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NEWSLETTER

No 338

June 1986



Tom endeared himself to us all. The virtousi found him a worthy colleague and companion in group playing; the beginners found in him a patient coach full of kindly encouragement. We all enjoyed his endless humour and sense of fun.

He was born in 1904 - or was it 1905. He teased me often about being older than him, but never said by how much. He was born in Spennymoor, his father being a Durham miner. As he said himself, the men had horny hands and delicate fingers. From time to time the sturdy independence of the Northerner came out in Tom; for example he never consented to use a post-code. By 1915 the family was complete with five boys and two girls. Making the money go round was a problem, and his letters telling me about that period make fascinating reading, for they echo my own experiences, although I lived in London.

He was taught to play the concertina by Ned Hughes, commencing in 1921 at the age of 16. After a year's serious practice he was allowed to join the South Shields Concertina Band, in which he played second violin parts, on his concertina of course. An earlier article in the Newsletter gives some details of the band at the time. He discontinued playing in 1929, and I fancy had much uncertainty in employment. He spoke briefly of joining a drifter at Sheerness during the war, and that is all I have of his war experiences, he has two daughters, born 1939 (?) and 1944, both justly proud of their Dad. When I first met him he was reputed to be "in insurance" and he later spoke of old colleagues form the Prudential.

In 1959 he decided to resume playing the concertina, and took his instrument to Wheatstone's for repair. Harry Minting sold him a new one, and introduced him to the ICA, to the everlasting benefit of that organisation. He was always welcome, and prominent at meetings and Festivals. At first he played with the Kensington Group, then led by Len Jones, whose place he took when Len died suddenly. It became legendary for the Kensington Group to "top the bill". I remember Tom at the week-end courses at Hitchin, where he was tireless. He played from 10am to midnight.

The passing of time saw the demise of the Kensington Group, and much of the serious effort of those days. But Tom was a founder member of the West Country Concertina Players in 1982, has been prominent in their affairs ever since. It is of interest that the London Concertina Orchestra played Marriage of Figaro at the First London Concertina Festival In 1955, and the West Country Players made the same choice for the Taunton Festival of 1984. A very testing piece. Tom himself won the Telecom Cup for solo concertina at the Taunton Festival in 1985. He must have been 81; a truly worthy success.

Tom spent Sunday the 11th May with the WCCP, a long happy day; Monday he played golf; Tuesday he left us. We mourn his loss, but at 82 we are thankful that he was spared a distressing illness.

F. E. Butler

Three years ago a group of concertina players, mostly unknown to each other, met in Frome. This was the Inaugural meeting of the West Country Concertina Players. Bob Senior was elected chairman. He had brought from Manchester Harry Dunn. Tom Jukes was elected as Musical Director. His playing delighted us too.

Since then... three Halsway Manor weekends; two concertina days at the Taunton festival; two series of sessions at Sidmouth..twenty plus playing days at Freshford and elsewhere...various band meetings at Butleigh Court Towers...through all this Tom was our inspiration, teacher and leader. His humour, encouragement and playing have been part of our lives.

He is irreplaceable, but his influence will continue as long as any of us play concertina. We were so lucky to know him.

Jenny Cox

TOM PRINCE

Members of the ICA will be sorry to hear of the death of Tom Prince at his home in Consett, County Durham, on the 1st June, 1986. He had suffered a heart attack about a fortnight previously, and had also been somewhat affected by the death of his wife last year.

Until 1975, Tom had been a blacksmith at the Consett Steel Works, and he took the opportunity of retirement to concentrate more fully on his music. The Concertina was his prime interest latterly, but as a young man he played many instruments, including the fiddle and saxophone. Memebers will recall that at one time he competed at the ICA's Music Festivals in London, and rarely returned home without a good selection of the major Trophies.

Tom could, and did, play all kinds of music, but he was best known locally as a Folk-dance musician and had run his own band over a period of several decades, mostly in conjunction with the pianist Jack Bainbridge with whom he made a privately-produced tape a few years ago. At one time he conducted a Concertina band and up to his death was still running, and teaching, an Accordion and Concertina group in Consett. He was an accomplished Morris and Rapper Sword musician who played for Benfieldside, his local Team, and also for the Newcastle Morris Men until ten year ago.

Over the years at Ring Meetings (gatherings of several hundred Morris Men at various venues all over the country), Tom would sometimes entertain at the conclusion of the Feast. He did not then play Folk music but rather party pieces for the Concertina. The brilliance of his playing, coupled with the atmosphere, made these truly unforgettable occasions and do doubt were a revelation to many who had not heard his like before.

