

# INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION



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## EDITOR'S LETTER

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DEAR ALL,

I've just got back from Kilve, where I had a smashing time. It was great fun meeting and playing with so many other concertinaoids (lot's more on Kilve inside).

Several of you wrote appreciations of Frank Butler, I have printed short extracts from all of them but will send the full texts to his daughters by way of a tribute from the I.C.A.

I am in the process of writing some publicity leaflets aimed at festivals. If you're going to one and would be prepared to shove a leaflet at anyone with a concertina shaped box, do let me know. We may recruit a few confused punters with pigeon race clocks or even ballet dancer's make-up cases, but never mind!

Happy playing

CHARLOTTE.

P.S. Sorry about the emergency layout, I won't bore you with the sordid details, but trust you'll bear wiLh us until next issue - Thanks.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Music helps not the  
toothache.

George Herbert,  
(1593 - 1633)



## COMPETITION RESULTS

By popular request, our newsletter title is changing to 'CONCERTINA WORLD'. It has been chosen because it reflects our 'international' endeavours and is simple and straightforward. Patrick Caulfield was the first reader to come up with it and so wins our magnificent prize! (A small plastic concertina playing gnome).

As to the 'caption' competition, Andrew Norman came up with:

'Whilst Charles Wheatstone IV went to patent his nuclear fission concertina, the boys from British Aerospace were indulging in a spot of industrial espionage'

and so wins a cute ceramic teddy playing a squeezebox shaped something - I hope they'll be very happy together.

## COMPETITION TIME

This one isn't really a competition, but a plea! We need artwork and black and white photos all the time in order to make our magazine attractive and dynamic. We can't offer any reward apart from fame, fan mail and the adulation of fellow subscribers.

I hope to have an issue focusing on young players soon, so, please try and persuade your 0-18 year olds to submit pictures from their eye view of concertinas (A small box of choccies for every piece of artwork used).

## REVIEW TIME

### "BAYOU DEGRADABLE"

9 tracks recorded December 1991. No number or price but Bayou Gumbo can be contacted on 0943 465436 or 0945 879958.

Featuring Harry Gumbo on concertina and harmonica. (Surely this must be the Harry Scurfield we all know and love! - Ed)

Wonderful title! An English band doing a good impersonation of a cajun band and obviously thoroughly enjoying themselves. Their playing is lively and well arranged, but am I biased in thinking there was just that extra lift and swing when the concertina was playing? I thought this was especially noticeable when it comes in on the track 'Mama tol' Papa'. However, all are very competent musicians, their enthusiasm shining through on this foot-tapping cassette.

TINA SMITH

## ARCHIVAL UPDATE

Frustrated with the 'shall we buy a D.A.T. recorder or not?' argument that comes up at every A.G.M, whilst those we wish to record retire from playing or even depart heavenwards, I've invested several millennia of pocket money in a second hand Morantz tape recorder and have been attempting to track down some players myself.

It's been fascinating but frustrating at the same time. There are so many players out there in their 80's and 90's, but often with wonderful stories to tell, many of them still playing beautifully but we must track them down soon!

So come on lets make 1992 'the year'. Ask around, get yourself on the local radio or write in to your local free newspaper, my contacts have come partly from a plea on the telly, but also from other members asking around. One lovely gent with whom I am in contact was first inspired to play after hearing Alexander Prince 'live' in 1919.

If you want some advice about interviewing and recording, there's lots of expertise in the I.C.A., just get in touch. On the other hand, I'll leap into my turbo 2CV and drive almost anywhere to interview the right players (I've learned a lot about tact and diplomacy lately). I phoned up one older player for a little chat and he said 'YOU did give me a start love, it's nearly quarter to nine at night you know!



Jenny Cox contributed a copy of this fascinating photo of an I.C.A. meeting in 1951. (The original belongs to Reuben Shaw.) Do you recognize anyone? Are you one of the assembled throng? Do let us know all about your memories.

