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No 327

NEWSLETTER

May 1985

It is with great sadness that we announce
the passing of
Mr ALFRED EDWARDS
who died, peacefully, on 24th March, 1985
at St Bernard's Nursing Home, Worthing.

"Music was his Queen"

Readers who wish to share their memories of Alf Edwards are invited to write, however briefly or simply, to the Editor who proposes to compile a tribute for inclusion in the Newsletter.

RECORD REVIEW

'Eclogue'

Steve Turner - Fellside FE042

Having become something of a lapsed 'folkie' over the past couple of years, in terms of visiting clubs and buying records, I must confess that listening to this record was my first hearing of Steve Turner though I had read very favourable accounts of him in such magazines as Southern Rag.

This is Steve's third solo LP and contains a wide range of material both traditional and contemporary, English and from overseas. English concertinas, sometimes multi-tracked, are used to a greater or lesser degree on ten of the twelve tracks, two of which are instrumentals. Steve also sings, plays mandolin, bouzouki, tenor banjo and Dobro tenor guitar and is joined by a host of accompanying musicians and backing vocalists.

Side one opens with 'The Wounded Whale'. After a hammered-dulcimer introduction we hear Steve's strong vocal style and a sparkling yet unobtrusive concertina accompaniment which interplays very effectively with the dulcimer. On 'White Copper Alley', a song on the familiar theme of a prostitute robbing her customer, the lone treble accompaniment is lively and imaginative. 'Prospect Providence', a Keith Marsden song written from the view-point of a rather bitter retired woollen-mill worker, is very catchy and I have been humming it for weeks. There is no instrumental accompaniment but some splendid close harmony singing.

The first of the two instrumentals is 'The Old Manchester Hornpipe' with the unlikely but surprisingly successful combination of treble, harpsichord, and electric bass guitar and on which Steve displays considerable virtuosity. 'The Boomer's Story' is an American railroad song with a jazzy concertina accompaniment, multi-tracking of bass, baritone and tenor instruments creates a beautifully rich sound. The final track on side one, 'The Girls of Glossop Road', features some fine close-harmony work by Linda Adams. Steve's accompaniment, again bass, baritone and tenor, bubbles away underneath and, if not particularly spectacular, is admirably suited to the song, creating a period flavour.

'The Diamantina Drover', which opens side two is handled very sensitively with a rather eerie backing; the treble concertina weaving intricate patterns with the guitar and bass. Napoleon's Farewell to Paris' is an unaccompanied vocal tour-de-force. Bass, baritone, tenor and bouzouki provide a pleasantly florid accompaniment to 'The Bunch of Rushes' which is followed by 'Lord Thomas of Winesberry', the only song on the album with which I was familiar. Again, multi-tracked concertinas provide a rich yet unobtrusive complementary backing to this beautiful ballad. The sinister 'Me and my Uncle' is made appropriately eerie by the effective use of treble concertina and Martin Simpson's guitar. Of the three concluding reels; 'Tamlin', 'Carlisle' and 'Francis T Robertson', the first two show Steve's capabilities on mandolin, banjo and Dobro tenor guitar with treble and tenor-treble joining in to good effect on the third.

Without dominating it, Steve Turner's concertina playing is a vital ingredient of this album; adaptable to the needs of the song and sympathetic to the other instrumentalists, there is plenty here for the aspiring English player - and players of other types of concertina for that matter - to take guidance from. The added bonuses of ICA member Steve's fine vocals and the wide-ranging choice of material makes this a record that is easy to recommend.

Malcolm Barr-Hamilton

Mainly for Middlebrows

The ICA library list contains at least four arrangements of works by Albert Ketelby, whose descriptive pieces, bearing titles like 'Bells across the Meadows', 'In a Persian Market' and, of course, 'In a Monastery Garden' attained enormous popularity during the 1920s and 30s. Ketelby's compositions, written between 1915 and 1951 could never be described as profound - you may well squirm with embarrassment at repeated choruses of 'Baksheesh, Baksheesh, A..a..allah' - but they have much to commend them in the way of life, colour and those broad, sweeping melodies.

One might expect Ketelby's music to have been consigned to oblivion by musical snobbery but there has, in fact, been a revival of interest in recent years. To hear these pieces played in their full glory, good selections can be found on Decca's 'In a Monastery Garden' (Cassette no KDGC 16) by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Eric Rogers, or on HMV ASD 5542 on which the Philharmonia Orchestra are conducted by John Lanchbery. This one earns three stars in the Penguin Record Guide. Not a Concertina to be heard but if you delight in evocations of tea-gowns and palm court orchestras, you might just be tempted to reach for your library index.... CMT

YOUR LETTERS

No Igloos for Ireland

Derrick Hale of Derby wrote about the spurious practices of dealers. I can't condone the practice of conning old people out of their instruments, especially where they are unaware of the current market values. I must say, however, that the repair of old instruments can be time-consuming and expensive and therefore greatly inflate the selling price.

In Ireland I'm sure we are on the receiving end of some high profit-taking but my attitude would be; if the instrument is a good quality one then the market price should be paid. Unfortunately, the market price on this side of the Irish Sea has risen steeply in the last five or six years. This is no doubt due to the scarcity of good concertinas. Because the Anglo system suits our music best these models are most in demand, especially Jeffries since they are by far the best Anglos. Prices for concertinas, however, compare favourably with the prices of other instruments used here - accordions, flutes and especially uilleann pipes, which can cost up to £3000! So, spare a thought for the poor, in every sense of the word, uilleann piper.

The other point made by Derrick is the decline in concertina players in England. Well, happily the opposite is true in Ireland, hence the demand which I've mentioned earlier. The situation is so buoyant that a concertina maker is starting production in the West of Ireland soon and we will not be as dependant on the English market in future. But will prices fall?