Tom himself was an unassuming and mild-mannered man who was held in much respect and affection for his personal qualities as well as his musical skills. He will be missed by many.

Phil Ham

ANNOUNCEMENT

The September issue of the Newsletter will be edited by ALAN DYER.

Pease send your news, letters, articles and music to Alan at this address

ALAN DYER
7, STOKE ROAD
LEIGHTON BUZZARD
BEDFORDSHIRE

Tel 0525 375 889

Please help Alan to plan the Autumn issues by sending him your items as early as possible.

It is also extremely helpful if you can indicate precisely what you want to appear in print. The best way to do this is to write out, or type, your item on a separate piece of paper, mark it 'For Publication' and send it to the Editor with a covering letter.

YOUR LETTERS...

Scottish Fieldwork

In order to clarify your report that I have been granted a LIVING SCOTLAND award under the scheme sponsored by the Glenfiddich whisky company, I offer a few notes. Newsletter readers may be aware that I am currently engaged in research into the history of the concertina and its players in Scotland, a country which welcomed the newly invented free reed family of instruments with open arras and where their distinctive sounds can still be heard at every ceilidh.

The award is to allow for field recording of older musicians, both playing and talking about their music and instruments. To date I have visited and recorded around 10 elderly concertinists in Scotland, with more to come when time allows. The tapes will be transcribed in due course and copies are to be lodged with the archives of the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, which is one of the foremost collections of field recording relating to national folklore and music. This project should cheer the hearts of recent correspondents to the newsletter who lament the lack of such work.

The English concertina is very suited to the playing of music within the Scottish tradition and with my music group THE WHISLEBINKIES we combine the concertina with other traditional instruments including fiddle, lowland bagpipes, ciarsach and flute.

In 1984 I performed on concertina in an experimental piece under the direction of the great American avant-garde composer, John Cage, this being the composer's first experience of the instrument. During the 1985 Edinburgh International Festival we shared the platform and a specially composed piece with Sir Yehudi Meuhin. Unlike Cage, the great man had already encountered the concertina as he told me he is the proud possessor of an old instrument, a gift from his son I think!

Unfortunately the band seldom plays in England although we will be at the Cambridge folk club on 11th July on our way to a continental tour. Our latest album WHISTLEBINKIES 4 has just been released on the Claddagh label and features concertina on most tracks.

Stuart Eydmann
4 Melville Place
EDINBURGH
EH3 7PR

Keeping in touch

Living overseas from Britain, the newsletter is a very important means of keeping in touch, and I must make compliments for the really good quality and the regular appearance of the newsletter! Also, with the Kirkpatrick articles I am glad the ICA is picking up the trail which was so abruptly broken off when the "Free Reed" newsletter suddenly stopped. Many interested people were still looking forward for the promised articles such as the Anglo, and reprints of old Catalogues/pricelists of concertinas by Lachenal, Wheatstone etdc. This might also be something for the ICA Newsletter to pick up where Free Reed left it. Also it is a pity that the concertina T-shirts which were made during the Free Reed existence are no longer available. Maybe something else which could be introduced again by the ICA? Quite likely a lot of people might be interested!

Sincerely,
J J Van OmmenKloeke
133 Boerhaavelaan
LEIDEN 2334EH
The Netherlands

Qualified benefits

Although I never had the pleasure of- meeting Nigel Chippindale, or of hearing him play, his letter in the February issue leads the reader to conclude that he had a fair expectation of life, and I would like to express my sympathy with his relatives for what must have been a rather sudden end.

My wife and I came to live in Spain for the climate; and the Newsletter is now my only contact with the ICA. While caravanning through and around the coast of Portugal and Spain, I realised that there is very little music to be heard in the camps. It was this that caused me to buy a concertina and teach myself to play it from the "Tutor". However, I was rather surprised to find, on my first visit to the ICA in London that there was only one other Duet player present. As I am one of those "lone" players sometimes referred to in the Newsletter, I know- very little about the other types of concertinas, but it soon became obvious to me that I had bought a very difficult instrument. Since every key in the "Tutor" needs completely different fingering, no doubt this is why Brian Hayden invented his new system. As I play mainly by ear I have eased the position by learning any new tune in a new key. This helps one to master the chords and harmonies in various keys much more easily than by plugging away at the exercises. But to play Schubert's "Ave Maria" with full arpeggio accompaniment in chords would take a better man than me even in C, let alone A where one has to span the keyboard to reach a half tone. I was therefore rather surprised to read that Ivan North had bought a 46 key Hayden after using a 67 key McCann: He could hardly expect the same scope and surely to have to jump from treble to bass to fill in the required notes is adding difficulties which to some extent must counteract the benefits of the Hayden system.

