

# INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION

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Subscriptions are due on the first of January. New members at  
1/12th of the above rates per month to the end of the year.

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## Editorial Chuntering

Here I am again after the summer break. I hope all of you have enjoyed the weather. I found it a bit too hot for my taste, but there were plenty of distractions - of a family nature. How did Sidmouth go? Nobody has told me what was going on there, and it is not a festival that I can find time for in my activities. And I have been rather busy. You might be interested to know that I am not going to collapse over a red-hot keyboard for a bit yet. I had to renew my pilot's medical certificate this summer, which was extra severe because since the last one I have passed the "Phyllosan" point. Nothing showed up on the ECG, for which I am grateful. Also, my "holiday" involved driving over to Den Haag (The Hague) for a conference, complete with my daughter. Those with children will know what an expedition that sort of undertaking is. Just to add the cherry on the cake, we had to commute about 2 miles by tram to get from the hotel to the conference site and back. Some holiday.

Which brings me to an apology. All the planning to get to the continent, together with the exhaustion when I got back, and a load of new legislation to get on top of at work has meant that I am not that much further forward with all the things I wanted to do as stated in the last Newsletter. Many thanks to Phil Ham for his suggestions about computer programmes for music printing, and sample printouts. I won't bore the rest of you with this subject, but providing the stencils print as well, I am more confident than I was before.

Thanks also to the others who have provided me with material, and those who have written personal letters. I will be getting around to personal replies in due course.

I also have one sad duty, to record the passing of our immediate past Membership Secretary, Doreen Hunt. I will leave the appreciations to those who knew her better. I was well aware that she was backed into her position, but still did the job to the best of her ability. She has contributed towards keeping the I.C.A. together and running, and we owe something to her memory in doing our best for the Association. I will certainly miss her enthusiasm and musicianship.

I think that is all I have to say at this point. For those who think I am filling space - you're right, but it means less work in setting up a new page template.

Deadline for the next issue is October 22nd

### Membership News

Welcome to the following new members:-

David Palmer, Pen Rhos, Groeslon, Caernarvon, Gwynedd, LL54 7TS

Patrick Caulfield, 9 Beatrice Avenue, Norbury, London SW16 4NW

Norman Wadden, 29 Worcester Road, Colchester, C01 2RH

Doreen Nickless, 3 Leyburn Avenue, Shrewsbury, Salop., SY3 8TP

Sarah Crofts, 7 Northbrook Road, Lewisham, London SE13 5QT

John Scholey, Flat 3, Osbourne House, Penmaenmawr Road,

Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd, LL33 OPN

Rachel Strong, 57 Meersbrook Road, Sheffield, S8 9HU

David Nind, 44 Highlands Way, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 2XH

Penny Clarke, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Osborne House, Osborne Terrace, London SE3.

Welcome back to a rejoining member who also has a new address:

John P. Siebert, 2833 River Plaza Drive, Apt. 248, Sacramento, California 95833, U.S.A.

### Doreen Hunt

Doreen Hunt died peacefully in Michael Sobell House, Mount

Vernon Hospital, Northwood, on Wednesday 15th August 1990. The funeral was at St. Luke's Church, Parkstone, Dorset on 24th August and she is interred in Parkstone Cemetery.

Frank Butler writes:

Few people who attended the last A.G.M., of the I.C.A. and found Doreen acting as Secretary can have realised that she was terminally ill. Mrs. Hunt was coerced into the job, and took it on a temporary basis. She was a cultured and educated woman, with a Diploma in French and German gained in Paris. She had office and teaching experience. She was horrified to find the paucity of records over the last twenty years, and had she remained in office hoped to restore them to the necessary historical and working record. But it was not to be.

Doreen attended the New Year meetings of the West Country Players in great discomfort, and on her return again sought medical advice only to be warned at once that her condition was serious. She died of cancer of the throat on 15th August.

She joined the I.C.A. in 1959, almost immediately becoming librarian, and winning an award in a Festival. She was unable to pursue this interest, and the I.C.A. lost touch with her until about 1984, when she took up the concertina again, playing for folk groups and a clogging team, one of whom re-introduced her. Shortly after she commenced a considerable correspondence with me. Again she won a top Festival award.

She was enthusiastic about the activities of the West Country Concertina Players, which she inevitably supported, sometimes playing solo. She was good, light-hearted company, and was welcomed by many new friends. She was a great admirer and supporter of Douglas Rogers, and attended his class. I arranged a great deal of music for her, mostly trifles of bygone popular numbers, about which she was always enthusiastic. She played duets with J.G., the Initials cloaking the identity of another member.

Doreen's original concertina had been the property of her grandmother, but it was stolen from her during a journey, and soon replaced.