This leads on to Jean Megly's letter which evokes sympathy from one who has thought of taking up the English concertina, for variety. The lovely picture painted by Jean is enough to deter anyone in far-off places from starting, or even continuing, to play the concertina. Communications do help but nothing can beat playing with other players. As I've said, the main instrument played here is the Anglo so I think I'll stick to it rather than enter an icy igloo with an English.

S Fogarty
6 Mannix Rd, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Eire

Something for nothing?

The demand for the Concertina is as high today as it has ever been since the revival of 1960. In fact, we receive more enquiries now than we ever have. However, it is sad to say that many enquiries are for job repairs to Concertinas purchased privately or instruments which have been incorrectly repaired by the unregistered for VAT and tax - Concertina players who are subsidising their income from unsuspecting beginners. This will continue to occur until the customer is educated as to prices and what to look for when buying.

Regarding prices, I can assure you that it is possible to buy a Concertina at anything between £50 to £1000 or more. (It is funny, when someone wants to buy £50 comes into mind and when they want to sell £1000 is thought of.) Let's not kid ourselves, all you will get for £50 is either a worn out instrument needing extensive repairs or the toy-like cheap foreign models. Either way, it is doubtful if it will still be playing within a year.

Very few people realise how much skilled hand work is involved in Concertina making to produce that unique sound and the reliability of many, many years (some are over 70 years old and, with proper care and repairs, could last a further 70 years) and even when priced at £1000 are made with hardly any profit. Nor do they realise that quite extensive work has to be done on second-hand instruments bought in before they are ready for re-sale; very few come in full working order.

As a Concertina maker with 31 year's personal experience in making, repairing, buying and selling - not to mention three previous generations of experience to fall back on - I welcome healthy competition and have heard there are one or two dealers and repairers earning a living the way I am, and I stress earning a living with all the overheads of running a business, not with a government grant to subsidise prices, nor are we selling other musical instruments with high profit margins. We are only interested in Concertinas but I have to admit that I have yet to meet a Concertina-maker millionaire.

A lot of instruments are going overseas. I feel the reason for this is that overseas players know good workmanship when they see it, they like to buy good British goods and are prepared to pay the proper price. This, in turn, is good for our country's exports and balance of payments, whereas we British tend to want something for nothing.

I have read with interest your articles on dealers and makers in past Newsletters and have noted that we have failed to get a mention so I wish to remind readers that we are

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still at the same address we have been at since 1890, and we hope to be for a long time to come, so if you need advice come and see us.

Neville Crabb
H Crabb & Son, 158 Liverpool Rd, Islington,
London N1 1LA Tel: 01 607 5987
(Member of the Guild of Master Craftsmen)

VAT, short for Value Added Tax, will be familiar to European readers but not, perhaps, to others. It's levied on payments for goods and services and is currently 15% in Great Britain. A £600 instrument would therefore cost the purchaser £690 - Editor's note.

The Argentinian Alternative

Frank Butler seems to think that I call for the ultimate extinction of the English Concertina, as we know it. This is not so, by a long way. It is a fine little instrument for those that can afford it and are able to read music. With a limited and probably dwindling supply of second-hand instruments, and new ones in traditional style in limited production and expensive, it would be no good trying to create a mass demand for it. They just ain't there to supply it.

What I look for has the same aim that Uhlig pursued all his life, and which accordion factories have done their utmost to discourage - to find an instrument to replace the rather vile toned red pearloid beatnik melodeon, that will do all the melodeon will do, with none of its restrictions, and would not be prohibitive in cost. Ideally, the Morris player needs something that is proof against rain, fog, fug and beer spills, with a reasonably waterproof bellows and casing, an aluminium mechanism and what the French delightfully call 'musique inoxidable' (stainless steel reeds). The trouble is that many folk-dance bands are led by melodeon players, and the only music they know is simple eight-bar stuff learnt by ear from others, so their music remains static and cannot develop. You can't play much of the popular dance music of the inter-war years on a melodeon. Some are turning to the piano accordion, but then they find it very heavy and lacking in expression. Almost exactly the same situation prevailed among the small groups that played for dancing in Argentina in the late 1800s. Simple eight bar tunes, ear players, etc. The choice of Bandoneon freed them from all restrictions and gave the Tango to the world with some of the finest music - a lot of it in counterpoint - to come out of South America. There is good proof of what I am driving at in the 'Rosalien Polka' published with our Newsletter (No 325). You cannot play it on a melodeon and you would have a job on an Anglo or English if you are going to add the bass/chord accompaniment, yet my copy is all annotated and it can be played in full score on the small 59 button Chemnitzer that Bastari can make for around £100.

There will always be a market for a top quality hand-made traditional style instrument for the solo performer or folk singer, but Wheatstone's original rather clever keyboards? I don't know. There are not many players of Anton Staedtler's original clarinet, or the simple system keyed flute. The Hayden system seems to be a lot simpler for making a good, full sound and self-accompaniment, as well as being logical. Chennitzers and Bandoneons work on the logic of usage rather than the logic of sequence. At first sight their keyboards appear haphazard but when you get to playing in harmonies of thirds, sixths or octaves you then realise that a lot of thought by a lot of players over a long time has gone into it. For constant playing in the flat keys, with brass, reeds, etc., they made the Chemnitzers in various pitches as transposing instruments.

Interest in one type of Concertina raises interest in all the others, and they are all complementary. It is the vile toned beatnik melodeon that I do not like. I think the type of Concertina depends on what it is wanted for. For the old-style Concertina Band, obviously the traditional English types. For the Tango, the diatonic bandoneon. For early keyboard music, the Bandoneon, maybe chromatic. For the Morris, something small and weatherproof, maybe Anglo, maybe Chemnitzer. For folk dance bands, a big Chemnitzer. For the folk singer/player or for playing with a guitar, whatever you fancy. There is room for all types.

