

THE CONCERTINA NEWSLETTER

FOR PLAYERS AND COLLECTORS OF THE CONCERTINA AND
RELATED METAL REED INSTRUMENTS

No. 4

Free on Subscription
Supported by Donations

Edited by: Neil Wayne,
c/o Concertina Newsletter,
University of Nottingham
Sutton Bonington
Leicestershire.

1. EDITORIAL

Well, there certainly seems to be a Concertina revival on the way! Since issue Number 3 appeared, we've added over 100 new subscribers to the list, and the useful publicity on "Folk on Sunday" in "English Dance and Song", and in "Folk and Country Magazine" keeps subscription requests coming in at about 15-25 per week.

Though printing and packing of each issue takes more time with the bigger circulation, I now have all the subscribers' addresses punched onto I.B.M. Cards, and can thus print out all the address labels for sticking on the envelopes quite easily. Incidentally, if any subscriber has a good use for a complete address list, let me know and I'll get one printed out.

As mentioned below, this issue is the biggest yet, and includes the first part of a Concertina and Melodeon discography, a large section of subscribers' letters, a brief history of the concertina family, some American articles, and the final part of the interview with Mr. Tommy Williams of Lachenal & Co. Again, many of the contributions are from subscribers, and this is where you come in, do let us know about your Folk Club, Morris or Sword teams, and the tunes and music you play, did your concertina belong to old relatives? - Then find out about what they played, and where - even collect some songs in the process! Do you have any repair hints and tips, or advice to would-be players? And there are many subscribers with no instrument yet - could those of you with several concertinas, possibly lend one out? (There is a list of subscribers without Concertinas in Newsletter 2). So, any articles, large or small, about your activities will be most welcome!!

I've included a list of the major Folk Festivals of 1972, to assess the likely demand for concertina workshops and "squeeze-ins". Though I'll do as much as I can as regards providing addresses, contacts, and possible speakers and teachers, I'd appreciate it if people in the area of the festival could take on the organisation of these events, as most of this year I'll be writing up my Ph.D. - a virtual full-time job! Anyone who can take on the organising of a small workshop at a festival this year, please let me know soon, and we can begin planning.

Supplies of Newsletters 1 and 2 have run out, so new subscribers will have a short delay until I can get some more printed. I'll try as far as possible to see that everyone gets a complete set, but as we get more and more issues out, this might not be possible.

At the Annual General Meeting of the International Concertina Association, held in January, I had very fruitful discussions with the committee and fellow members about the ways the I.C.A. and subscribers to the Concertina Newsletter

can work together to revive, establish and maintain interest in all types of concertina playing. Many subscribers have been in touch with the I.C.A., and attended their one day course and Night-school concertina playing courses. I gave the committee an address list, and will probably publish the I.C.A. address list soon, to enable you to get in touch with I.C.A. members in your area. When I meet the I.C.A. Committee again, we plan to discuss other possible ways of co-operation - of this, more later.

I have had a letter from the Head of the Music Reference section of the Library of Congress, U.S.A., saying that they would like a permanent subscription to the Newsletter: they have sent a list of all the Concertina tutors they have in the Library, which I've included in this issue.

Hopefully, there will be a photocopy of an old Wheatstone catalogue in with this issue. Thanks to the kindness of our anonymous photocopyist, there should be another one next time, and then some copies of tutors for English and Anglo concertinas, which should help beginners sort out the fingering and tuning of their instruments.

So, I hope you enjoy this issue, and can pass the word on to any of your friends who are interested. And don't forget - if there's anything you'd especially like to read, or there's anything that you'd especially like to write, just drop us a line!

Happy Springtime,

Neil Wayne

2. FINANCE OF NEWSLETTER

It's good to be able to report that the generosity of the donations since issue No.3 will enable us to produce larger issues this time and next, and also hopefully to include some photocopies of old Concertina Catalogues and price lists. Also, so many of you have sent in stamps and S.A.E.'s that with the money we save on postage this time, we can begin to think about some prints or drawings in Issue 5, or perhaps a better method of printing! Circulation is really going up fast, over 100 new subscribers having received Newsletters since NL3 came out. Several more American and European subscribers have 'found us out' and I'm hoping we can print something about how our friends over there use their concertinas in future issues.

About 15% of the subscribers have been able to send in donations, while about 24% have sent in stamps and stamped addressed envelopes. Incidentally, now that I'm printing addresses by computer, it would be easier if just stamps and not S.A.E.'s could be sent in; alternatively, it will speed up the long task of addressing and packing each issue if all the envelopes you send are standard size, i.e. 10 cm x 23 cm (4" x 9", Foolscap').