## KILVE COURT



1992

I can't resist Charlotte Oliver's editorial request for a piece about Kilve 1992. It was thanks to her that I got invited there in the first place. I hadn't been to a concertina event since Neil Wayne's rumbustious gatherings twenty years ago. The cacophony in the big room at Kilve Court on Friday night brought it all back. There's no sound in the world like forty concertina-players at full blast on different tunes. But straight after supper everyone disappeared tidily into their working groups. This was not an easy-going Belper-style gathering but a weekend school with tutors, a timetable, lots of music stands and manuscript paper, even a blackboard or two. People had come for some serious playing and soon some very fine music-making was to be heard around the old house.

The sessions spanned the whole range of concertina music, from classical ensemble pieces to jigs by way of music-hall, tango and tin pan alley. English, Anglo and Duets each had their own sessions, with the duettists subdivided into separate meetings for McCann, Crane and Hayden systems on the second day. At least that was the original idea, but it was just as well nobody turned up for my classes on the Crane system (Beginners 2.15-3.00. Advanced 3.00-3.45; in the Cooke Hurler Room) because I haven't a clue how to play one.

I spent my time in the Cooke Hurler Room agreeably enough chatting to Colin and Rosalie Dipper whom I had not seen for ages, Colin rebuilt my old late-lamented 42 button Jeffries duet that is featured on the record 'The Rampin Cat' and was stolen in Spain in 1968, My current instrument has a very sweet tone, but is a little heavy for comfort and is tuned to the unsociable key of A,

For some reason several conversations over the weekend came back to that original Jeffries, and the question of how and when I started to play it. The answer begins with a wheezy ivory-buttoned Anglo bought at a school jumble sale in Preston in 1957.

The next ten years were spent sorting the buttons out. It was a solitary business. I didn't bump into another concertina player until 1971 on the Reading University campus, and was amazed to find that I couldn't play his instrument or any of the collection brought along by his friend Mick Bacchus. The same feeling came back at Kilve this month: a hundred or more concertinas and not a familiar, playable Jeffries duet among them!

That's the odd thing about the concertina. Not only are they (nowadays) an expensive instrument to buy and a difficult one to learn, but you have to lock yourself into a particular system. Another question I was asked more than once at Kiive was which one to go for. The variety of button arrangements is a typical case of English muddle spoiling good invention. Wouldn't concertinas be played more widely if they all worked the same way? But as they don't we can make the most of all the subtle differences of character between the systems. Happy the beginner who has the chance to listen and compare before taking the plunge.

The great pleasure of the Kilve weekend was in hearing the full range of the squeeze-box: English concertinas well played in classical and light chamber music; that great virtuoso of the Anglo, Bertram Levy, tearing into tangos and polkas; Iris Bishop's wonderfully subtle chromatic arrangements of show standards on the McCann duet. The jam session with Iris and Bertram in the bar on Saturday night was a finger-scorching experience. Iris is particularly well worth hearing because she evokes the touch and style of the older generation of performers like Gordon Cutty and Tommy Williams. What's more. I could see her passing on the skills to other fine players like Peter Woodger, the avuncular Medway boatman who comes each year to Kilve to get 'that little notch further' in his McCann technique.

MICHAEL HEBBERT

## TRIBUTES TO FRANK BUTLER

Dear Frank, he will be sadly missed, How much we all owe him. He taught me to play and introduced me to a lifetime of enjoyment. I am proud to have known him and commiserate with his family on his loss....

Norma Moore

I shall always remember his patience and kindness at the Hitchin weekends....

and am extremely grateful to him for teaching me to play and love the concertina.

Vena McDougall

I had known Frank from the earliest days of the I.C.A. and always found him very helpful and ever willing to be of assistance.

His letters were always bright and a pleasure to read, more so in view of his great difficulty in reading and replying....

Reuben Shaw

He had an enormous library of music much of it arranged by himself. He was generous with this. He made arrangements too for large groups of recorders, some for over 100 players. It was a privilege to have made music with him....

John Hutcherson

....Frank's musical ear was almost pitch perfect and his musical sensitivity was a gift given to few....

He was a man in a million and I was extremely fond of him and Doris, his beloved wife. Her loss was a great tragedy to that gentle man .....