Pat Robson, Crookham Village, Hants.

May I suggest that any bristling melodeon players whose sole wish is to defend the merits of their instruments correspond privately with Pat. Comments on the other points in Pat's letter are, of course, very welcome. CMT

YOUR LETTERS

Continuing craftsmanship

We would like to take the opportunity, as manufacturers, to comment on the many interesting points raised by Pat Robson in the last newsletter. First let us say that reports of our demise have been grossly exaggerated! The manufacture of Concertinas by C Wheatstone and Co has been continuous since the instrument's invention, production and currently being continued by ourselves at our Suffolk workshops.

We were intrigued by the assertion that the Concertina 'has developed a lot in other countries'. Development implies improvement and we are not aware of any improvement in quality from instruments manufactured overseas. The only significant improvement since the peak of development in the Edwardian era has been the use of certain high grade plastics and superior modern adhesives. Design innovation and the use of modern materials could produce an instrument as different from a Concertina as the electric guitar is from its acoustic partner. Would the end product be recognisable as a Concertina and be bought by youngsters for learning?

This brings us on to the next point. The desire for a cheap Concertina to learn on is shared by all Concertina enthusiasts. The instrument would have to be robust, easy to play (action), stay in tune, not leak air and not sound like an over-engineered harmonica. Reeds manufactured using the Italian technology mentioned would not last long in the enthusiastic hands of school children. Hohner, Bastari, Gremlin and Shire Concertinas have all travelled this road with varying degrees of success. Now the problems appear to be solved, on the drawing board at least, and we would like to wish Pat Robson the best of luck getting his 'Concertina' into production.

However, we would like to take issue over the remark concerning the end product of 'old-fashioned trad design and craftsmanship' not justifying the cost. This is, of course, subjective. What price justifies a musical instrument that will give a lifetime's service? Our recently introduced 'Club' range (Anglo, Duet and English) sells from around £500. How does this price compare with one year's depreciation on a new car or the cost of a fortnight's holiday abroad?

Serious players require a Concertina of the highest quality and this is what we strive to provide. This, in turn, requires traditional design and craftsmanship. Modern technology and new materials are used only where they enable us to make better Concertinas.

S Dickinson, R McKie
C Wheatstone & Co, Thornham Magna, Suffolk.

Home notes from Abroad

Dear Jean Megly and ICA members:

As random notes insist on groaning and shrieking out of my English treble, perhaps I can send a few bad; across the sea to its homeland. First, a flat note to Mr Hale, who bemoans the departure of so many Concertinas to foreign lands. Granted, were I a Briton, I'd feel the same way - but think of it as a musical parallel to the Elgin Marbles; they spread British culture abroad and may speed the day when there will be sufficient world demand to support production of good affordable Concertinas again.

Expatriate English and Anglo Concertinas are used in America almost exclusively to play British traditional music, building an interest that creates concert tour opportunities for British musicians. Our good friends Wendy Stewart (Concertina, clarsach) and Alan James (guitar, mandolin) of Lancaster will be playing three concerts in this city in May.

A somewhat sharper note to P A L Ham of Newcastle, whose notion of American incomes is a bit off. Median income in Washington - a city infested with lawyers, politicians, lobbyists and generals - has little to do with the real people in the rest of America (compare median income in St James with that of Newcastle, Mr Ham). Unfortunately, most Britons get their ideas of our country from TV bubblegum like Dallas or from fleeting exposure to the most obtrusive of my countrymen. But transatlantic ignorance is not one-sided - Americans tend to believe that most Englishmen talk like Lord Haw-Haw. and that Scots wear kilts all the time.

My own Concertina is a Wheatstone English treble, purchased just before Christmas 1982 in Glasgow. It sat, dusty and forlorn, on a shelf among the helmets and medals and swords of a small militaria shop. It was in the old pitch, the five-fold bellows were asthmatic, the air valve was missing, and I hadn't a clue as to how the keys were arranged. But it had a lovely sound all the same, and I fell in love with it.

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That winter we were living in the West Highlands and I spent many a dark, howling night by the coal fire, squeezing out my laboured tunes and trying to sort out the mysteries of written music. The English Concertina helped, with its left-hand notes on the lines and right-hand notes in the spaces! After a few unfortunate collisions with concert-pitch instruments at local ceilidhs and pubs, I took it to Mick Johnson in Hallbank Gate, Cumbria, who retuned it, replaced the air-valve and made new 6-fold bellows. Mick did a very nice job and at a reasonable price!

My wife and I left Wester Ross in 1984, returning to America with Concertina and clarsach to brighten our hours and remind us of throe wonderful years in Scotland. I play my Concertina at least an hour every day, just for the fur of it - mostly Scottish traditional music, with some Irish, Welsh and English tunes. I've started to explore other music recently - French and Eastern European folk music - and an working on Pachelbel's Canon in D (the arrangement for three violins and bass viol could be a nice piece for Concertinas!).

In Scotland I found many wonderful musicians who encouraged and suffered (both senses) my early playing through countless pub sessions and ceilidhs. The lively British tradition of public participation in music and song provides a secure screen behind which we learners can make our joyful noises. Sadly, such opportunities are few here, I am envious every time I read the calendar in my ICA newsletter!

Finally, I'd like to play a few sweet notes for Jean Megly, whoso letters I nave enjoyed and whose delightful artwork now brightens my office wall. I look forward to following his 'Concertina through the Ages' and hope it will lead me some day to meet the author!

Jack P Maloney
4905 - 41st Ave South, Minneapolis MN55417

Squeezer or Wheezer?

Anne Ward (mentioned in issue no 325) played flute - and played it well - in our 'Squeeze and Wheeze' country dance band prior to her return to the barbaric north. Our group was Southampton based. Anne used to bring her Concertina but I couldn't got her to take it out of its box!