No one yet has said a word concerning the tone of these new Haydens or the price.

Wishing all British members of the ICA a better summer than they - "enjoyed" last year!

Vic Davies
Apartado 68

Alfaz del Pi
Alicante
Spain

Working hard

I am afraid there is few information concerning our favourite instrument in this part of France except I feel very lonely (sigh!). A meeting with Jean Megly is expected in June!

I would like to tell my admiration for Frank Butler's arrangements and his work in general; I work hard on MINI-TUNES and CONCERTINA 2 but some tunes are really challenges for me!

I have been also impressed by Penny Ward's "At Sunrise" and "Softly Awakes my Heart" arrangement by Arthur Clements.

I wish I could write such tunes and arrangements - of ragtime, for instance! Anyway, no doubt I shall let you know when I manage it;....

Best Wishes,
Jean Luc Valette
1 Rue Rameau
La Gateliere
60300 SENLIS
France

My Anglo discography has now expanded to three pages. For those interested a SAE will secure a copy. May I also express my thanks for all those who have contributed to the list, especially Pete Bellamy, John Kirkpatrick, Roger Digby, Jean Megly and the late Nigel Chippindale.

Just a thought. I am undertaking two sponsored Walks again this year as follows:-

MAY 24-26th NEWBURY - BROCKENHURST (75 MILES).
AUG 24 - 29TH WINCHESTER - CANTERBURY (150 MILES)

The money raised will go to several charities including Cancer Research and Guide Dogs for the Blind. Any additional walkers or offers for sponsorship will be most welcome.

Peter Trimming
20 Haslemere Road
Thornton Heath
Surrey
CR4 7BE

BUTTONHOLES

Two red roses for CALENNIG'S Mick Tams and Pat Smith from Maggy St.George.

Mick and Pat live in Llantrisant, and run one of the best folk clubs in the U.K. As we were away when they helped a Welsh contingent to raise over £2,000 by walking from Llantrisant to London in aid of FOLK FOR FAMINE in May, I rang them to ask about the splendid music they make with two concertinas.

In the early 70*s Ali Anderson started Mick's interest in a loaned 26-key Jones Anglo rumoured to have belonged to Phil Tanner's family. He progressed to a 30-key Lachenal, found in a Northumberland junk shop, which John Cunningham thought had been used by Silly Wizard. In 1978 Pat, recuperating after an operation, was lent the Lachenal; she says it was baptism by fire, as everyone on the ward demanded Danny Boy immediately!

Pat kept the Lachenal - and Danny - and acquired amazing red bellows from Sue Holman. Only Pat could get away with scarlet bellows! Mick bought his present Jeffries, and so it all began. They say they never practice. Hear them on record, on one of their frequent folk club tours, or at Halsway next March, and form your own opinion

Of their clever, bouncy Welsh dance tune arrangements they say it's the challenge that's most interesting. Their tunes were written down for harp and fiddle, from the 17th to 19th centuries; and by the time the concertina was invented, Welsh traditional music was all but lost beneath the Chapel influence. Each of the three Calennig albums has one concertina duet among the fine and varied repertoire they present.

Mick and Pat are unsurpassed as ambassadors, world-wide, for Welsh music and song. The successful blending of their concertinas is largely due, they say, to regular maintenance from Marcus Music, of whom Mick gave the following quote; "Quick, efficient, enthusiastic and cheap - and only 20 minutes down the road, which is great in an emergency!"

It would seem that as far as squeeze-boxes are concerned, Wales is extremely lucky.

Maggy St.George

You can hear CALENNIG on the Greenwich Village albums...

GVR 214 Songs and Tunes from South Wales
GVR 224 You can take a White Horse anywhere
GVR 1325 Snowy Davs of January

FREDERICK WILLIAM BRIDGMAN

A CONCERTINIST IN VICTORIAN EDINBURGH

by
Stuart Eydmann

The second quarter of the nineteenth century is normally regarded as a low period in the history of Scottish music, the death of Nathaniel Gow in 1831 heralding the end of the golden era of fiddle music. Not entirely by coincidence this period also saw the introduction of a range of new musical instruments which operated on the ancient free reed principle; instruments which would in a few short years find their way into and influence folk, and popular music throughout the world.