I never met Doreen after 1960, but her light-hearted, almost hilarious correspondence lightened my life repeatedly, and I know from other people that she was one of my greatest champions. I shall miss her, and she is a loss to the I.C.A. She leaves a son and a daughter.

Douglas Rogers writes;

What a great friend we've lost in Doreen Hunt. I first met her in 1984 at an I.C.A. Festival. She'd recently lost her husband and was keen to start playing again. She became one of the most enthusiastic and staunch members of the old Bloomsbury Concertina Band, contributing not only her considerable yet self-effacing personality and her cheer, but also her unique style of playing which paradoxically combined impetuosity and strength with considerable delicacy of touch.

She would turn out in all weathers, and since she had only recently passed her driving test, and was an unusually nervous driver, travelled mostly by public transport even when ill and in pain, often weakened by the necessary unpleasant medical treatment she was undergoing. She might turn up late, breathless and frazzled, knock over a music stand, and turning, apologising profusely, to retrieve that one, tip over another. She had a ready wit, often making fun of my pedagogical pedantry, and she used to quote amusing little bits of doggerel she'd composed on various concertina topics. Pity they were never published in the Newsletter.

The last time I saw her she was suffering from very bad aches and pains, and was quite low, but even then bravely trying not to show it. She'd come all the way - not an easy journey - to the National Theatre foyer to support Joanne and I in our June performance there.

What a faithful friend you were, Doreen: you brought a sympathy and generosity to the world and everybody loved you. We'll miss you.

### News

A new composition for concertina and piano has been written for Douglas Rogers by Keith Amos following his immensely successful Sonata from 1987 which Douglas performs quite regularly. This new piece "Compositae" is just under 7 minutes long, is full of happy syncopation and play between the two instrument. Most of the concertina part is in single line but there is some effective use of 3 note chords and some spicy octave passage work (While I might have trouble in deciding what is meant there, I recall from my university botany that compositae are a group of plants which includes daisies and dandelions. Maybe there is also a pun intended. HAR.)

It's available from CMA Publications, 10 Avenue Road, Kingston, Surrey, KT1 2RB, tel. 081 541 0857. The price is £4.50 inc p&p. The Sonata, of course, is still available from the above address at £7.50 inc p&p. (If you want a recording of the Sonata & other works, see the mention of Douglas' cassette in the last Newsletter. HAR.)

Douglas Rogers recently took part in the Edinburgh Festival playing the baritone concertina with the City of London Sinfonia at the Usher Hall. He was performing in one of a series of Percy Grainger settings that made up the second half of the concert. Douglas' contribution was in the well-known "Shepherd's Hey" in which Grainger actually included a baritone. The part consists of quite large chords going at a fair old lick, but apparently the most difficult thing was counting the 80 bars rest. (Enough time for a pint of beer according to one old musical story I've heard. HAR.) The concertina was featured prominently, being placed near but happily just out of reach of the conductor's flailing baton...

On Radio 4 last week (24-28 Sept.) I heard a piece about the Wexford Oyster Festival which I am sure had a concertina providing background music. But not credits (as usual?) HAR.

Douglas Rogers' West London evening classes in individual and ensemble playing started on 28th September and take place at his house each Friday evening from 7.30-9.30. The charge is £5 each (various concessions can no doubt be arranged). There's room for two or three more. C'mon down. Ring Douglas for more information on 081 567 9297.

Incidentally, Douglas is thinking of offering a "remote" tuition course in "formal" English playing using an established method book and recording the exercises and musical examples on cassette, augmenting the text with further exercises, pieces and explanations. If there's enough interest in this project it might well go ahead. Please let Douglas know your thoughts. 34 Balfour Ave, London W7 3HS.

### Correspondence

One of my earlier correspondents was doubting that the ICA was

truly international. I hope that the contents of this section will nail that particular canard.

I'll start with a request for information from a non-member, W.A.L. SCHULTZ of Blyde Ave 253, Sinoville 0182, Pretoria, South Africa:

A friend of mine has shown me an extract of an unknown publication relating to the history of the Wheatstone, Lachenal and other concertinas which I found very interesting.

I am at present researching the origin and development of the traditional Afrikaans music which we call boeremusick, which was no doubt inspired by the captivating sound of the concertina.

Unfortunately, South African sources are very scanty on the importation and sale of the concertina during the early years, say from 1825 to 1860. I wonder if you, by any chance, have access to the records of Wheatstone and other manufacturers showing the dates of sale to South African firms?

Will you also kindly let me know whether the comprehensive work "A Chronological History of the Concertina" has been published as yet and how I can go about to obtain a copy.