All 'Squeeze and Wheeze' wish you well, Annie. Regards to Simon Cooper.

Tom Jukes
Alresford, Hampshire

At Your Service

As always, the Newsletter is what YOU make it. The letters pages are here for you to air your views, comment and criticise, or just to say, 'hello'. I hope that many more of you will find time to do just that.

The growth of a 'letters to the editor' section is a very welcome development. After all, the Newsletter is intended as a forum for your views and opinions and I can think of no better way of stimulating interest among such a geographically widespread membership than having a wide variety of topics being discussed by such literate and articulate individuals as make up the ICA. (Creep, creep)

I shall always try to include complete letters where possible but I reserve the right to omit irrelevant material where it can be done without altering the sense of your letter.

Occasionally, I receive letters which require a personal reply as well as containing items suitable for publication. To help me decide what to include - or omit - please make it clear which parts of your letter are intended for me and which parts are intended for the Newsletter.

Finally, can I point out that the inclusion of your letter in the Newsletter does not mean that I, or the ICA committee, agree with your views. As editor, I shall express my own views through the occasional editorial, though you are at liberty to read between the lines elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Thanks to all who have made this month's correspondence so interesting.

Colin

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ENGLISH CONCERTINA FROM 1844

by

George Jones, born February 29th, 1832

An edited and abbreviated version of this memoir appeared in the ICA Newsletter in 1955. A full and unexpurgated text is given here. Of special value is the list of employees of Wheatstone and other makers, which may solve some little known identities.

* * * *

In 1844 I commenced working for Mr Austin who made the pans complete for Wheatstone, the inventor, all done by hand, outdoor. Mr Dowset made tops, bellows, frames and cases outdoor, Mr Card, bellows, Mr Jackson, metalwork. Mr Rock Chidley and Mr Dove were finishers, Mr Saunders and Mr Scates tuners. Every part was then made by hand, no press tools were then in use.

About 1847 Mr Nickolds and his two sons were engaged to make tools to produce the metalwork, they being machinists, but there was a difficulty in obtaining note screws. Messrs Lachenal, Hervy and Shaller came over from Switzerland and started screw making. They first supplied screws to DeFrieze, Gas Meter Makers, and was introduced to Wheatstones. Mr Lachenal, being a clever tool maker, soon displaced Nickolds and Sons, who started to make concertinas in Clerkenwell. The second son, being a musical man, soon became a tuner.

Mr Scates left Wheatstone and started to make at 40 Frith Street, Soho. Mr Austin then went into the shop to do his woodwork, and I with him, but working at note fixing, reducing and voicing. My father, thinking the trade would not be any good, refused to apprentice me to Scates. I therefore had to leave.

Parish was shop boy at that time. Being a sharp boy, Scates set him in my place and he served his time to Scates and became a first-class tuner. Mr Austin then left Scates (and) started for himself. My father and him being great friends, it was arranged that I should be fixed to Austin. I having a knowledge somewhat of note work was of great use to him and it was also a good chance for me to learn every branch which I did to my great advantage. Through the treatment of my step-mother I had to leave home, and my wages were not sufficient to keep me.

I had played the French accordion from very early age and learnt to do repairs to it. I found no difficulty in getting repairs from shops to do at home at my lodgings, after ay day's work was done. Then, having a good voice, took engagements at Music Halls and came out as a vocal and instrumental artist. The German concertina came out, and I purchased one and soon was able to master it and I claim to be the first to introduce it to the public.

I must now leave my work in order to give an account of the progress of others who commenced business for themselves.

Mr Scates sold his business to Mr George Case, the Professor. His shop was in Bond Street. Not being a practical man (he) failed, and sold his interest and business to Messrs Boosey and Co who manufactured concertinas under the management of Mr Giles, tuner, with the assistance of Bankham, Card, Potter, Parish and others. Mr Rock Chidley started in Oxford Street (and) also made harmoniums. Mr Dove started in Poland Street but made no headway and arranged with Keith Prowse, who purchased the tools, etc, and who produced good instruments by the employment of Bankham, Card, Potter and Parish. There have been several others started to make, but no one of the original school. Nickold family all passed away, some many years ago.

This brings me to the firm of Lachenal and Co. When Mr Lachenal had completed the vast machinery there was no one but him and his staff who understood the working of the tools, therefore he really was the master, and being able to produce the instrument at much lower prices offered to make and supply the firms if they undertook to take a certain quantity, which they agreed to, but in time failed and broke the agreement. Now nothing remained but for Lachenal to start and make to supply the Wholesale Trade, which he did, and soon captured it, also a good export trade by making an instrument at a price within

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ENGLISH CONCERTINA FROM 1844

The reach of most people. By this means the instrument became popular. Mr Lachenal was not a musical man (but) was a far-seeing man, a clever machinist and, I believe, a good man.

I now go on to my own start. As before, I was on the Music Hall stage. This I continued till I was 15 years of age. My time was up with Mr Austin. The German Concertina having one semitone only, I made one with 22 keys for my own use and later made one with 26 keys full chromatic scale which was after my greatest success and without doubt greatly enhanced the sale of the English concertina. Being tired of the Music Hall business, I applied to Messrs Nickolds for work, who was pleased to accept my services. I was with them about fifteen months. When Mr Austin took premises in Commercial Road with a view to open them in the General Music trade in addition to manufacturing concertinas he sent for me and offered me a good position to manage the shop, to teach and to supervise the workshop. In the works he himself (undertook) the woodwork, in which he was an expert, Here he soon made money too fast and began to neglect the business, took to drink.