Among the first players of the French Accordeon and English Concertina were aristocratic amateurs although the sophistication of the latter ensured that, for a time at least, it was taken into the hearts of the London musical establishment and featured prominently in formal performances of specially arranged classical music and pieces composed for the instrument. By the year 1840 the concertina had found a place in the Edinburgh music scene through the playing of a child prodigy, Frederick William Bridgman.

Bridgman was born in London in 1833 but came to Edinburgh as an infant to be taught by his grandfather, the pianist, violinist and composer, John Eager. Originally from Norwich, Eager had held the post of corporation organist at Great Yarmouth before settling in Edinburgh in 1836 where he became noted as a progressive teacher including the Royal children among his pupils. One of Eager's two daughters married Joseph Lowe the celebrated fiddle player and dancing master, while the other married a Mr Bridgman who was also a musician and the father of Frederick. Unlike most of his contemporaries in London, who had already established themselves as performers on conventional orchestral instruments, F W Bridgman first appeared as a concertinist before his debut as a pianist at the age of seven. During the 1840's he played in and around Edinburgh and drew great praise from the critics for his performance on both instruments.

In 1851 F W Bridgman entered the Conservatoire at Leipzig where he studied under the great Moscheles. He returned to Edinburgh in 1862 after eight years in England as a soloist, conductor and manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company, London. In Edinburgh he worked as a teacher and held a post at the Edinburgh Ladies' College as well as acting as organist at the United Presbyterian Church in College Street. As a pianist and accompanist he appeared with concert companies in nearly every large town in Scotland and was in great demand by visiting artists of note and the organisers of regular concerts, such as those held every Saturday at the City Hall, Glasgow.

Throughout his career Bridgman employed the English concertina in his public performances and, as noted in the obituary in the Scotsman which followed his death in 1892, he:

"made a speciality of a Scottish selection on that instrument which was always popular."

Would it be fair to guess that his Scottish selection included Mr Eager's Strathspey, the composition of his uncle Joseph Lowe, which bears the name of his grandfather and teacher? Like so much Scottish music this tune sounds well 'on the box'.

TAUNTON AND SOMERSET MUSIC AND DRAMA FESTIVAL

The Taunton and Somerset Music and Drama Festival is an important and well-established event in the cultural life of the West Country. Thanks to the efforts of members of the West Country Concertina Players back in 1994, Saturday November 15th will be your opportunity to take part in the Festival, either as contestant or spectator,

Between them, the seven competitive classes cater for players of every ability, from the rawest beginner to the most seasoned virtuoso. Whatever keyboard system you play - Anglo, Chemnitzter, Duet, English or Hayden - you can enter any of the following:

- 1) ELEMENTARY
- 2) INTERMEDIATE FOLK
- 3) INTERMEDIATE CLASSICAL
- 4) ADVANCED FOLK
- 5) ADVANCED CLASSICAL
- 6) TWO CONCERTINAS

These six classes are all 'own choice', which means that you alone make the decision about which piece of music you will play. There is no limit, either, on the number of classes you can enter. In addition there will be a

7) CONCERTINA BAND CONTEST

open to any group of four or more players. Music for this event will consist of TWO short pieces by Antony Holborne, selected and arranged by Dave Townsend, and an 'own choice' piece which should last for about two-and-a half to three minutes. There is no need for the instruments you use to belong to the same system.

The event, to be held at Queen's College, Taunton, will start at 11am and all classes will be judged by DAVE TOWNSEND who, last year, proved to be a popular and sympathetic adjudicator.

November may seem a long way off but please don't wait until the last minute before deciding whether to take part. All entries should be made by early September so, even if you have only the vaguest intentions of taking part, write NOW to the organiser, JENNY COX, who will be able to provide you with music and any further information you may need.

To follow the Festival, the West Country Players are hoping you will join them in a full day's playing at Halsway Manor, not far from Taunton, on Sunday 16th. Help them make it a memorable weekend.

For music advice and encouragement, send a SAE to: Jenny Cox, 33 Northumberland Rd, Redland, Bristol BS6 7AZ Tel 0272 487 96

For Applications Forms, please send a SAE to: Vi Fordham, Tackers Cottage, Horn St, Nunney, FROME, Somerset Tel 037 384 442

Bed & Breakfast enquiries to

The Manager, Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, Taunton.

Tel 09 848 274

Buying a Secondhand Concertina

Part 2

What to look for when buying concertina

Andrew C Norman

An in depth examination is not always possible, but wherever practical, check the following points, bearing in mind that anything can be repaired or replaced, at a price, and that some repair work or tuning is to be expected. Assuming then that this is the chosen instrument, and it has not been already restored:

1. Try to play the instrument to ascertain:
 - a) Does it work?
 - b) Does it have the sort of sound required?
 - c) Does it sound in tune with itself?