It has been suggested by several subscribers that we take commercial advertizing, possibly from instrument makers, Folk shops, Record companies, and Music Teachers, and suppliers. I expect this will come eventually, when we go into magazine format, but I would suggest leaving this for a few issues until we can assess the likely steady circulation of the newsletter, and until a need for financial support, on top of the donations which have been sufficient up to now, becomes necessary. If anyone has any comments or suggestions on taking commercial advertising, please write in!

Many thanks are due to the following subscribers who've sent in the donations which help to bring the newsletter to you; however if you aren't in a position to help out financially, please don't worry. The Newsletter will be a free one just as long as possible.

Finance of Newsletter (cont'd)

John Rankin	Paul Warrender	Mac. Macdona
Gary & Vera	John Rodd	David Jenkin
John Watcham	Jim Hall	John Golulcowiez
Tony Engle	Lindy Goldstraw	Harry Mousdell
Don Petter	Dick Cross	E. R. Keeling
G. S. Truelove	Michael Naylor	Albert Dyer
C. G. Haworth	S. Beale	Ror Adams
Alan Webb	C. A. Lancaster	M. R. Ball
C. D. Duckham	Anthony Green	I. S. Posen
Robin Scott	Fon Wheeler	Frank Loach
P. Johns	Jennie Bassett	C. McCarthy
Mrs. M. Burgess	Alan Kangurs	

3. DISCOGRAPHY OF CONCERTINA AND MELOPEON MUSIC

This project looks most promising, as over a dozen subscribers have sent lists of their record collections, and several more are in the process of preparing lists, too. I'll have to put a little in each issue, and when sufficient material has been sent in, we'll print a classified discography for distribution with a later issue, perhaps in booklet form.

Modern Long Players

"The Rake and Rambling Man". Score Pol 040 by Declan Affley and Michael Bull. Folksingers of Australia Series, vol. I. (8 tracks feature tina)

"Soldiers and Sailors" Score Pol 041, Folksingers of Australia Series, Vol. II (4 tracks feature tina). By S. Karlin, G. McIntyre, D. Spooner, M. R. Ball. Available from Peter Mann Recordings, 294 Little Collins Street, Melbourne 3000, Australia.

"Horsemusic" Lea Nicholson. Trailer LEP 3010. Stereo. English and continental Folk tunes, some multi-track Bach. (English tinas). Available from Leader Sound, 5 North Villas, London N.W.1.

"William Kimber" E.F.D.S.S. Records LP 1001. For sale to members of E.F.D.S.S. only. A record of the finest Anglo music available, with full notes and booklet. A must for Morris players.

78 r.p.m. discs (collection of Mr. Harry Hatton of Haydock, Lancs.)

Alexander Prince

Estudianta Waltz/Il Bacio. Columbia (28833) 2426.

Belphegar March/Punjaub March. Columbia (27909) 1864.

Lads of Scotland/Blue Bonnetts Schottische. Columbia (18055) 1961.

Thin Red Line/Cavalry of the Clouds. Regal G 8838.

Concertina Medley: Song hits of 1926. Pt. 3 & 4. Regal G 8510.

Pt. 1 & 2. Regal G 9083.

Pt. 1 & 2. Regal G 8467.

" Regal G 8205

" Regal G 8044

Belphegar March/Scotch Reels

Winner 2055

Ernest Putterford

Slumber Song/Salut D'Amour

Winner 4326

Walter Dale

Honest toil/Administration March

Homochord D1057

The Premier English Concertina Band

The Shamrock Irish Selection/A Darkey's Dreamland

Albion 1130A

Frank Ollams

Poet and Peasant Overture

Parlophone E5232

William Kimber (All on His Master's Voice)

Haste to the Wedding, Getting Upstairs/Over the Hills to Glory	B8368
Jockey to the Fair/Old Mother Oxford	B9671
Headington Morris Reel/Bacca pipes Jig	B9672
Lailanum Bunches/Shepherds Hey	B9670
Constant Billy/Country Gardens	B9669

33 r.p.m. Long Players

Alfred Edwards

"The Music Box"

Folkweave One and Folkweave Two.

from : John Hassell Recordings, 21 Nassun Road, Barnes, London S.W.13.