I now saw the thing would not last long. I engaged Mr Shaller, a tool maker of whom I have spoken, to make the tools for the production of metal work and started to make at first the Anglo-German concertina, in which I was immediately successful. (I) sent the first one to Mr Scates in Dublin, who gave me a large order. Also arranged with me to supply metal work, and made arrangements with Bankham, Card and Parish for the production of the English complete. And now Mr Austin was taken ill and soon passed away. There being no one to continue the business, the trade fell into my hands.

In 1855 I commenced to make harmonium reeds. 1867, to make harmoniums. Made the first portable instrument for Mr Turner, then of Cheapside, who I worked for for many years. Finding I could not keep up the demand for the portable, one was sent to France to a firm who improved on mine and had a very large sale. 1859, made the Celestial English and Anglo concertina. 1870, produced the original Broad Steel Reeds, also extended the size of the 40 keyed instrument to take them and which produced the most powerful instrument ever yet made.

I received an order from the Messrs Bros Webb for two 56 keyed with metal tops - a great success and played all over provinces, continent and parts of Africa, now in use. Later I made 40 key piccolo, which has been of great value to them.

I was introduced to the Salvation Army and asked if I could make for them the Anglo in pitch to go with brass instruments. This I done and supplied them for fifteen years. Wrote and published the first Anglo Tutor, which commanded a great sale. Made 42 key Anglo to play in all keys, and patented it. Made chromatic melodion, now known all over the world.

My last effort was an improvement on the portable harmonium, 1895. Owing to the many hinges being required for folding them there was a great leakage of wind. I there-fore inserted a flexible tube each side to convey the wind from the feeders direct to the reservoir.

I have had fifteen apprentices, most of which has done well, served me faithfully and now I am resting in my 81st year after a happy and prosperous life, only waiting for the last call to eternal rest.

George Jones

PS I may mention that I have had the pleasure of teaching the Bros Webb and many other popular artists.

* * * * *

By 'outdoor' Mr Jones means 'out-work', a system by which the man worked at home, providing his own tools and being paid piece-work. Mr Jones was educated at a School for Dissenters, and would have been considered well educated at the time. Only his spelling has been corrected. His sentence construction is sometimes confused, making it difficult to know who worked for whom. By about 1875 Jones instruments were made using Nettlefold's screws. The two instruments made for the Bros Webb were used by the Bros Butler around 1950. By 1960, Mr Crabb reported that it was impossible to re-tune them. The 'Recollections' was written in 1915. Mr Jones died in 1918.

The original manuscript is in the possession of Mr Frank Butler, who also provided these notes.



Halsway '85

"Inspiring demoralisation" - Tom Stevens

"Wonderful weekend. I learned more here than in the past year of self-teaching." - Sam Powers

HALSWAY '85 - The Official View

Our second Halsway weekend. was a great success with about forty players gathering to make music. Nigel Chippindale again directed operations, assisted on Saturday by Tony Rose who kindly stepped into the breach at very short notice, due to the illness of Vic Gammon.

On Friday evening we had an informal get-together for Nigel to assess the range of ability and types of Concertina. This was followed by a session of playing in the bar until in ones and twos, we trickled off to bed.

On Saturday we really got down to the serious business, Nigel taking a group for sight reading, Brian Hayden had a group for chords and, following coffee, John Hutcherson took the English 'Classical' players through their paces. Gladys Thorp took the English beginners group while Nigel took Anglo players. How grateful we are to those stalwarts who so nobly and ably help us on these occasions.

Tony Rose demonstrated, and gave us tips, on playing and singing - together! - which interested quite a large group. In the afternoon his session covered style in traditional dance music, The afternoon also took in a Big Band session and harmony and arranging; also more for beginners with Gladys.

On Saturday evening we gathered in the hall by a blazing log fire for a really super concert - what a wealth of talent! Among many excellent performers I must mention Harry Dunn from Rochdale, who delighted us all with several solos.

On Sunday morning we continued with small groups for folk, harmony and arranging - duet Concertinas - and various splinter groups doing their own thing.

The final session, after lunch, was mainly to hear Steve Dickinson who was able to show us one of Brian Hayden's new Duet Concertinas which he has just made.

I won't mention the weather, (well, it was a little better than last year). Halsway Manor 13 a delightful centre and the inner man was well looked after. Also, thanks to all who helped in various ways to make it so successful.

Book now for next March!

Vi Fordham

"Not a moment wasted" - Penny Ward

"A really smashing weekend" - Gladys Thorp

"The Big Band session run by Nigel was very successful and useful and could be developed..... perhaps we could prepare for this before the weekend and send out some music beforehand" - Bob Senior

"An inspiring weekend.

Loved the wide age-range and international flavor as well" - Sarah McGough

HALSWAY '85 - The Highlights

'I've never been on a weekend like this before'

'We don't have anything like this back home'

These were just a couple of remarks overheard during the WCCA weekend at Halsway Manor on March 22nd - 24th. Those comments could have been prompted by the incredible quality of music being played by Mr Harry Dunn and Mr John Hutcherson or by the variety of workshops available from Nigel Chippindale, Tony Rose, Tom Jukes, Gladys Thorp and Brian Hayden on such topics as Concertina playing for beginners, classical and band playing, and song accompaniment. Or maybe it was the superb concert on Saturday night which, incidentally, was one of the highlights for me.

The apres-concert music session was just as amazing. One-thirty a.m. saw Nigel Chippindale on Saxophone and Jenny Cutting, from Washington DC, on jazz piano leading such classics as 'Crocodile Rock' and 'The Young Ones'. I didn't realise that I could play 'Bye bye love' on Concertina until then!

Sunday brought us back to sanity with a band session by Tom Jukes and this was another highlight of the weekend for me. To actually sit and play as part of a Concertina band is very rewarding from a musical point of view and, at the same time, great fun.

I have already marked down the weekend for next year which, incidentally, is 14th - 16th March. Thank you WCCA and the staff of Halsway Manor for a really enjoyable weekend. See you next year.