A weak sound with many reeds not working could mean brass reeds, broken reeds, or other faults. If the instrument plays quite satisfactorily, compare the pitch with another instrument if possible, or something known to be in modern concert pitch:- a tuning fork, pitch pipe, or piano, ideally! Anything in fact except an infernal melodeon! After this a reasonable idea of tone, suitability etc. may be established.

Most instruments I come across are, however, unplayable so I recommend:

2. A general study of the external condition - check for:
 - a) Missing or broken fretwork, endbolts, worn felt bushings around the buttons. Straps are easily replaced.
 - b) Signs of misuse or lack of care towards the instrument.
 - c) Any obvious rips, tears, or previous repairs to the bellows, especially where played over the knees!
 - d) Does the instrument look clean, particularly bellows, papers, with a case perhaps?
3. Check for leaks. Hissing noises indicating leaks from the ends can be caused by:
 - a) Broken springs
 - b) Missing or defective pads, particularly if the felt has been eaten away
 - c) Cracks in the action boards
 - d) Sticking buttons
 - e) Leaks from the bellows
 - f) Leaks where the gusset, or edge strips have come unstuck
 - g) Torn or eaten leather, particularly at or around the bottom folds or gussets.
 - h) The corners sometimes tear, also check where the instrument may have been rubbed over the knees.

4. Remove ends. If the instrument does not play well, or play at all, it is advisable to look further before parting with large amounts of cash! If the endbolts do not unscrew easily, it is possible that corrosion and damp have seriously affected the instrument. Steel reeds, of course, easily rust.

So, having removed one end, place the end section aside temporarily, and check the reed-pans and bellows.

5. Remove the reed-pan.
 - a) Is it a good fit? The reedpan mustn't be too loose.
 - b) Are the reeds rusty or broken?
 - c) Are they all there?
 - d) Are they all the same, all steel, all brass, etc?
 - e) Is the concertina clean inside or does it resemble a science experiment? i.e mould! The valves usually need replacement anyway.

- f) Are the blocks that support the reed-pan well fixed? If not, the reed-pan may have dropped and all the reeds will sound weak or several sound simultaneously.
- g) Is the reed-pan warped or cracked, etc?
- h) Lift the bellows to the light, and look inside for obvious leaks, or previous repairs. Bellows are expensive to replace, and if a lot of sticky tape has been used, replacement may be necessary.

6. The Action (the end section).

- a) Look at the section from underneath. Cracks should be visible.
- b) It may be worthwhile to gently blow through the pad holes to give an idea of which ones are defective, In case it's not possible to see inside the action. There's a limit to just how far you can dismantle a concertina in front of the vendor. If it's a real basket-case, you may not be able to get it back together if you decide not to buy it!
- c) Check to see if all the buttons move freely and smoothly. Though Anglo actions can often be dismantled quite easily the thin screws in English ends usually rust and might need drilling out. For reasons better known to anglo players, Anglos suffer a great deal more from abuse and bad repairs; some have to be seen to be believed!

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT! Having ascertained the condition of this once pristine instrument that you are considering purchasing, you need a rough idea of what it will cost to repair, or if its repair is within the scope of the player.

If you have discovered all the faults mentioned, and it is a brass reeded Lachenal 20 button Anglo in high pitch, offered by your local 'Antique' dealer for a mere £100 - which isn't unusual, actually - you can tell' him what to do with it!

But: if for example you have a Lachenal 48 button English with rosewood ends, bone buttons, and steel reeds - quite a satisfactory instrument, but not the best - with the following faults, you could get a reasonable idea of what to pay if you can afford it!

For example: the instrument belonged to the grandfather of the seller, it hasn't been played for many years, and he says "make me an offer": you discover on examination :

1) most buttons move freely: 2) some reeds don't sound, but you are happy with the tone: 3) it's probably in high pitch, and out of tune with itself: 4) hisses from the ends, and bellows, but generally quite clean, with only the odd pieces of broken fretwork: 5) thumb straps are missing, but finger rests, and bolts, etc are OK.

After removing an end, you find:

1) Some valves are curled back, some are stuck in the reed slots: 2) all reeds are there (and all steel), but show signs of rust, and some are loose: 3) the reed pans fit well, but some of the blocks rattle around in the bellows: 4) the bellows have about a dozen small tears, and about a dozen worn or patched corners: 5) unable to look inside the action, it appears when looking from underneath that some pads have come adrift from the levers, and some have obviously been attacked by insects, allowing air to escape.