78 r.p.m. Records (Collection of Steve Gardham of Hull)

Alexander Prince

My Dreams/Austria March
Martial Moments pts. 1 & 2
Tipperary/la Marseillaise

Winner 2054
Pegol G.8984
Regal G.7011

Anon

Donnybrook Fair/Harrigon's Reel

Phoenix E.023

Ernest Rutterford

Four Little Piccaninnies

HMV ?

4. Subscribers' Letters

John Kirkpatrick writes -

"I am interested in all aspects of free reed instruments and their playing, though time for research has just about vanished now. I play button accordion, melodean and anglo, and would be glad to write about them for the newsletter. Regarding tutors, I've never looked at one for any squeeze box with more than passing scorn - I thought of writing one myself, no time, but perhaps one day..... I wrote one article about button accordion in "English Dance & Song" a few years ago, but I don't think now its a very helpful guide to how to play it".

A further letter from John appears in this issue.

Colin Mallett writes -

"I'm interested in repairing concertinas, and have made bellows experimentally - but it takes a long time. I am an Electrical Engineering Student, and have an interest in electronic tuning and also experiment with electric pickups. I have a design in mind for an electronic device for keeping a check on the tuning, which would only work on steel reeds."

Most interesting, and I'm sure we'd appreciate more information!

Dave Middlehurst writes -

"Although I don't have a concertina yet, I bought a small accordion at an auction recently. On it are the words "Little Lord Fauntelroy" "Melbourne" and has 3 basses and 10 buttons numbered 1 - 10. Does anyone have any information about such an instrument?"

Brian Griffiths writes -

"The suggestion for one-day gatherings is very good, and I'm prepared to help later, when finals are over. I think a 'tuning and repairs' workshop is badly needed, as if interest is to spread, more people must know about the works. We must set up a supply of reeds, frames, springs etc. Nottingham would be ideal for such a workshop, perhaps. I look forward to hearing your views on the subject.

Well, what do the subscribers think?

Harry Mousdell, bagman of the Broadwood, Sussex, Morris men, writes -

"This Morris and long sword club was inaugurated at the beginning of January. We have four musicians: a fiddler, two anglo players, and Mel, who plays everything including anglo and melodeon. Between us, we have Brian Blanchard who has a Jeffries Anglo and a Shakespeare English with fine metal ends. Mel Stevens has a Wood and Wheatstone anglo, and a new Hohner melodeon. My collection is a 1905 Crabb anglo, once used for the Royton Morris men before 1914, a 30 key metal end Anglo with squeaker and whistle keys, a wood end Wheatstone english, and a half-derelict continental toy concertina. Last practice, Pete Marsden, our fiddler, did not turn up because he was mending the bellows of an Anglo "music" which a relative had found in the attic!"

Roy Smith of Leyland Morris Men, writes -

"I was interested to read about Concertina bands - there is, or was, such a band in Bootle near Liverpool which used to play in the Orangeman's procession in Preston each Whit Monday. Probably around 20 players with concertinas and drums. The sound was glorious!"

The Bootle Band still exists - see them (10-12 other concertina bands!) in the Southport Orange Parade on August 12th. More about this nearer the day.

Jennie Basset writes -

"The idea of Concertina workshops at Folk Festivals is great - I would like to be on the learning end for English at Loughborough and Falmouth. Some form of local gathering here in Cornwall would be a possibility later on, if we can find someone experienced to set us on the right path".

Robin Barnett writes -

"I bought an English last year, and having previously only played guitar tried, unsuccessfully to arrange guitar chords for it! Now, I use drone-type harmonies, and intend to build up the sort of chord sequences I like that way. I'd particularly like to see suggested harmonies appearing in the Newsletter, something along the lines of the March/April 1971 "Sing Out" article by Louis Killen". Can anyone send us this article to reprint?

Alice Matthews writes -

"I went to the I.C.A. one-day music course and they are such a friendly set of people! I also went to the Holloway Evening Institute class, and Mr. Butler gave me a start, as it were. This class is a little advanced, so I am going to the Battersea Evening Class. I remember how, as a child, I listened to my father playing the tina in a room, and was amazed to discover how like a string orchestra a number of concertinas players sounded from a distance. Truly Delightful."

Michael Naylor writes -

"Where does one usually find the number of a concertina? Mine is fairly old and I can't see a number"

Virtually all makers stamp each each "layer" of their instrument with the number - the bellows frame, the reed pans, the lever or action board, and the fretted end and always at the angle of the hexagon furthest from the person when it's being played. However, you'll have to take the end screws out and look inside, as all the numbers, apart from the label, if present, are not visible from the outside.