Eileen Jones

....He had travelled widely in this country, both for work and holidays, and was very knowledgeable about railways. His memories were incredible: of his work at George Philip & Son [the Fleet Street cartographers, school text book and equipment producers and book-sellers) of London; of his 25 years as a Special Constable, including the war years and the Blitz; of many years 'church watching' in the City Church of St. Helens; to name but a few....

....I valued his determination to carry on, although his many disabilities must have caused him endless pain, and he was always ready for comment and criticism if needed. I personally miss him very much, but will always admire his courage and determination to carry on being a PERFECT ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

Arthur Clements

# DIARY

Try and catch 'Country Dancing' featuring Tim Laycock and Peter Honri. I've highlighted a few dates, but there's a lot more. Phone 02<sup>^</sup>9 654970 for details.

Jean M Perree recommends The Black Head, Bletchington, Nr Oxford every Thursday.

## MAY

- \* 21st. Bradford On Avon 'Country Dancing' st. Margarets Hal). 7.30pm
- \* 25th. 'Country Dancing' at Chippenham Folk Festival 2.30pm

## JUNE

- \* 7th. South East Group meet at Pennies 2.30pm. 081 947 0686
- \* 16th. Scottish Concertina Club meets at 2.00pm at Grange Church Hall, Kilmarnock. 0563 27573
- \* 27th. South East Group meets at Charlotte's 'Playing for Dancing' with Tony Dunn (caller, ceildh player and morris musician extraordinaire!) 2.30pm
- \* 22nd-28th. Yorkshire Dales Summer School with Davie Townsend, Martin Carthy and many more. The

course costs £275 (all in) or £155 (self catering, camping in the grounds) 0943 609393.

## JULY

- \* 5th. Ruishton 12pm-6pm. West Country Concertina Players 0398 MH
- \* 10th-12th. Simon Thoumire at Gillingham Festival, Kent.
- \* 26th. South East Concertina Group meets at Charlotte's 2.30pm. 0273 603633 (Brighton)

## AUGUST

- \* 3rd-6th. Sidmouth Festival. The biggest folk event in the universe! Workshops by the West Country players in the All Saints Church hall 10am-12.30pm. All sorts of 'drop-in' performers. Details 0398 6414
- \* 16th-22nd. Yorkshire Dales Summer School.

## SEPTEMBER

- \* 6th. Ruishton 12pm-6pm.
- \* 26th-27th. Concertinas at Witney-bookings are coming in thick and fast, so get on the phone if you want to take part in a stimulating, fun weekend. 0272629931

# ICA

## COMMITTEE BITS

We're looking for an auditor for our accounts please. It doesn't involve much work, honest! Phone John Wild for more details.

Apart from the newsletter, how can we promote concertinas and generally help members? If you have any ideas do let me know. Rosalie Dipper suggests we find out about insuring concertinas, particularly when sending them through the post for repair etc. I'd like to know about insuring the things when out gigging. DO we have any insurance persons amongst our membership? (surely we must!) Can you help us on this one?

How about a local groups liaison meeting? There's quite a few groups out there now and it would be useful for all co-ordinators to meet up and share ideas. It would be useful in all sorts of ways, but particularly when players like Bertram Levy are trying to tour round a bit. I got all sorts of frantic phone calls from people not able to find him bookings/wanting to book him/ wondering who he was etc. Even a simple telephone tree would help. So let's meet up soon! (Maybe the I.C.A. could subsidise fares etc.)

## GOSSIP

Keith Robinson wants to start up a local group on Hertfordshire. His address is 57 Shaftesbury Road, Watford, Herts.... Colin and Rosalie Dipper have been busy making miniature concertinas for continental circus clowns.... John Kirkpatrick played some tasty concertina on Radio 4's production of 'Tess of the D'Ubervilles'.... There's a CD of historic archive recordings of Black South African Concertina music in the pipeline.... watch this space.



This photo is from Iris. Does anyone remember the Pearly King of Wembley? She has his concertina and would love to know more about him •

**FOR SALE**

English concertina (Wheatstone) 48 button, metal ends, 5 fold bellows, steel reeds, concert pitch (just tuned). Powerful tone, vgc £775. Phone John Lambert on 0992 55489.