You reassemble the instrument, and think hard. As a rough guide, to repair these faults, retune to concert pitch (and revalve throughout), fit new straps, repair fretwork, repair bellows, clean, repad completely, replace any broken springs, make it play evenly and well, could set you back about £90.00.

If you think such a repair is within your own capabilities, make sure you really know what is needed, how to do it, and that you have the right materials. Getting the right leather or wood for a concertina 100 years old, or more, isn't always easy, and there are no modern substitutes, or easy ways out! I've often had to remove sticky-tape, bits of old shoe leather, safety-pins, bits of sponge or rubber, candle wax, sealing wax, and chewing gum, bits of cornflake packet and Christmas cards, not forgetting moulds, spiders and insects!

A professional restoration will be priced depending on the condition and the number of buttons, accepting that the customer may well require more cosmetic work on a top quality instrument, such as refinishing the ends, it is likely to cost the same to repair a brass reeded Lachenal English with mahogany ends, as a Wheatstone English with steel reeds and metal ends worth perhaps four times as much.

Having said all that, it comes down to what you can afford anyway. Wheatstone Aeolas and Jeffries Anglos are often advertised for £500 - £600, but you don't have to pay anything like that for most good concertinas. There's always an element of risk in buying a concertina, more so if it's unplayable, so decide what you want or can afford first, while also being a bit flexible. Finally, should you have any doubts about choosing the concertina, or are even considering an infernal melodeon, remember: "The Concertina...is portable, toy-like and very neat in appearance; it's use extracts no disfigurement of the person: on the contrary, it particularly favours, without compelling, a display of personal attractions; - while it is capable of producing most expressive music, it is much more perfect in its musical capabilities than many instruments of higher pretension, and cannot be sounded out of tune." (Davidsons Concertina Tutor).

NORTHAMPTON LARKS

Dave Townsend, who was appearing in "LARK RISE" at Northampton Repertory Co. Theatre, called on Arthur Clements, and they were soon playing some of Arthur's arrangements for two concertinas, the Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana and The Saxon March by Boggetti. Arthur played The Dawn of Spring by Le Duc, taken from a recording by Alexander Prince, and Dave has requested a copy as he was impressed with the arrangement. Tea and cakes were served as usual.

TEACHING YOURSELF THE ANGLO

The BERTRAM LEVY ANGLO TUTOR - book and cassette - is now being distributed in Britain by Colin Dipper of Heytesbury, Wiltshire. The price is around £10 but you are advised to check before ordering.

For full details write to: Colin Dipper, West End House, High Street, Heytesbury, WARMINSTER, Wilts BA12 0EA Phone 0985 405 16

SITUATION FILLED

Following the July issue of the Newsletter there will be the usual summer break before the September issue appears - this time edited by ALAN DYER of Leighton Buzzard.

Don't imagine that Alan will be able to produce that September issue without your help so, please, use the summer break to send him the letters, articles, news items and music that you would like to see published in the autumn.

In the meantime, there is still plenty of space for items to go in the July issue. I shall try to include whatever you send but anything which is squeezed out or arrives too late for publication will be passed on to Alan.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS.. ..

Subscriptions received

The Treasurer wishes to thank the following members who have renewed their subscriptions;-

B J Bibby D J Blayney D Breeman A C Collins J Cox P Davies C M Doorbar F Edgley J Glasson E Jones A Kell P B Koval
L Law P Lin D A Lloyd N J Mikus A J Mills H Minting R Shaw M St George C Taylor P Trimming Jean-Luc Valette K Yendall

Special thanks to those who have sent donations in addition to their subscriptions.

Subscriptions due

At the end of May the Treasurer reported that subscriptions were due from (surnames only): Aumeau Brady M Butler Chambers Cobb
Creer Cutting Daly S Dickinson Drynan Elphick Hale Hathaway Hayden Higgs Hoare Inglis Kirkpatrick Morris Oliver
Randolph Rogers Royds Stapledon Stevens Wayne

Lapsed members

The treasurer reports that January/February subscriptions have not yet been received from the following members.

Mrs L C Hodges L C Hodges S Bowen W L Stevens D Clift T P Barker M North

If you wish to retain your membership, please inform the Treasurer at once, otherwise this will be your last newsletter!

