

THE INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION

N E W S L E T T E R

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NO.148

NOVEMBER 1967

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NO NOVEMBER MEETING

But

The next meeting of the  
I.C.A. will be an evening  
one.

Saturday December 9th in  
the Club Room at Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square (near Holborn  
Underground Station) from  
6 to 9 p.m.

Carols will be featured this evening  
for all to play

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE AT WHITEFIELD  
HALL, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD W.1. at 3.0 p.m. on  
SATURDAY 27th January 1968.

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ADVANCE NOTICE

The London Music Competition Festival  
SPRING 1968

There will be ten classes for concertina players, at entry fees  
comparable to those of the I.C.A. The test pieces will be:-

English Elementary.	BOUREE in G. by Handel published Joseph Williams
English Intermediate	RONDINO. Beethoven/Kreisler published Schott & Co. Ltd.,
English Advanced.	MENUETT by Mozart. from Alte Weisen Book 2 published Schott & Co. Ltd.,
Large Groups.	SLOW MOVEMENT from Beethoven's First Symphony. published Augener. (order score & string parts with piano)

Full details and entry form will be given in a future Newsletter.

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS ISSUED FOR THE I.C.A. BY THE SECRETARY  
FRANK E. BUTLER, 60 MAYFIELD CRESCENT, LONDON, N.9.

REPORT OF THE I.C.A. MEETING 28th October 1967

Holloway Institute has marked advantages in offering clean, warm accommodation, good music stands, and a satisfactory piano of the right pitch. A little less rain and we would have been completely happy.

"John" Hutcherson, Frank Butler, with Vena McDougall opened with a trio by Pleyel. There were six in the book, but they played only one.

The first concerteds were selections by Haydn, creditable attempts in view of the sight reading and some of the members being unfamiliar with orchestral music.

Vena McDougall gave the classical high-light of the evening - Benedictus - which she explained was introduced on the recommendation of Mr. Ralph of Bognor. She gave a faultless performance, with full attention to every nuance of expression.

Tommy Williams gave a spirited performance of Waldteufel's Estudiantina Waltz. There was some jesting on the spelling of it, which led J. Hutcherson to play Mon Reve, by the same composer.

Next we had a talk by Billy Hartford, which was very much enjoyed, and is reported elsewhere in this Newsletter. Billy was most interesting, and we are grateful to him for inaugurating this new series. He finished his talk with a performance of the popular "The Last Waltz" then Les Millions d' Arlequin on a miniature, and back to the duet for some full-bodied busking. These items were chosen to illustrate his styles of playing.

Then Harry Crabb took over, recruiting every player in the hall at some stages and adding piano, banjo and drums to the ensemble. We played endlessly from his store of special arrangements, with an interlude when Mr. Court played Tears, and Alice Blue Gown, and John Hutcherson, Vena McDougall and Frank Butler more trios - to whit - Chanson Bohemienne and Little Donkey. Ron Barwood also deserted the drums, and played an Irish Reel on his English Concertina.

Finally, Mr. Crabb gave three of us a lift home, and what else could be wished for to round off a happy evening.

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AN ECHO OF HITCHIN

On October 27th, Ruth Ware became Mrs. Amasanti. Since Ruth and Tom met first at the I.C.A.'s Concertina Week-end, we take particular pleasure on this happy outcome, and wish them a joyous duet and full harmony to the last note of the Coda.

Mr. & Mrs. Amasanti will reside at 65 Byron Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex.

MY CONCERTINA LIFEA short report of the talk given by Billy Hartford.

"Why did I like concertinas?" said Billy rhetorically. He explained that he was fascinated by players of his childhood, who at that time used to stroll the streets making music for the joy of it. Nevertheless, his first instrument was a portable harmonium which he played by ear.

He was disheartened, and in despair, when he lost much of one finger when cleaning the free-wheel of his bike. This was exceptionally bad luck, as in years of employment in the dangerous occupation of band-saw operator, he never had an accident. The accident however, revived his thoughts of concertinas. By this time he had heard of Lachenal and of Jeffery's, and without reason, decided Lachenal would be best. So his father bought him a Lachenal 48 English, of which all he remembers is that it had red and white keys. He did have lessons, but was always put off because the melody lay between his two hands, and there was no chord accompaniment.

Of course, he was a fan of Percy Honri, and one night at the Holborn Empire he watched and heard him play Shepherd of the Hills, noting that Percy played the melody on one side of the instrument only - what sort of a concertina was this?