I shall be pleased if you will supply particulars and entry forms of the I.C.A.

Any assistance you may be able to render in connection with my enquiries will be sincerely appreciated.

Anyone able to solve Mr. Schultz' problems? I think Neil Wayne would be the man for the Wheatstone records, but I don't have an address for him.

Next we come to RICHARD EVANS, my opposite number for the Australian Concertina Magazine:

It has been some time since I sent a letter to the good people of the I.C.A. As I am presently in possession of a borrowed word processor I thought I would let you know how things have been going here in Australia (at least the eastern bits). The Concertina Magazine has been through a difficult time lately owing to John Ramshaw the production person spending a great deal of time out of the country due to his key position in the Aust. industrial and scientific organisation (C.S.I.R.O.). Up to the present John has been totally responsible for the physical production of the magazine because of his access to the publishing equipment, including word processing, laser printing and proximity to a cheap reliable publishing firm. It has become apparent that if I intend to reliably publish the Concertina Magazine in the future then I shall have to obtain my own publishing hardware to provide backup in case John is whisked off overseas at the crucial time.

How, you ask, has concertinering been going in Oz lately. Well if it wasn't for the fact that Concertina Magazine has fallen 12 months behind in its production I could give you an idea by the number of subscriptions we have. The other way I can guesstimate the health of the concertina in Oz is by general interest in repairs and orders for new instruments. I was recently involved in starting a concertina society in Canberra, and groups exist in most major cities. However a great deal of interest comes from the outback where concertinas were the premier instrument three generations ago. I repair quite a few instruments which have been in families for generations and go back mainly to the first world war or before. By the 1930's the concertina was almost entirely replaced by the melodeon (called the "bush accordion"). Nevertheless there are many 20 key Lachenals that have survived the years and a good number of Stanleys made here just down the road (about 60 miles away) at Bathurst just after the gold rush. The Stanleys really are very nice concertinas, made from Lachenal parts but with the fretwork designed by Stanley and the reeds made by Stanley as well, fitted to a higher standard than most Lachenals, i.e. most cheap Lachenals. I have tuned some of the Stanleys to the original "old pitch" (about 1/4 tone sharp) but to mean tone rather than modern even temperament, the result is a sound that is the equivalent of old black and white silent movies.

Back to the concertina scene here in Oz. From my repair records I can say that the balance of English and Anglo is about 50-50 as far as usage is concerned. Duets are numbered on the fingers of one hand with a few

Triumph players, even less McCann players (including me), and one Jeffries player (who is also a Triumph player, and a P.O.M. to boot). Because of the lack of McCann players I seem to have collected more McCanns than are necessary, are they in any demand in England these days? There was a patent applied for (and received) here in South Australia years ago for a duct system which used the McCann layout of buttons but with all the various notes changed around called the "Cheeseman System". This must be the ultimate obscure system as, as far as I can tell, I don't think it ever got beyond the prototype.

An interesting situation has developed here over the last couple of years regarding the cost of concertinas. It is generally acknowledged that a good concertina is worth on average around \$1000. This is the cost of a 30 key Lachenal steel reeded rosewood ended concert, this is what I consider to be the "standard concert". This also includes the 48 key wooden ended metal buttoned concert. I know that the 48 key instrument should theoretically cost more than the 30 key Anglo but the Irish tradition here favours the Anglo. We do however have some very good concertinas such as the anboyne ended gold plated Wheatstone instruments. The odd thing is that a concertina of top quality might bring a deal more than the 30 key Anglo Lachenal, it will not bring anywhere near what it is really worth. In fact as far as I know the maximum price paid for a quality instrument is around \$1800 for a professional quality Wheatstone treble. Considering that I have to charge \$1750 for a new 30 key Kookaburra Anglo to make even enough to scrape through it makes you wonder if there is any point in it all. Luckily there is a shortage of 30 key Anglos for the Celtic market. In the recent past, people selling good instruments have ended up selling in the U.K. as a good instrument fetches more than in Aust. This is probably because of a smaller market, the fact that no one here has any money as the country is going down the gurgler, and the universal fact that concertina players are either poor or mean. Just lately I have had a couple of people call me with instruments they have brought from England in the hope that they can get a good price here. I have to explain to them that they would probably have done better to sell them in the U.K. Perhaps the place to take these instruments would be the U.S.A. The Magazine has a number of Stateside subscribers and it seems to me that there is quite a demand for quality instruments. I have not tried to sell any of my own instruments to the States because of all the Govt. red tape and the problems involved in any after sales service. Frank Butler once told me that as far as he was aware no one had ever really made any money -it concertina making including his grandfather George Jones, who he assures me made his money on harmoniums et al.