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to:

Iris Bishop	44 Ifield Rd, West Green, CRAWLEY, W.Sussex
Paul Dickinson	2a Holland Rd, SPALDING, Lincolnshire
Mrs Fetterplace	208 Franciscan Rd, Tooting, LONDON SW17 8MG
P F Johnson	61 Moss Lane, Alderley Edge, Cheshire SK9 7HP
M A Pattman	4 Branscombe Rd, BRISTOL BS9 1SN
Sam Powers	Luther Street, Peaks Island, Maine 04108 USA
Becci Prosser	9 Castle Avenue, ROCHESTER, Kent ME1 2DW
Bob Senior	Butleigh Court Towers, GLASTONBURY, Somerset BA6 8SA
J Sever	7 Brentham Way, Ealing, LONDON W5 1BJ
Jurgen Suttner	Lisburger Str 32, 5900 SIEGEN, W Germany
Mary Tindall	3 Mayfield Drive, Caversham, READING, Berks RG4 0JP
Mrs G M Walton	180b Sovereign Rd, Earlsdon, COVENTRY, CU5 6UY
Christopher West	151 Stockwood Lane, Stockwood, BRISTOL BS14 8SZ
Tony Wilkins	6 Lansdowne Rd, FALMOUTH, Cornwall TR11 4BE
Peter Woodger	55 Bell Rd, SITTINGBOURNE, Kent

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Penny Ward	Phoenix Cottage, 2 Higher Pennance, Lanner, REDRUTH, Cornwall
Dave Townsend	189 Corn Street, WITNEY, Oxon OX6 7DL
Tony Kell	Sussex House, 10 Shirley Drive, WORTHING, W Sussex BN14 9AX

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland	£4.00
Europe	£5.00
USA, Canada, S.America, Africa	£6.50
Australia	£7.00

Martin Williams reports on....

TIM LAYCOCK AT BLOOMSBURY

SATURDAY 12TH APRIL 1986

Many, many years ago, when good Queen Victoria ruled England and the concertina was, as every schoolchild knows, to be heard spreading its melodious harmonies up and down the land from the elegant drawing-rooms of the great to the cosy back parlours of the humble, there might have been born the typical concertina player. Such a being would not have been a flawless Regondi-like virtuoso - for what typical player could ever aspire to such heights? - but rather someone whose repertoire summed up the wide appeal of the instrument to different audiences in different moods. And had this person existed he would surely have looked and sounded like Tim Laycock's nameless hero whose fate and musical Odyssey were presented to a fortunate hand of ICA members at the last meeting in Bloomsbury.

Tim managed to pack into an hour a selection of almost every style and type of music which has given pleasure to concertina players and listeners since the instrument was invented. His hero's progress could best be described as erratic, involving spells as a soldier, sailor, Salvation Army bandsman, music hall entertainer, circus juggler, freelance busker and aged, reminiscing greybeard, but wherever he went the concertina went too. In fact, it seemed to supply the single stable element in his life.

And wherever he went he picked up tunes and songs, from lullabies to hymns, from marches to music hall hits, from sea shanties to solemn and stately classical pieces, which he proceeded to perform for our and his enjoyment. For one of the most striking features of this wandering musical Everyman was that he obviously loved the instrument and would almost have been willing to play for his own pleasure alone whether an audience had been there or not, and this is surely a trait he shares with most concertina players, past or present. They play the instrument because they like it, and they do not worry unduly if the world is tasteless or witless enough to sneer. All of us could sympathise with the character as undeserved hardships fell on his head, many of them connected with the invention of a certain unwieldy and raucous square black box in the early 20th century, and Tim's innocent West Country voice brought out the sadnesses of some episodes most effectively. But he carried on playing regardless and it was the good times and the fun that predominated, especially during the spell in the circus, when our hero related all the paraphernalia he could juggle - I remember "Eight 'eavy ostrich eggs 'atched in 'ottest Africa" - while actually performing with 'Three Brass Balls' and playing a concertina concealed in his bow tie which, unfortunately, we weren't allowed to see. All ending, very suitably, with the ageing concertina player who had seen it all and played it all, being approached by the younger generation and asked to pass on his secrets and share his music. Which brings us back to the ICA meeting.

So it was an excellent show, displaying not only Tim's playing abilities on the Crane Duet but also his experience as a public performer and showman. It would make a fine radio programme or even record, and I certainly hope the first performance, created specially for the ICA meeting, won't be the last.

Martin Williams

DIARY DATES

June 1986

Sat 14th ICA LONDON MEETING
 BLOOMSBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HALL 1 to 7pm
 Guest: ROGER DI6BY, who will talk about his approach to playing, the Anglo.
 Admission 50p. Tea and biscuits 15p
 Nearest tubes: Holborn (walk westward)
 Tottenham Court Rd (walk eastward)
 Nearest pub: The Plough, Museum St.