Harry Crabb (father of our present maestro) sold him a duet and sent him to a Mr. Snatchell, who taught, but not from staff notation. Progress was slow, and the best he could manage was demonstrated in a short extract replete with slurring and excessive legato. But, Snatchell introduced him to Billy Williams, whose motto appeared to be "get on or get out". But first Billy Hartford obtained an 81 duet from Whitton of Bermondsey. And he got on. Within a week, too. He learned basic chords in every key, and for the first time enjoyed the delights of minor keys, which excited him.

Tunes he could learn overnight from memory, which he knows now was bad for sight reading. Nevertheless, Billy says he owes 90% of his ability to tuition at the hands of Billy Williams Jim Cleverly, a player of several aliases came on the scene, and he also helped.

There was one drawback. These players used systems of notation of their own, and Billy Hartford got fed up with it. So he bought Ezra Read's Pianoforte Tutor, and studied it until it became the basis of his music reading.

Billy Hartford was now a performer. When working the clubs, he found that others kept to marches, The Lost Chord and imitations of the Bells. Billy found success by giving his audiences tunes they could sing, and he thought there should be more of this.

In his opinion there were two types of concertina player. One type was notable for the high musical standard of their playing, and among these he admired John Gibson and Maurice Harvey most. His own style was pure entertainment, playing to his own particular public.

Billy could not explain his remarkable memory. His only gimmick was an instinctive conversion of all tunes to tonic solfa. He recalled a lady organist at a Masonic whose ability to play extremely difficult music at sight amazed him; on the other hand she was equally amazed at Billy's prodigious memory.

Finally, Billy said he was without musical ancestors.. But, his grandson was a lad of great promise, and Billy liked to think that his own ability had in some measure contributed to the prospects of this budding musician.

THE T.V. BROADCAST OF AUGUST 25th

We are indebted to Jim Harvey for this brief account of concertinas in the "24 Hours" Programme, and are very glad to record it in the Newsletter. Jim Harvey also recorded it on tape, which correspondents will note with interest:

The screening, at 10 p.m., opened with the story of the invention by Charles Wheatstone, and continued with virtuoso playing with orchestra in the style of Regondi. The narrator described how Shackleton carried a concertina into the Arctic, and Livingstone into the jungle. Alf Edwards provided background music to this part of the story.

The Salvation Army Concertina Band at Plymouth contributed a hymn, and the scene switched to Crabb's factory, where Harry himself played a midget followed by a bass English, finishing on his duet.

Finally, some of the best of modern playing with the Kensington Group at the Crown and Sceptre playing Handel's Concerto Grosso No.1. The Group comprised Alf Edwards, Tom Jukes, Harold Dawson and Maurice Harvey.

All appearances were cut very short.

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As a footnote to the above Harry Crabb says that the T.V. crew spent 3 hours at his factory filming.

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NEWS OF THE MEMBERS

W.Court, whom we welcomed at the October meeting, had in fact spent 6 months in hospital with acute rheumatism, and it was wonderful to find him able to play so well. This indomitable player is 74 years of age, but it is hard to realise it.

Harry Crabb tells us that he has sold a concertina to Bob Dylan, the American folk singer. Also that he was astonished to find how many concertinas were in use in his recent Folk Dance week-end at Keele University. Hearing Harry at the meeting, we were not surprised to find that his class is playing at the Royal Free Hospital on a return visit this Christmas.

A polite note from Mr. A.G. Hague of 24 The Chesils, Styevedale, Coventry, made your secretary wonder how many members had spotted that we now have two members of that name. Notice of Mr.A.G.Hague joining appeared briefly in one of the longer Newsletters.

George Rose of Glasgow asks us to say how much he enjoyed the company of Mr. Harvey, and the players of the Kensington Group. He wishes he could meet more players in Glasgow

A pleasant letter from Bill Waite - not time yet to join our activities, but by no means has he forgotten the I.C.A. No reports yet of the musical aptitudes of his grandchildren Mark (6) and Joanna (2).

Kensington Group compete in the Hounslow Festival on October 27th and played for the Toc H. at Eastcote in October.

Change of address:

Mr. & Mrs. J.F.T. Moore, and family, have moved to 54 Wodeland Avenue, Guildford, Surrey, where we wish them much happiness and harmony. Like their contemporaries with young families, their visits to I.C.A, meetings are likely to be rare, but a warm welcome will be kept for them.