- (1) Lachenel 40 key metal ended C/G Anglo....Price £750
  - (2) Lachenel 20 key wooden-ended A/E Anglo (new R.Dipper bellows)...Price £200
  - (3) Wheatstone 57 key ebony-ended McCann duet, restored by C. Dipper in 1989 (damaged fretwork)...Price £450
  - (4) Wheatstone 67 key metal-ended McCann duet (in excellent original condition)...Price £650
- Contact Peter Trimming - 0779 72071 (day), 0779 77936 (eve), or 081689 5550.

**LOST**

BRANKSOME SALVATION ARMY

We have lost two concertinas.. both Edeophones 12 sided English. 48 key, black, ebony ends. Black bellows, metal buttons and the other a Wheatstone. Serial numbers are:- 49223 and 723523

## NEXT ISSUE

Young Concertina Players and  
Anglo 'SPECIAL'

# MUSIC SUPPLEMENT

FOUR LITTLE BLACKBERRIES - This fascinating piece of music was part of the repertoire of Harry Crabb's 'North London Concertina Band' and a great favourite with players attending his evening classes in the 1970's. From memory, there was more 'busking' than 'reading the dots' but the over-all effect was quite glorious. The general layout of all the music for the band was a melody line, bass line and chord symbols. You could therefore take your pick of which part to play according to ability, or improvise a counter-melody, if you felt so inclined! - Iris

The musical score is written in treble and bass clefs. It includes the following sections and instructions:

- Section A:** First system with treble and bass staves. Chords: C, G7, C, G7. Bass line: C G, C B C, C E, G A G, G D, G D, F G F G. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section B:** Second system with treble and bass staves. Chords: C, C7, F, C DIM, C, G7, C. Bass line: C G, C B C, C E, F, F#, G, E, F, G, C, G, C. Includes a first ending bracket.
- Section C:** Third system with treble and bass staves. Chords: C, Am, Dm. Bass line: C G, C, A. Includes a first ending bracket and a note: "2ND TIME".
- Section D:** Fourth system with treble and bass staves. Chords: G, Am, E7, Am. Bass line: G, A, B, C, A, A, C, E, A, E, A, A, G#, G. Includes first and second ending brackets and the instruction: "BACK to (A) THEN to (C)".
- Section E:** Fifth system with treble and bass staves. Chords: F, Gm, C7. Bass line: F, A, G, Bb, C. Includes the instruction: "TRIO".
- Section F:** Sixth system with treble and bass staves. Chords: C7, NO CHORDS..., C7, F, Gm. Bass line: C, E, Bb, A, G, F, E, Eb, D, C, F, A, G. Includes the instruction: "contd. over".

Notes - For 'chord reference' see the chord chart in the Jan/Feb Supplement. Two 'new chords' in this piece, not in that chart, are as follows :-

- C dim - C, Eb, F# A
- F dim - F, G#, B, D

- The 'bass line' is written in the bass clef, but letters are written under each note, so that you can transcribe the line to treble clef, if necessary,
- Try your own counter melody eg. a 'third' below the melody line.
- This piece is ideal for 'ensemble' playing, with one person concentrating on chords and rhythm. Try these two rhythms :-

- Duet players - play melody and bass line, and add 'chords' when you have spare fingers and mental capacity.

Notes and arrangement by Iris Bishop. Copyright 1992.

**\* MUSIC REQUEST SPOT\*** - As the many styles, melodies and arrangements of music are central to our interest in the concertina, I would like to make a general plea for contributions and requests for this section of the Newsletter. Any of your own arrangements for one or more concertinas, or copies of old concertina music in your collection would be gratefully received, with any notes on playing or memories connected with them. Please send any contributions, requests etc. to Charlotte in the usual way. Thanks - Iris.

VALSE D'ASTRID (ASTRIDIN VALSSI - FINLAND)

This beautiful waltz was used in one of Jean's inspiring workshops at Witney 1991 and suits the concertina perfectly.

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