July 1986

Sun 6th WEST COUNTRY CONCERTINA PLAYERS
 at Freshford Village Hall, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts

Sun 11th BLOOMSBURY STREET FESTIVAL;
 Bloomsbury Concertina Band will be led by Douglas Rogers

Sun 14th Concertina Meeting at Leighton Buzzard
 Forster Institute 12 to 6pm
 Phone 0525 375 889 (Alan Dyer)
 0525 375 794 (Pippa Sandford)

August 1986

1st - 8th SIDMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL
 WCCP Concertina Centre from Monday 4th
 Christian Alliance Holiday Centre
 All Saints Road 10 - 12.30 daily

24th - 29th
 PETER TRIMMING'S SPONSORED WALK
 Winchester to Canterbury - 150 miles in aid of
 CANCER RESEARCH and GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

September 1986

Sun 7th WCCP at Freshford Village Hall

Fri 19th - Sun 21st
 ALISTAIR ANDERSON AT HALSWAY MANOR
 a weekend of Concertinas and Northumbrian Pipes
 jointly promoted by EFDSS and Halsway Manor
 Total cost £40 shared, £43 double
 Deposit £10 per person.
 Payment and enquiries should be made to:
 Halsway Manor Soc, Ltd.,
 Crowcombe, TAUNTON, Somerset.
 Tel Crowcombe (09848) 274
 Bursaries available by application to;
 Peter Dashwood
 EFDSS National Training Officer
 PO Box 46
 ROTHERHAM
 S Yorks
 Tel 0709 377 084

Sat 20th ICA LONDON MEETING
 BLOOMSBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HALL 1 to 7pm
 HARRY MINTING will talk about his association with Wheatstones, and play some of his favourite music.
 BLOOMSBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HALL
 is in Bloomsbury Way, a continuation of the eastern end of New Oxford Street.
 Locate St George's Church and walk along the left hand side. You will find the hall on your left

Sun 28th M1 FOLK DAY
 Challney Community College, Luton, Beds
 includes a course on
 'Playing and Performing Folk Music'
 for players with some experience
 led by ROGER WATSON
 for details of other courses, including
 Historical Dance Kentucky Running Set,
 Lakeland Stepping, Border Morris,
 Longsword and Children's entertainment,
 contact Dave Rutherford,
 2a Pligrim's Close, HARLINGTON, Beds LU5 6LX
 Tel 0525 454 3

November 1986

Sat 15th TAUNTON AND SOMERSET MUSIC AND DRAMA FESTIVAL
 Queen's College, Taunton. 11am start
 A competitive event with 7 Concertina Classes
 including a CONCERTINA BAND CONTEST of
 one set piece and one 'own choice'.
 For four or more players.
 Adjudicator DAVE TOWNSEND
 All entries must be made by early September
 for fullest details, contact Jenny Cox 0272 487 96

Sun 14th Concertina Meet and Workshops at HALSWAY MANOR
 with Dave Townsend

Sat 22nd CONCERTINA MEET AT KIMBERLEY, NOTTINGHAM
 precise venue to be announced
 Workshops with Alistair Anderson
 and the New Mexborough Quartet
 Dance to Out of the Hat Band,
 Alistair Anderson, Ripley Wayfarers,
 Mexborough Quartet, A Little of What You Fancy.
 In aid of the British Heart Foundation.
 Contact Angela Bell,
 26 Larkfield Road, Nuthall, Nottingham
 Notts 0602 384 479 or Derby 761 903

January 1987

Sun 4th New Year Party at Butleigh Court
 Glastonbury, Somerset.

February 1987

Sun 15th WCCP meeting

March 1987

13th - 15th
 CONCERTINA MEET AT NOTTINGHAM
 Fri: John Kirkpatrick and Alistair Anderson
 in Concert
 Sat: Workshops with John and Alistair
 Dance with Out of the Hat Band,
 John, Alistair and the Ripley Wayfarers
 Sun: more workshops and playing sessions
 Contact Angela Bell,
 26 Larkfield Road, Nuthill, Nottingham
 Notts 0602 384 479 or Derby. 761 903

20th - 22nd

HALSWAY MANOR WEEKEND.
 Workshops led by Mick Tems and Pat Smith

South Wales Concertina Players
 meet on the last Monday of every month
 at Marcus Music, Newport, Gwent