

A Concertina Band Day - SqueezEast 2015

Nearly thirty squeezers of different concertina systems, tunings and sizes met convivially in Stamford on Sunday June 7th to have some fun playing as a band. This annual event is eleven years old and continues to go from strength to strength, attracting more and new players from a wide area as far apart as Kent, Somerset, Yorkshire, Home Counties and the East Midlands as well as East Anglia.

Sadly, the original organisers are withdrawing from making future arrangements and they will be sadly missed. But the day will hopefully be continued by SqueezEast Concertinas (formally East Anglian Concertina Players). Many thanks were given by those present to David Nind and Paul Barrett for their hard work over this period.

The morning started with a short address by Martin Henshaw about the sad death of Geoff Thorpe, a keen player and member of The Chiltinas, who was known to many of us. Martin also reminded us that ICA subscriptions were now due and new members could also easily join a worthwhile organisation with a number of advantages to concertina players.



The band hard at work. Photograph courtesy of Steve Cordery.

For the main part of the day, Paul Barrett had arranged five pieces of music in parts, and once we had decided which parts were suitable for our different skill levels, we sorted ourselves out into Trebles, 1, 2 and 3, Baritones (1 and 2) and Basses, and practice commenced. Tunes selected included two pieces by members of The Beatles, Souza and Elgar, each more challenging than the last.

Lunch was taken, when Dave Elliott kindly sorted out a few concertina problems, and advised on solving and curing others, followed by more practice. In a short afternoon interlude, six members of SqueezEast Concertinas entertained the gathered assembly, playing The Beverley Processional and The Queen's Jig, in their first public performance, for which they were soundly applauded.



SqueezEast Concertinas perform. Photograph courtesy of Paul Barrett.

The day was concluded by the band playing all the items previously practiced (which were recorded). Farewells were made and we dispersed at around 4.30 promising to meet again next year, if not before. A really good day was enjoyed by all.

Anyone interested in playing in a concertina band is welcome to come along to our practices and SqueezEast Concertinas welcome novices and beginners as well. You can contact us via e-mail at squezeastconcertinas@gmail.com or via Facebook page. We are a very friendly informal group based near Norwich. SqueezEast Concertinas are also interested in hearing from squeezers who have experience of arranging and conducting and may be prepared to help out at future SqueezEast events.

If you live further afield, why not contact your nearest concertina band, group or club such as West Country Concertina Players (WCCP), Kettlebridge Concertinas, The Chiltinas, or The Yorkshire Concertina Club, or otherwise look at the International Concertina Association (ICA) pages for other groups in your area.

By Mike Jones and Sally Barrett