John Golubowicz, Folk Musician of Iowa City, U.S.A., writes -

"Hey man, you've a great concertina newsletter going, so keep the issues coming. Just a big hello from everyone over here, and I'm enclosing a couple of our dollars to help with your expenses."

John plans to tour England in a year or so, and we hope to set up a folk club tour for him in part via the Newsletter and its contacts.

Steve Gardham writes -

"Firstly you have not mentioned the Lap organ yet in the newsletter. This instrument is very like the piano accordion have a piano keyboard with a rather interesting one way bellows system. In shape it is rather like a large flutina and as its name suggests it is played by laying it across your lap with the keyboard facing you. You play the keyboard with one hand and work the bellows with the other. Most of them are double bank reeded and have a very sweet tone. The bellows system which has a smaller set of bellows inside the outer bellows allows the note to continue playing for a short while, while you draw the bellows out again. I have seen 3 of these instruments - one in excellent condition in my own possession, one in poor condition owned by John Gall and one for sale in reasonable condition in an antique shop in Durham for £22 which I believe is still there.

Morris Dancing and Sword Dancing

Five concertina players regularly attend our weekly morris dance meetings. We are the Green Ginger Morris men. Frank Bull, one of your subscribers, is the squire. We have two English players and three Anglo players in the team. The anglo players in the team are Frank Bull, Martin Bull and myself. I also play in the Green Ginger Band and I would like to hear of any other anglo players who plays country dance music in the English style on an Anglo. The vamp of the anglo does not fit too well in with a country dance band so I have taken to playing the lead part in the band. As you know I also accompany myself for singing with the Anglo.

Tips on Concertina Repairs

I have tried several types of leather for patching up bellows and recovering the lever pads and the two I now use are chamois and calfskin. I use the chamois to cover the lever pads and the bellows internally. I have heard other people speak against this because they claim that chamois is porous, but I have found this air loss negligible, if any at all and chamois is pretty strong and durable. To repatch the outside of the bellows, I use calfskin which is already a dark colour. Calfskin usually comes in 2 or 3 layers unlike chamois. If the hole is larger than a seepage I use both layers together but if the leakage is just a crack I separate the skin and use the very thin outer covering which can hardly be detected when applied to the bellows.

You could mention our Folk Club as being interested in concertinas as we now have upwards of twenty concertina players and never a week goes by without a couple of players getting up at the club.

FOLK UNION ONE. The Bluebell Inn, Lowgate, Hull.

Sunday - Folk Club : Monday - Country Dance :
Tuesday - Morris & Sword : Wednesday - Singaround
Thursday - Folk Drama Workshop.

Recently in the Yorkshire Post an old Anglo Player (very good) advertised a duet for sale. This is a small ebony ended aeola duet in perfect condition - 67 keys. I offered £25 for the box being all I could afford, but he wanted more for it. As far as I know it is still for sale and the telephone number is :

SNAITH 514 ; ask for Mr. Ward.

still from Steve Gardham.....

I would like to know a lot more about the early history of the concertina, particularly how the Anglo developed and where the banked-reed Anglo fits into the pattern. There seems to be a lot of these cheap old instruments about although no-one knows much about them as they are shabbily made and have no makers' name.

John Gall writes -

"Just a few words about a concertina which was one of a batch of six I acquired recently since it may hold a clue to some of the early dating problems.

Its a very venerable Wheatstone - small green 5 fold embossed leather bellows, 48 key small type reeds and metal inlay on ends which are apparently rosewood. Two air levers on blow suck principle.

Anyway; all inside parts labelled 'Conduit St.' but the carrying box has label of West St. Vintage and also 'late of Conduit Street', hence the conclusion is that the instrument was made at "Conduit St." and sold from West St. Knowing the date of this change of address gives the approximate date of the concertina, Q.E.D!. I think, though I would like your views on this reasoning.

Have also acquired a Jefferies Anglo of fairly early vintage - smashing tone but usual ex-sally army keys - strange cheap metal ended wheatstone (with white wood ends and metal contour plate) and flat ended buttons. - 48 key metal end wheatstone of about 1910-1920 vintage in V.G. nick and sweet wooden ended lachenal of 1910 vintage about and a couple of flutina's and a lap organ with wood work by the same people that did work for Winrow's..