PS How about a workshop on erecting music stands? They do seem to have a mind of their own!

Dave Blayney

"A well-planned and organized event. Food was abundant and well-prepared, lodging comfortable.....the owners should really invest some money in improving the pianos'
- Jennifer Cutting

"The weekend was planned with good variety.....an excellent idea to have the concert in the entrance hall" - Babs Goodyear

"Great weekend. Thanks very much. As a Duet dance music player I found plenty to keep me occupied" - Mary Tindall

"Please can we ban concertinas at meal times?" - Charlotte Oliver

"Super weekend once again" - Vi Fordham

HALSWAY '85 - A Revelation

As a Concertina player living in the States (rural Massachusetts) I found a lot of curious interest but few fellow players. Hence, when I heard about the Concertina weekend at Halsway Manor, I was interested but wondered about a whole weekend of free reeds. What? No strings, no whistles? I left at the end feeling very enriched with all the possibilities for Concertina playing.

John Hutcherson's English Classical session offered part playing of the Barcarolle from Tales of Hoffman and the Minuet and Trio from the Surprise Symphony of Haydn, among other selected gems. John's expertise and encouragement was much appreciated. Was I delighted to have a chance to try classical playing again on Sunday!

Nigel Chippindale's sessions were most enjoyable. What an energy level that fellow has! His teaching, morning or afternoon, small or large group, is a pleasure. As an English Concertina player of six years and a school teacher of ten, wasn't I surprised in his Sight-Reading; Short Cuts session to learn two basic and beautiful bits: Lines on Left (hand) - Apply reading skills to sight-reading (grouping, scanning etc)

The music, some of Nigel's own composing, passed round in the Big Band session was very impressive. A challenge to play for some of us but satisfying to work out and hear with all parts playing.

Brian Hayden's Sunday session on folk playing with chords allowed me to try a new instrument. After struggling through the first tune under the weight of a double-bass Concertina, I was rehearsing polite ways of getting out from under. Then I found the next tune beginning and peer pressure put the oom-pah, oom-pah into every measure. Having decided to throw my whole body into pumping the bellows, I actually began to enjoy myself and was sorry the hour finished so quickly.

I look forward to next year's weekend with the West Country Concertina Players. They're a friendly, welcoming bunch with many talents.

Sarah McGough

"Happy and successful" - Jenny Cox

THE INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION'S
NINETEENTH FESTIVAL

THE RESULTS

Class 1	<u>Elementary English Test Piece; "Afton Water"</u> Won by JUNE ROSENBLUM	80 marks
Class 2	<u>Intermediate English Test Piece: "Les Carillons" by Kirnberger</u> Won by JENNY COX	87 marks
Class 5	<u>Intermediate Duet; Own Choice</u> Won by PAT ROBSON	81 marks
Class 8	<u>Intermediate Anglo; Own Choice</u> Won by MALCOLM BARR-HAMILTON	85 marks
Class 13	<u>Folk Dance Playing</u> Won by JENNY COX	85 marks
	JOHN ROYDS	85 marks
) Joint winners
Class 16	<u>Intermediate English: Own Choice</u> Won by VIOLET FORDHAM	88 marks
Class 3	<u>Advanced English Test Piece: Sonata in A by Handel</u> Won by DOUGLAS ROGERS	86 marks
Class 6	<u>Advanced Duet</u> Won by JEAN MEGLY	88 marks
Class 10	<u>Two Concertinas</u> Won by BRIAN BIBBY and JENNY COX	85 marks
Class 17	<u>Advanced English: Own Choice</u> Won by Douglas Rogers	90 marks
Class 11	<u>Five or more Concertinas</u> Won by THE EVEN STEVENS	83 marks

The WHEATSTONE CUP presented for the highest aggregate of marks was won by;
JENNY COX

The CHARLES PARSLAY MEMORIAL TROPHY presented for the best performance of
the day was won by:
DOUGLAS ROGERS

Fuller details, including other competitors and the titles of pieces played will appear in
next month's Newsletter. Your comments on this year's Festival are invited.

LATE NEWS FRANK EDGLEY of 2346 Meldrum Rd, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N6W 4E4 is hoping to
fom the Great Lakes Concertina Association and will welcome enquiries from
Canadian members and players. Sounds like a Superior Idea! Frank is a teacher
and would like to arrange an exchange with any other Concertina-playing teacher
who would like to spend a year in Canada.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

OBITUARY

Miss Dorothy Nicholl

Dorothy joined the ICA in September 1965. Like many other players, she had taken up the Concertina in later middle age because she wanted to achieve the portamento and expresiveness not possible on the piano, on which she was already a first-class classical performer. She had been Secretary of the Burnley Music Festival for some years and was accustomed to mixing with musicians of skill. She entered the 1965 Festival, winning the Intermediate and Sight-reading classes.

At her request I called to see her in 1966. She wanted me to give her tuition but in truth there was little I could teach her. In 1967 she entered the Advanced classes, coming second in each and being beaten by the redoubtable Tom Prince by only one mark. In 1968 she reversed the order, coming first in both classes in what was possibly the biggest array of top talent the ICA ever achieved. She was a kindly and friendly competitor and very friendly with all the top-rank players, some of whom visited her for concertina sessions. Tom Jukes has remarked on the pleasure he had on such occasions.

She tried hard to get the Concertina re-introduced to Northern Festivals, with some success but not enough to please her. Her pleasant, lady-like manner cloaked her sound business acumen; for much of her life was spent in partnership with her brother in a ladies' outfitters business in Burnley, which boasted a very special clientele. She had civic responsibilities, too.

Her passing is a loss to the world of music no less to the ICA but I am sure that 'all the trumpets sounded for her on the other side).

