

THE INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION

No. 282

NEWSLETTER

Jan. 1981

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

Secretary: J. Harvey, [REDACTED]

Treasurer: F.J. Hutcherson, [REDACTED]

Assistant Secretary: S.F. Green, [REDACTED].

Notices

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Saturday 31st January, at 2.30pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London. Nearest Underground Station is Holborn (Kingsway). Yes, I know I said it was the 24th in the last Newsletter, but I have found my memory is at fault, and, if you consult the October Newsletter, you will find the date advertised as the 31st, and this is the correct date. I apologise for confusing you all. See you on the 31st!

As you might have noticed, it is now 1981. That means you now have the pleasure of paying your subscription. May I remind you that the cost of postage goes up in the next few days, and I doubt if that is the last time in the next 12 months. Referring back to the account of the last A.G. M., our Treasurer reminded us of how much the I.C.A. depends upon members donating money over and above their subscription, so please dig deep if you can spare it.

Finally, a word to those who have not seen a Newsletter for a few months. Was the last one you received the April issue? If so, that was because you did not pay your subscription. Present this happening again by renewing now!

News

First of all, welcome to two new members:

Mr. E. Bohn, [REDACTED]

Nigel Chippendale, C/O Hobgoblin, 17 Northgate Parade, Crawley.

Arthur Clements writes:

On Anglia News, Friday December 12th, Phil Ingle of [REDACTED] was on view with his collection of 40 concertinas, chiefly Duets.

As a matter of interest, before the television interview I had spoken to Phil Ingle, and we are arranging a get together in the New Year, and so a little more news could be forthcoming from the Midlands in the near future.

Jottings

First, a tailpiece to the bit about Alexander Prince in the last Newsletter. The company which produces the cassettes is Neovox Cassettes of 14 Regent Road, Harborne, Birmingham 17. telephone 021-426 3663.

Secondly, I have had a letter from William Lang of [REDACTED] Missouri who is complimentary about the Newsletter. In case you do not know, Mr. Lang, both your letters have arrived. Mr. Lang is not the only one who has expressed appreciation for my monthly task. Thank you, all of you. It is nice to know that someone thinks I am doing a good job.

Finally, WANTED: an Aeola tenor treble 56 key with Ebony and Amboyna wood ends. It is wanted by Arthur Clements of [REDACTED].

The Christmas Social

This was held on Saturday December 6th, at Montem School Annexe, Holloway. Approximately 23 people attended, and it was nice to see some faces which had not appeared since the last Social. However, before we find out what happened, there are some thanks to be handed out, at the request of Neville Crabb on behalf of the committee, to those who helped make the social a success. He writes:

.. 'My thanks to the following for their efforts in making the Christmas party go so well:

Iris and Nick Bishop, and Mrs. Elsie Northam for their work in the kitchen making tea and sandwiches and laying out the food.

Mrs. Hutcherson for making and donating her lovely mince pies.

Mrs. Hutcherson, Mrs. Elsie Northam and her friend (name not known) for their donations of prizes for the raffle.

Vena McDougall for her usual supply of cakes, and Mr. & Mrs. Steve Green for the sausage rolls.

There was also a donation of a nice slab of cake from one of the guests. It must have been nice, because when I went to get a piece, it was all gone. (It was very nice. HAR) I do not know who brought it, but thank you very much.

Also, please thank all those who came and played to make the party go so well.

Now to what happened. After a period of chatter, playing was opened by Mr. Jevons who, appropriately enough, gave us the Merrymakers Dance from the Nell Gwynn Dances by German.

We next had a duet from Billy Hartford and George Crathern, with Don't be Cross (Der Obersteiger) and Walk Right Back. They are a very lively pair, belying their age!

Vena McDougall was the next soloist. She played the Swan from Carnival of the Animals by Saint-Saens.

Mr. Robson followed, using a German concertina which he described as an improved version of the Chemnitzer. He played two rumbas: In Case I Should Forget, and Song of the Slave.

It was then the turn of Arthur Austin. He gave us Melodie d'Amour, another version of The Swan, Love Here is My Heart (by Novello)

. Mr. Hutcherson then had his turn, which consisted of You Are My Heart's Delight by Lehar, and Brahms' Waltz in A.

The lure of the refreshments then grew too strong, so there was a break to sample the food.

Fully refreshed, we had the traditional collection of Christmas carols played in concert. They were We Wish You A Merry Christmas, Shepherds in A Field Abiding, Silent Night, Come All Ye Faithful, It Came Upon A Midnight Clear, We Three Kings, and, to finish, a reprise of We Wish You A Merry Christmas.

After this seasonal presentation, there was another short break while the raffle was drawn.

We resumed with more concerted music, but in a different vein, that of Estudiantina.

Charlie Jeffrey had his turn as the next soloist, playing Gigolette; and El Reliquario, then he was joined by Mr. Jevons, and they played the Punch and Judy Polka.

Billy Hartford and George Crathern found they had to catch a bus, so gave us a quick rendition of Until We Meet Again, Goodbye.

Iris Bishop was prevailed upon to close the solos, and played Charmaine and Blue Moon.

Finally, there was another session of concerted music. The tunes were Four Little Blackberries, Four-Leaf Clover, Together, It's A Sin to Tell A Lie, You Always Hurt The One You Love, Benjamine, and Auld Lang Syne.

As Neville Crabb said above, the Social went very well, and I hope that more of you will feel jealous enough to want to come to the next one!