Thanks for newsletter etc. I enclose some stamped addressed envelopes in anticipation. Looking forward to your views on the Wheatstone

The Librarian of Kings College London writes" -

"I am sorry to have to tell you that we have no material at King's College relating to Sir Charles Wheatstone's work on the concertina or indeed on any other musical instrument. Such papers of his that we have relate mainly to his electric telegraph.

You will doubtless be aware that there is an entry relating to him in Grove's Dictionary of Music, and you may find some reference to his interest in musical instruments in the obituary notices which appeared at the time of his death, e.g. in the Times on 22nd, 25th, 27th and 28th October 1875, in Nature on 27th April 1876, in Proceedings of the Royal Society, no 169, 1876, and in Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1877.

There is as yet no satisfactory biography of Wheatstone, but it is just possible that there may be some mention of his musical interests in two items which deal primarily with the electric telegraph: Cook and Wheatstone and the invention of the electric telegraph, by G. Hubbard. and the invention of the electric telegraph, by D. A. Bayliss, a prize essay written under the pseudonym Mercurius and existing, to the best of my knowledge, only in typescript. But I very much doubt whether you will find either of these rewarding for your purpose.

Frances Mackenzie writes -

"I have a Lachenal 48 (Number 46156) concertina which seems to be in very good condition - but unfortunately it is a treble tone one - which means it is hard to sing with - and as I only use it to accompany my school class that results in a few strained voices. So I wondered if you could put an advertisement in your newsletter to ask for a deep tone, good quality concertina? I have not come across one in the shops and I gather they are hard to find.

Another thing that is hard to find is somebody to mend them. A year ago one of the pads came unstuck and rattled around loosely in the box. Frantically, I pounded the streets of Glasgow searching for a shop that might stick it back on - but with one voice they turned me away, "we don't do them". It was 5 o'clock on New Years Eve and the man in the shop must have heard the desperation in my voice. "Well we don't usually do these, but if the pad is there, Willie might." "Well", I said forelornly, "the pad must be there, you can hear it rattling and there is no way it can get out". "Well, I can't ask Willie unless the pad is there." I went white as he unscrewed my precious concertina and finally forcibly prised it apart. Luckily the part was there and the various pieces were sent down to the basement to the unseen Willie. The little old man behind the counter looked at my box and sighed - "They don't do work like this nowadays", while I imagined a dwarf type Willie hunched over my concertina in the darkened cellar. Eventually the concertina was borne back, in one piece again to my relief. "Willie says to charge double cause he was on his teabreak" said the messenger. My heart sank, I imagined a huge fee. The little man upstairs tested the notes against a tuning fork and pronounced them good. "How much will that be", I squeaked. "Well, since its New Years Eve - nothing" he said. I glowed with pleasure and relief. "A Happy New Year to you too". That time I was very lucky - but I dread the day when something goes really wrong!"

The Library of Congress, U.S.A., Music Division, writes :

"If you could manage to visit our Music Reading Room here at the Library I feel sure you could gradually dig out a good amount of information regarding the use of the concertina in North America. We have drawn up for you the enclosed list of concertina tutors published in the United States and found in our collection, which should give you some idea of the dates and authors involved. The spadework necessary to find information about players and makers, however, is more than we can undertake, and we really don't have a means of providing this service for a fee.

There is a good bit of music in our collections for the concertina, and this would certainly be of interest to you, but most of it is uncatalogued, and has to be located at the shelf in various ways. Altogether, it is a job for on-the-spot work by an author, and we hope that somehow you will manage to pay us a visit.

Yours sincerely

William Lichtenwanger
Head, Reference Section

*** I have since heard from Mr. Lichtenwanger that the Library is accepting copies of the Newsletter for its music section.

John Kirkpatrick writes -

"I was shocked and appalled to see in the first issue of the Concertina Newsletter, the remark that "The English Concertina is superior in every way" (i.e. to the Anglo). In a publication of this sort, aimed at specialists, and knowledgeable enthusiasts, a dogmatic assertion such as this is completely out of place.

In some ways the Anglo is undeniably superior to the English. Simple dance tunes, such as those used for Morris and Sword in this country, fall easily onto an Anglo and its single action makes for bright, gutsy music. Chords are easy to fit in to emphasise this quality, although of course, only in a very limited range of keys. Nevertheless a full 40 keyed Anglo is fully chromatic in the middle two octaves and in the hands of a competent player can achieve all the subtlety of an English, but still with the brightness which characterises the Anglo.

I am sick and tired of hearing in Folk Clubs round the country that the English is the only one of its family worth serious consideration as a musical instrument. I am more than willing to spend the rest of my life attempting to prove otherwise.

