories with a new waltz of his own composition. A novelty was provided by Neil Wayne playing Flamenco dances in traditional style on a Spanish Guitar, with delightful artistry. John Hutcherson's selection of Songs by Wilfred Sanderson revived pleasant memories and were delightfully played. Frank produced a book of arrangements of his own, pieces as diverse as Mozart's Twelfth Mass (Kyrie) and A Wandering Minstrel I.

A gallant attempt was made at the test piece for larger groups competing at the London Music Competition Festival.

A CONTINENTAL EVENING AT ASHMOUNT SCHOOL

This annual event is the showpiece for the Language Classes of Holloway Institute and its branches. Members of the various study groups present poetry, plays, songs, readings and colourful dances in costume from all parts of Europe. This year, France, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Russia and Germany were all represented before a packed and enthusiastic audience.

The Monday Concertina class acts as a "pit orchestra" providing an overture, and short excerpts (sometimes a mere few bars) to string the items together. Its own contribution was the carol, Mary's Boy Child, sung by Herbert Lorne with concertina band accompaniment, a surprise and most successful item.

With all this wealth of entertainment, pride of place must be accorded to the refreshments, served free of charge from booths representing the country of origin, and supplying indigenous food and wine to all comers. No wonder consuming delayed resuming.

THE LONDON MUSICAL COMPETITION FESTIVAL

This issue contains an abbreviated syllabus, with details of the concertina classes only. Members are urged to give this event their support. It offers a Spring competitive festival, in a hall we know well, with an adjudicator for whom we have great respect, in a year when there is not an I.C.A. Festival. Give the London Festival as much support as you do your own, and you will make it possible for Mr. Ranger to give you nearly the same conditions.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 1968

Mr. J. Harvey will this year complete three years in office, and under the rules of the I.C.A., will retire, but be eligible for re-election. A nomination form will be issued with the January Newsletter. The other members of the Committee wish to place on record their sincere appreciation of Mr. Harvey's services on the Committee, and indeed to the I.C.A. in many ways.

The vacancy left by the resignation of Mr. Harold Dawson has also to be filled, for what would have been his last year of Office. Your Committee propose to co-opt Mr. F. Watts yet again, and hope that this will be confirmed at the A.G.M.

INCREASE OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

It is certain that the finances of the I.C.A, will this year show a loss on the year's activities, and the Committee have agreed to implement the power given to them at the A.G.M, of 1965 and confirmed in each subsequent year, by raising the subscription to 15/-d each member, or £1. for joint membership. Corporate Membership will remain at two guineas and owing to the devaluation of the pound, U.S.A. membership will remain at two dollars.

NEWS OF THE MEMBERS

Recent engagements for Vena McDougall have included one before an audience of 500 at Walthamstow, to whom she played Scottish songs and melodies. With her, Herbert Lorne sang Without a Song, Maire My Girl, and Mary's Boy Child. For the last he had organ accompaniment, which both he and the audience enjoyed. Vena also regularly plays at Westminster Central Hall, and although greeted last time with "I hope you have brought your squeeze box", she said she would accept the expression as long as they liked the concertina sound.

A.G.Hague is back in the news for us. He writes that H.Hague of Somercotes is his father, and that Father's concertina playing is probably his earliest recollection. At the age of eleven A.G. acquired an Anglo of his own, but within a year had graduated to an English. He now uses a 56-key Tenor Treble by Crabb, but also has a spare as he hopes his own two sons will take them up. One son is six months and the other two years old, so there is plenty of time. (These Hague's are an intelligent lot. Father holds one of the few musical degrees in the I.C.A. The Son's degrees are in engineering)

And that reminds us of a note from Vena who distributes the Newsletter to say, that excluding relations, the I.C.A, list of members has fifteen pairs and five triple sets of identical names. She has addressed the envelopes for so long now that these points become land-marks in the task.

Our President, Father Loveless was delightfully pictured, and amusingly described as "The Swinging Dean of Hackney" in a recent issue of the Stoke 'Newington & Hackney Observer. The picture has his characteristic smile as well as his concertina. The text describes his folk music activities, and his great interest in the Scout movement.

Another staunch ex R.N.Supporter is Lt. Comdr. W.G.Leek of 228 North Road, Plymouth who is anxious to meet players in his district. Commander Leek was brought into the fold by Mr.Rolph and says that he has come to regard many other stalwarts of the I.C.A, as friends.

News of our Members is one of the most popular features of this Newsletter.It is compiled from correspondence and personal knowledge. Please let the Secretary have details of your concertina activities. Don't be shy, we all want to hear them.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS ISSUED FOR THE I.C.A. BY THE SECRETARY
FRANK E. BUTLER 60 MAYFIELD CRESCENT LONDON N.9. ENGLAND