Frank Butler

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NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to:

John Gent
17 Fleet Road, BENFLEET, Essex
John plays accordion and English Concertina

Paul Davies
15 Upper High Street, WORTHING, West Sussex
Paul plays the Anglo and any other instrument you care to throw at him

Stephen Dickinson
2 Redhouse Yards, Gislingham Rd, Thornham Magna, EYE, Suffolk IP23 8HH

Stephen Chambers
84 Vicarage Road, LEYTON, London E10 5EA
As well as playing, Stephen sells 'Antique, Vintage and Selected new instruments'

Jennifer Cutting
825 New Hampshire Avenue NW 705, WASHINGTON DC 20057, USA

Michael Drew
7 Cambridge Road, WORTHING, West Sussex BN11 1XD
Michael plays folk music on his 48 key English and would like to meet other players in the Worthing area

Tom Stevens
16 Polbathic Road, REDRUTH, Cornwall
Tom plays an Anglo, mainly for folk dance music

John Kirkpatrick
Round House, Aston-on-Clun, CRAVEN ARMS, Shropshire SY7 8EN

An equally warm welcome to returning members:

David Haxton

70 Drumpellier Ave, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 1JS

Mr Haxton joined during the early days of the ICA and has been playing for over 60 years

Maggie St George

10a Temple Market, WEYBRIDGE, Surrey KT13 9DL

Mrs D E West

Alpine House, Quarry Road, WINCHESTER, Hants

Harry Minting

121 Birch Tree Avenue, Coney Hall, WEST WICKHAM, Kent.

Mr Minting was formerly manager of Wheatstones and is a founder member of the ICA

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

P B Koval is now at;

Rua Dr Joao Pinheiro 398, Jardim Paulista, CEP 01429, SAO PAULO, Brazil

Our thanks to Mr Koval for his very generous donation

CORRECTIONS

Apologies to Charlotte Oliver who lives in Islingword Street, Brighton, not Islingworth

Apologies also to Georg Mollers, Berbmstiege 70. 4440 RHEINE, W Germany

and to Peter Hansen, Hansestrasse 122, 2400 LUBECK, W Germany

Georg's name was unintentionally deleted from the mailing list while Peter's newsletters have been going to his previous address in Kiel

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DISAPPEARING DOLLARS . . .

Our Treasurer, John Entract, reports that a recent subscription payment in the form of a cheque for 5 dollars swelled the ICA's bank balance by a mere £1.76

Here's how.....	Currency Total	\$5.00
	Sterling Equivalent	£5.98
Bank charges (Commission £2.00	
	Other Charges .22	£2.22

	Total Credited	£1.76

John therefore requests overseas members to take these charges into account when sending subscriptions.

SOME NEWSLETTER FACTS AND FIGURES

Your Newsletter is a low-cost, low-tech production requiring only the most basic materials and equipment but, as you will have seen from the Treasurer's report published last month, it represents the ICA's biggest expense.

An eight page Newsletter - the maximum size for collation purposes - costs only 6p to produce;

Paper	4p
Stencils etc	1p approx
Envelope	<u>1p</u>
Total	6p

If you live in the British Isles, postage puts the final cost up to 19p.

However, postal charges for Newsletters sent overseas put the cost up dramatically. Even at the cheapest air-mail rate (Printed Paper rate necessitating unsealed envelopes and definitely NO letters included) the final cost of a Newsletter sent to a European member is about 56p, while one sent to Australia can cost around 80p

Draw your own conclusions. Comments invited.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

May 1985

- Sat 11th. Workshop; "Getting more from your Anglo" by Alan Davies. Stag and Pheasant, Lower Parliament St, Nottingham. 8 to 10.30
- Sun 12th: Dick Miles at Worcester Folk Club/14th at Bradford-on-Avon Folk Club/ 15th Rugby Folk Club/16th Bedford Folk Club/17th Swindon Folk Club
- Sat 18th: ICA MEETING, BLOOMSBURY - St George's Church Hall Bloomsbury Way. 12 to 6pm
Nearest tubes: Holborn and Tottenham Court Rd. Nearest Pub: The Plough, Museum S
Douglas Rogers will give a talk on the 19th Century Concertina Repertoire.
Talk starts about 4.30, following a tea-break.
- Sun 19th: Dick Miles at Cheddar Folk Club
- Sun 19th WCCP MEETING AT BUTLEIGH COURT TOWERS, GLASTONBURY. SOMERSET
AGM and playing meeting hosted by Bob and Hilda Senior. 10.30 to 5pm
Take the road from Somerton to Street and locate the cricket ground.
Refreshments available.
Contact Bob Hayes, 44 Rothesay Rd, Dorchester, Dorset. Tel 0305 66809
- Thurs 23rd Dick Miles at RAF Brize Norton/24th to 26th Dick Miles at Chippenham and Lacock Festival/26th NewMexborough Quartet at Elephant Arts Festival, Plymouth
- Mon 27th South Wales Concertina Association meet at Marcus Music, Tredegar House, Newport, under the guidance of Philip Edwards. Meetings are held on the last Monday in every month. Tel 0655 54555
- Mon 27th New Mexborough Quartet at Chippenham and Lacock Festival

June 1985

- Sun 9th CONCERTINA MEETING. LEIGHTON BUZZARD. BEDFORDSHIRE
Forster Institute, 12 to 6pm. £1.50 Food available. For music and tune list send SAE to Alan Dyer, 7 Stoke Rd, Leighton Buzzard or Pippa Sandford, 9 Mardle Rd. Ring Alan on 0525 375 889 or Pippa on 0525 373 794
- Sun 9th Mexborough Quartet at Wath-on-Deerne Folk Club, S Yorkshire (to be confirmed)
- Mon 24th South Wales Concertina Association
- Fri 28th to Sun 50th
WCCP meeting at Taunton Folk Weekend. Albermarle Center, Taunton, Somerset.
Organiser, Brian Heaton. Star attraction, John Kirkpatrick.
Details (when available) from WCCP Secretary

July 1985

- Sat 6th ICA MEETING, BLOOMSBURY
Rehearsal for Bloomsbury Street Fair, under the masterful direction of Douglas Rogers. All welcome.
Plus: Talk about the Hayden Concertina by its inventor.
- Sat 15th BLOOMSBURY STREET FAIR
Lots of Street Entertainment, including an appearance by the Bloomsbury Concertina Orchestra. Sign up with the BCO by ringing Douglas Rogers on 01 578 0690
- Sun 14th WCCP meeting at Albermarle Center, Taunton. 12 to 6pm. Players from Devon and Cornwall will be especially welcome.

