

Honorary President:	JACK EMBLOW
Chairman:	Gina Brannelli
Deputy Chairperson:	Raymond Bodell
Treasurer:	Robert Fletcher
NAO Secretariat:	Miss Pauline Noon
Executive Officers:	Anna Bodell, Cheryl Diggins Wendy Farran, Harry Hinchcliffe, Clyde Johnston, Graham Laurie
Music Committee:	Raymond Bodell, Clyde Johnston, Graham Laurie



CONTACT INFORMATION:	NAO Secretariat - Miss Pauline Noon 112 Countesthorpe Road South Wigston, Leicester, LE18 4PG United Kingdom
Telephone Numbers:	+44 116 241 2856 or +44 116 278 4094
E-mail:	naouk@accordions.com

Internet Site: www.accordions.com/nao

News from the United Kingdom...

The NAO roots trace back to the national festival, which began holding the Accordion Day annual competitions in 1935, the first event being at the Westminster Central Hall, London. There was a forced hiatus during the war years from 1938-1948, however the Accordion Day competitions resumed in 1949.

As this great revival in the interest of music making gathered impetus and more and more accordionists rallied together, the NAO gradually took shape under the provisional leadership of Messrs. Black, Bridger and Meyer. They were soon joined by many others wishing to see a powerful association for accordionists founded on a sound and democratic basis.

In 1949, the first formal meeting of The NAO of Great Britain was held, the original Memorandum of Constitution was confirmed, rules were formulated and adopted, and officers and committee elected. Mr. Toralf Tollefsen was elected the first President, and Gerald Crossman the first Vice-President. Dr. Otto Meyer was elected Chairman, Mr. H. J. Bridger the Treasurer, and Mr. Jimmy Black the Hon. General Secretary. From the outset, provision was made for teachers, and Mr. Graham Romani was elected Organiser of the Accordion Teachers' Guild.

The NAO is a truly national organisation, which always caters to the main body of British accordionists and includes almost every well-known name in the accordion world among its members.

In January 1950, the NAO was officially admitted as a founder member of the Third Constitutive Assembly of the Condéferktion Internationale des Accordéonistes.

Through CIA membership, it therefore follows that those who join the NAO also become affiliated with this international brotherhood of accordion players.

The newly formed NAO continued holding its annual festival in London until 1963. From 1964-1970, the event was held in Leicester under the direction of Francis Wright and from 1971-1992, the UK Accordion Championships were held in various locations including: Southampton (1971), Perth (1973), Brighton (1974), Margate (1978), Troon (1981), Buxton (1984), Blackpool (1987). The UK Accordion Championships are now held annually at the beautiful seaside resort of Scarborough.

In 1987 the NAO changed its name to become The National Accordion Organisation of the United Kingdom to include competitors from Northern Ireland.

The founding President, the late Toralf Tollefsen, was born in Glemmen, Norway. He began playing the accordion at the age of 5, and by 15 years of age, was entertaining at local restaurants. Within a few years, he was engaged as an entertainer on the cruise lines, which ultimately brought him to England in 1935. Tollefsen made contact with Recording Companies and was offered work with the BBC and soon became a household name throughout England. He married in 1938 but during the War, his permit ran out and he had to return to Norway. After the war, he returned to England for a series of very successful concerts at Royal Albert Hall and a tour to the USA. During this time is when Tollefsen became the NAO President.

Tollefsen returned to Norway with his wife and daughter in 1961, but continued to hold the title of the NAO President until his death.