After that lot, any wingeing U.K. members better shut up and count your blessings.

A couple of comments on London meetings from new member ANN DRURY and old, aged (her word) member EILEEN JONES. Ann thinks that travelling over 200 miles for the dubious pleasure of being berated for attending does not seem the most pleasing of prospects. (I think Father Ken was berating those who did not attend who could get there with reasonable ease. HAR.) Eileen suggests that London isn't what it used to be. She felt safe then, even in the dark, and now one hears such things. Then there is transport. There used to be a train from Coventry every hour or two with the fare £1 for a day return. She doesn't dare ask the fare and the trains are negligible. Coaches have to be booked in advance, and the last one back leaves Victoria at 4pm. (Which means that by the time she has struggled to the hall, it is time to go home. If lucky, Eileen would get about 1 hour of playing time. I agree, not a good investment of time and effort. HAR.)

PHIL HAM writes about the North Eastern Concertina Players:

When Steve Desmond set up the inaugural meeting of the North Eastern Concertina Players two years or so ago, we were all more than delighted to have as many as eight of us. Since then we have over thirty names on the book (not all paid up, of course, as is usual). We hold regular meetings and on a good day may have over a dozen. A poor day may see only five.

We have people come from as far and wide as Leeds to Kilmarnock; few had never met another living player before they got in touch with us. A lot of our players are relative beginners and can do with the odd hint here and there; a few are ear-players and hardly any are good sight readers. We have a mixture of English and Anglo. All a shambles, you may say, but those who come reckon it's progress and certainly feel they get a lot out of it.

We try to get guests to come and play and talk, and we have little workshops. We don't have competitive playing, as nobody is keen on the idea. We have managed a little concerted playing with a few easy pieces - as far as possible things which the English and Anglo players can all join in. Most of all, people are encouraged just by meeting other players.

It would be nice to all arrive by the dozen, sit down, and run through a six-part motet at sight but that isn't the way it is ever likely to be. We would do well ever to get within hailing distance of the WCCP, actually, but if you start from nowhere everything is progress. The good old ICA should stop looking backwards and might try counting its blessings.

And for those who might want to try the North Eastern Concertina Players, they meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month at Durham College of Agriculture & Horticulture, Houghall, Durham. Contact Phil on 0661 23822; Ian Munro on 0563 27573; or Keith Partington on 091 487 9412.

To finish with, a titbit from GORAN RAHM in Uppsala, Sweden. He writes that the Swedish Concertina Society meets once a month or so in Stockholm. The last 2-3 years they have had a group of 5 or 6 players playing arrangements for 3 to 6 voices.

#### For Sale

Margaret Murray of The Loft, Kite Hill, Wooton Bridge, Isle of Wight, PO33 4LA is offering a Triumph Duet 48 key in excellent condition with a Salvation Army tutor and both the original and a modern case for the bargain price of £450. Contact her on 0983 882433.

#### Diary

16TH OCTOBER: 1.15pm Douglas Rogers & Joanne Last 1/2 hour recital, St. Martin-within-Ludgate, Ludgate Hill, London.

4TH NOVEMBER: WCCP meeting in Ruishton Village Hall just off junction 25 of the M5 from 12.00-6.00 fee £1.50 & bring own lunch.

8-11TH NOVEMBER: Autumn Accordion Festival at Warner's Holiday Centre, Caister, Lincs. Details from Accordion Monthly News, Malcolm Gee, Freepost, Kidderminster. DY10 2ER. 0562 746105.

12TH NOVEMBER: Douglas Rogers will be giving an historic performance of Molique's 1st Concerto in G with the Lecosaldi Ensemble, director Peter Lea-Cox. 1.10pm St. Anne & St. Agnes, Gresham Street (Near St. Paul's Cathedral) London.

2ND JANUARY 1991: 5.30pm 1 1/2 hour foyer recital at the Barbican, London by Douglas Rogers & Joanne Last.

6TH JANUARY 1991: WCCP New Year Party at Butleigh Court Towers near Glastonbury, Somerset 12.00-5.00.

15TH JANUARY: 1.05pm 1 hour recital at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London by Douglas Rogers & Joanne Last.

15-17TH MARCH: WCCP Concertina Weekend at Kilve Court, Somerset. Led by Dick Miles & Brian Peters. For more details of this and other WCCP events contact Pauline Wallace, 1 Coles Cottages, Petton Cross, Shillingford, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 9BS. 03986 414.

A note on the Molique concerto: Written for Giulio Regondi, 1st performance in June 1854. Regondi played it on many occasions afterward, last time in the mid sixties. Reviews were effusive with praise, & he was compared with Paganini and other virtuosi.

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