August 1985

- 2nd to 9th. SIDMOUTH INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL
WCCP will organise busking from 4th onwards. WCCP have a Concertina Centre at Christian Alliance Holiday Centre every morning, Sun to Fri. WCCP will serenade campers, organise trips round the bay and feature in ALL Pete the Red's films. Alistair Anderson in concert first weekend. AA workshops ?
- 9th to 11th New Mexborough Quartet at Broadstairs Folk Festival/25rd to 26th at Towersey Folk Festival/Sept 1st at Chelmsford Folk Club/3rd at St Neots Folk Club, Cambs
- Sept 8th CONCERTINA MEETING AT LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDFORDSHIRE
15th WCCP meeting at Freshford, Bradford on Avon
17th World Concertina Congress visit Halsway Manor
21st ICA meeting, Bloomsbury, with possible visit from World Concertina Congress party
- Nov 9th Taunton and Somerset Music Festival Seven Concertina Classes to be entered.
BLOOMSBURY meetings on 2nd November and 14th December

THIS MONTH'S MUSIC

....is for beginners and players who want to add to their store of folk tunes.

TUESDAY NIGHT AT THE STILL

The Still is a pub in the middle of Peterborough where excellent pints of Elgood's are juggled in from the cellar, Peterborough Morris Men congregate after Tuesday night practices, and the strains of concertina, viola, hammered dulcimer, spoons and oven the vile-toned melodeon provoke the local punks and drunks into every sort of reaction from impromptu dancing to instant departure.

Salmon Tails up the Water will be familiar to most readers. I've written it as I originally learnt it when I knew it only as a Northumbrian pipe tune. Since being taken over by North-West Clog Morris sides, bar 8 of the B part is invariably played E, F sharp, G. I prefer it the old way.

Wentworth House found its way into the Still via Vic Gammon's Sussex Tune Book. I've heard it played with great spirit by at least one North-West side but played slowly it takes on a more lyrical and stately quality. More than one chord sequence is possible for the 3 part - even on my vile-toned melodeon!

The Battle of Prague came originally from the music manuscripts of John Clare, our local poet, and is one of the most requested Tuesday night tunes. It's simple enough, but it won't take kindly to being rushed.

BOURREES FROM BORGES

Peterborough is twinned with the French city of Bourges which has an excellent traditional dance group know as Notre Berry. These tunes were collected from Notre Berry by members of Peterborough Morris during a visit to Bourges in April 1982 and have been transcribed by Pete Shaw - man of many parts - who also provided the metronome markings. Needless to say, vile-toned melodeon players rarely play them exactly as written.

A CHALLENGE

This is the Readers' Participation bit. Since this month's music consists of melody lines, how about having a go at arranging one of them, for publication in the Newsletter? Your arrangement can be for any system, the only condition being that you preserve the danceable nature of the tunes. Fantasias on a theme can wait till later.

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SQUEEZING IT IN... .Best ICA wishes to Mrs Entract for a speedy recovery... .ARTHUR CLEMENTS of Northampton would like to apologise for missing the Festival due to a last minute illness. We wish him an enjoyable holiday and success in the North London Music Festival on Friday 17th May....More than thirty members have received Library Indexes. Have you got yours?... ANGELA BELL and DERRICK HALL; brought their Midlands meeting forward to 12th April to avoid a clash with the ICA Festival. Out of 100 people informed, only 10 turned up. Result? Out-of-pocket organisers....John Royds' Festival sandwiches were foot-tappin' good.... .Jenny Cox has started an English Concertina group for 9 and 10 year olds at her school in Bristol. Alistair Anderson will be giving a lesson or two and parents have shown interest in buying instruments....Goran Rahm, from Sweden, persuaded Frank Butler to play some ducts with him which Frank was unable to hear and therefore refuses repeat bookings....How long does it take Goran to pass his Newsletter round the other 29 Swedish Concertina players'; ... WCCP subscription is still only £1....The NEW MEXBOROUGH QUARTET'S first record is due out in May on the Plant Life label....Has the International Post-Festival Pub Session finished yet?...See Free Reed no 16, Nov 1975 for illuminating comments by Frank Butler and Neil Wayne on the shortened George Jones article... .ANCHE LIBRE for February 1985 is a special Concertina edition, packed with facts and pages of music... Contact Angela and Derrick, 12 Gayton Ave., Littleover, Derby (Derby 761903) for news of an early metal-ended Wheatstone English being offered for sale by a local player. No price quoted... Learn to play masterly arrangements of 'Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair', 'Lily of Laguna' and others when you get your copy of Frank Butler's MINI-TUNES in September. FREE to all paid-up members....Music for future issues has been received from Tom Jukes, Joan Megly, Philip Edwards, among others. Keep sending it in and it may be possible to issue a 'Music-only' issue before long....

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Compiled, edited and Tipp-Exed by Colin M Turner, 509 Uggmere Court Rd, Ramsey Heights,
HUNTINGDON, Cambs PE17 1RJ 26th April 1985