

THE INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

Sept. 1981

President: Rev. Kenneth Loveless, V.R.D., F.S.A., F.S.A. Scot.,  
Hon. R.N.R.

Secretary: S.F. Green, 118A Woodhill, Woolwich, London SE18 5JL.

Treasurer: F.J. Hutcherson, 45 Valentine Avenue, Bexley, Kent, DA5 3HF

Notices

The next meeting will be on Saturday 26th September, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1, from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. There will be a committee meeting at 2.00pm as usual, I am informed that the meeting will be in the North Room.

Please note our Secretary's new address above. Don't say you weren't told!

The A.G.M. is now starting to loom over the horizon, and so, as I do every year at this time, I am asking you to nominate people to serve on next year's committee. This time, just saying this year's committee will do it is not enough. Our ranks have been depleted by the sad death of Harry Crabb earlier in the year, and Mr. Hutcherson announced at the last A.G.M. that he would be retiring as Treasurer. So, get your thinking caps on. Any volunteers should contact the Secretary at the above address. I don't think the ICA's funds will stretch to a trip to South America!

Finally, get out your diaries. The October meeting is booked for the 24th at the Conway Hall- I expect the Club Room to be packed out!

News

First of all, membership matters: Welcome to new member Wendy Oakes, of 74A Moorside South, Senham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Also, I have some changes of address to go with Steve Green's example.

Peter & Lyn Law are now at 47 Beaconsfield Street, Boughton, Chester, CH3 5AY.

Alan Day is now at Sunnyfield, Nursery Lane, Hookwood, Surrey.

Mac writes: E. Charlesworth played English 48, and old member of the I.C.A. He died 24th June. Ernie was the head traveller for Clarnico's. I have lost a fine pal here.

Now I want to clear up some of the backlog of letters sent to me, either direct or via other committee members. First a letter from Mr. P. Ham of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, dated January!:- "My main activity is as the musician for the Newcastle Morris Men; we have a further three concertina players trying to learn at the moment, all Anglo players, and one of them my son, but it will be a little-while before any of them can be let loose on an unsuspecting team of dancers.

Tom Prince and I both contributed to the Morris Ring's recording of local dance musicians about a year ago. Only one of the tracks I made has so far been made available but I guess some of the rest will come out in the not-too-distant future. You may be interested to know that I was asked at short notice to play for a visiting team of Morris Men due to dance before an audience of 1500 Women's Institute members in Newcastle City Hall about four months or so ago. I rang up the Squire (the leader) the day before to enquire if he knew what he wanted me to play, since one is, of course, expected to play from memory. He replied that he was sure I would know all the dances, and in any case, we could have a quick talk about it just before we went on; Fortunately he was right and all was well on the night; however I feel that even Morris Dance musicians should give prior thought to their public appearances."

John Entract reports that he was writing recently and had occasion to look up 'squiggle' in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. To his surprise the word was not there but - more surprise - the following one was:-

// Squiffer. n. (sl,) concertina (Orig. unkn.) (// = not U.S.A.)

He asks if any other member has come across this onomatope.

John's enquiry prompted me to look up the word in my Compact Oxford Dictionary. I found it in the Supplement, with the same definition. However, the entry was enlarged by a quotation from Fanny's First Play, written in 1911 by G.B. Shaw:-

Dora: I'll stand you that squiffer with the gold keys.

Mrs. Gilbey: What's a squiffer?

Dora: Oh, of course; excuse my vulgarity: a concertina.

First, we must remember that besides being a playwright, Shaw started his career as a music critic, and a not inconsiderable one too. Secondly, his audience must understand his reference, and finally, a concertina with gold keys would not be cheap. All these combine to make me think that up to the date of writing of the play, the concertina was still a drawing room instrument.

Incidentally, I found three definitions of 'squiggle' in the main part of my dictionary.

Tom Jukes writes with a couple of points, firstly about Alf Edwards appearance at Aldeburgh:

"On his return from the Festival, Alf said he had 96 bars rest before he played his (about) 8 bars, so he made arrangements with the drummer to give him the tip at 94 bars. Dress was formal too."

Secondly, he encloses a cutting about the late Cyril Jackson, and tells me he was made a Life Director of the National Childrens Homes. The cutting includes two photos, one of Cyril on the musical saw, and the other in his costume as a comic 'cello player. The text is really a resume of Cyril's life.

Alan Day writes about his recent activities:

" You may be interested to know that I recently appeared on French TV demonstrating a miniature Anglo concertina and played a couple of tunes on my Anglo. It was their equivalent of "Women's Hour" and it was featuring an exhibition of Melodians, Accordians and Concertinas at Res Oranges near Paris and many guest artists were invited to play the different instruments. (I just happened to be there with the band for a folk festival)

I have spread the word about the ICA in France and you may be getting some requests to join.

I have been invited back to France in November and asked to do a Concertina Workshop which should be interesting as I do not speak French.

Finally, from Tom Prince:

" I have just spent a week-end at the Morris Ring meeting at Wentworth, run by the Wath-on-Dearne Morris Side, and I was surprised at the number of English concertinas on display. During the weekend the Squire of the Ring (Rev. K. Loveless) talked quite a lot about the ICA and about me being a member of said Association. So, as expected, a number of chaps asked me what it was all about. I did my best to inform the uninformed but one team had four concertina players and showed a real desire to have more information."

#### Editorial Chunterings

As you can see, space is running out, and the time for me to get this Newsletter into the post to you is doing likewise. I shall therefore hold over the account of the July meeting. Suffice it to say that there were only a few people there - single figures if my memory is correct! I hope there will be more at the next meeting.

Keep the letters and news items coming, as I want to have an excess of material more often.

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