Notes on the Late Herbert Greene by his son. Peter Greene

It is naturally with sadness that I write these brief notes about my father, Herbert Greene, who passed away a few weeks ago, for not only was he a devoted family man, and gentleman, but he was, I believe, one of the finest exponents of the Duet Concertina of all time. Dad was first

introduced to the Duet by his own father at the age of ten, and quickly discovered a natural ability and love for the instrument which was to enable him to become a virtuoso as a very young man. His early memories were of playing many of the great Alexander Prince's numbers and popular tunes of the day on horse-brake outings and local functions. He possessed an amazing memory and could remember and play these numbers in Prince's own style right up to the time of his death.

By the age of eighteen, Dad had become a brilliant artiste in his own right and was playing National Sunday League Concerts and Masonics appearing with many of the famous celebrities of the day. His repertoire at that time included such exciting solos as Poet and Peasant, Raymond, Zampa and Light Cavalry Overtures, the Grand March from Tannhauser, Slavonic Rhapsody and many others. His greatest asset was a tremendous appreciation of the capabilities of the big Duet, combined with an excellent knowledge of harmony and counterpoint, which enabled him to demonstrate the instrument to great effect - I know that anyone who heard him play would agree with me.

Early in the War, Dad created a double act with my late mother, playing the English, under the stage name of Herbert Greene and Marion Vane. For some twenty-five years they toured the country with their versatile act, featuring concertinas from the smallest baby English to the big Duet, Dad also playing the accordion. It is a measure of their popularity and success that they earned a good living and were never short of work. The double act included a wide range of musical taste, from popular and 'olde-tyme' medleys to classics, and they always received a great reception. I played with them myself on many occasions and have some very happy memories of those days.

Herbert Greene devoted the major part of his life to bringing before a large and appreciative public of several generations the instrument that he knew and loved so well, and gave pleasure to millions in the process. He was a true champion of the Concertina.

All that remains are photos, a few tapes and a heap of memories - If there are any members of the I.C.A. who would like any further details of my father's playing career, they would be most welcome to contact me.

Peter Greene

Cats and Concertinas

I was most amused by Lyn Law's article which has prompted the following:

Mac and I have been adopted by a black and white moggy, who had been abandoned, and had the reputation of being a 'loner', and not staying around. So, how comes that he spends all his time eating and sleeping in front of the fire now?

However, when Mac wants to play his concertina, Moggy, unlike our old cat, who used to go the door to be let out, just keeps putting his paw onto Mac's knee and crying, so Mac has to go into another room while Moggy settles down in front of the fire.

When I want to practice, he gets thrown out (not literally), so I get about half an hour, then he howls to come in; but I do spare him the agony of hearing me play the violin.

Seriously, it's the high note frequencies that hurt their ears.

Vena McDougall

Miscellany

Arthur Clements writes:

In 1939, the BBC ran a series of programmes: 'Industry entertains', and the shoe trade was one. A series of concerts were held in Northampton, Kettering, Rushden, Leicester, Stafford and Norwich, and 15 acts were selected for an actual broadcast. Out of the fifteen acts,

there were two concertina turns: Tim White of Rushden playing 'The Lost Chord' on a Duet, and myself playing 'In a Monastery Garden' on a Tenor Treble. An interesting point was that we were both from the Bottomstock department, the cutting out of leather soles and heels, and the hallmark of this department was generally the loss of a finger, but both of us had a full complement of the essentials to give a good performance.

John Entract writes:

The following excerpt from the 'Musical World' journal for May 25th 1872 recalls a period in the career of our first great virtuoso before he 'developped the capabilities of the concertina'. He was born in Geneva in 1822, and came to this country from Lyons in 1831.

His entry in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' is the only one in the entire work which mentions the instrument. That for Sir Charles Wheatstone merely describes him as 'musical instrument maker in London', in addition to 'man of science and inventor'.

Giulio Regondi

(To the Editor of the 'Musical World')

Sir, - In the year 1834, the late lamented Giulio Regondi, then in his eleventh year, was residing with his adopted father in Dublin. Mrs. Hemans, the poetess, who lived at 20, Dawson Street, in that city, was then on her death bed. After a lingering illness, one of the few visitors admitted to her room, after she became entirely confined to it, 'was that most gifted and gracious child' as she described him (for such he then was, both in years and appearance), Giulio Regondi, in whose wonderful musical genius she had previously taken great delight, whilst his guileless and sensitive nature inspired her with a warm feeling of interest. The lines she had addressed to him in the preceding year flowed from that well-spring of maternal kindness which was ever gushing within her bosom, and which made every child - still more every loving and motherless child - an object towards which her heart yearned with tender sympathy. The little fellow showed the greatest anxiety during her illness, and was constant in his spontaneous inquiries. Sometimes he would call to ask for her on his way to play at the Castle concerts, or at some other evening party; and as he stood in the doorway, with his innocent face, his delicate form, his long fair hair streaming down his shoulders, and his whole air and bearing so different from the everyday beings around him, one might almost have taken him for a messenger from 'the better land'. The following are the lines she penned after hearing him play on the guitar - I am your obedient servant,
Wellington Guernsey.

TO GIULIO REGONDI

The Boy Guitarist

Blessing and love be round thee still, fair boy!
Never may suffering wake a deeper tone,
Than genius new, in its first fearless joy,
Calls forth exulting from the chords which own
Thy fairy touch! Oh! may'st thou ne'er be taught
The power whose fountain is in troubled thought!
For in the light of those confiding eyes.
And on the ingenuous calm of that clear brow,
A dower, more precious e'en than genius, lies -
A pure mind's worth, a warm heart's vernal glow.
God, who hath graced thee thus, oh, gentle child,
Keep, 'midst the world, thy brightness undefiled.