5. An Outline History of the Concertina and Related Instruments

Concertinas, and the many instruments related to them belong to the "Free-reed" family of musical instruments. All these free-reed instruments such as the mouthorgan, Melodion, Accordion, Harmonium, and even the humble Jews Harp, produce musical sounds when the tuned metal reeds which they contain are caused to vibrate by means of air pressure from mouth or from moveable bellows.

Of the primitive Free-reed instruments that are the concertina's forbears, the Jews Harp or Guimbarde is perhaps the most widespread, being found in various wooden or metal forms in native musical culture all over the world. As with other inventions, it was left to the Chinese to really develop these primitive free-read instruments into the very sophisticated Sheng (Japanese Sho), a form of mouthorgan using skilfully cut brass reeds, set in the ends of polished bamboo pipes, and all set in a lacquered gourd. These instruments, still used all over the Far East, and produce a delicate, sweet sound, with silvery, chords in strange harmonies, and have changed little since their appearance over 2000 years ago.

In 1777, when there was little knowledge of these reed instruments outside Europe, Pere Amiot, a traveller and writer on Chinese instruments, sent a Sheng to Paris as a gift. Even before it reached Paris, the instrument had roused much curiosity amongst instrument makers and musicians across Europe, and by 1810, metal free reeds had been incorporated into small organs, by the Parisian organ builder Grenie in 1810, and into Haeckl's "Physharmonica", that is, a "bellows-harmonica", in 1818.

In Europe, there now began a rapid development of new instruments embodying the free-reed principle, such as C.F.L. Buschmann's Mund-Harmonica (Mouthorgan) and Hand-Harmonica, Cyril Demian's Accordian and the first English free-reed invention, Charles Wheatstone's Symphonium of 1829. Wheatstone (1802-1875) trained as a physicist, was brought up in London by his uncle, a musical instrument maker; having travelled Europe and seen the new family of instruments being developed there, he designed

continuing An Outline History of the Concertina and Related Instruments.....

and patented the Symphonium, a small mouthorgan with reeds contained in a metal box and operated by buttons on each side. This instrument was a considerable technological advance, for Wheatstone not only sought out the best alloys to give durability and steady pitch to the notes, but also evolved the brilliant "English" fingering system, in which the natural notes of the scale alternate on each side of the instrument and have their relative accidentals next to them. This system facilitates rapid playing of runs and scales, and has made the English concertina one of the easiest instruments with which to sight-read from music. Though his patent for the Symphonium shows how closely the principle of the Symphonium was derived from that of the Sheng, Wheatstone soon constructed a "bellows powered" version of this instrument, and this design, the Concertina, was perfected and patented by 1844. Wheatstone relied heavily on the skills of a Swiss craftsman, Louis Lachenal, in these early years, of concertina making, and though the earliest true concertinas were often only single-action, and had only 22, 28 or 35 notes, by the time the design was patented, the 48 key, double action, hexagonal "English" system concertina was firmly established, and the basic design was little changed for the next 60 years.

The new instrument was a great success. It was quickly adopted into high class musical society and many virtuoso professional players of the instrument soon appeared, together with a rapidly widening circle of amateur players. Famous players of mid-Victorian times included Giulio Regondi and Richard Blagrove, who composed and arranged extensively for the instrument, George Case and A. B. Sedgwick, who also began to manufacture and sell the instrument after the expiry of Wheatstone's patents: on the amateur side, numerous Cabinet Ministers and assorted gentry and royalty took it up, Shackleton taking a concertina to the Pole, and Livingstone one to the Equator!

By late 1850's, the instrument had clearly become popular with the musically-minded masses, for not only do the musical papers and journals of the times abound with reviews and announcements of concerts, societies, competitions, and new music for the instrument, but also many new manufacturers were springing up. Most notable and long-lived of these was Lachenals, the firm founded by Wheatstone's former employee, who left the house of Wheatstone, taking with him much technical and marketing expertise, and, it is alleged, a complete set of concertina-making tools! Minor makers of the period included Sedgwick, Simpson, Nicholds, Joseph Scates, Rock Chidley (a nephew of Charles Wheatstone), Ebbelwhite, Shakespeare, Metzler, Journet, Hyam, Myers, George Case, Thomas Dawkins, and so on..... but very little is known about most of these manufacturers, or even if they were actually manufacturers at all - as in some cases only a few instruments by these makers still exist, and as the labels may represent just the name of the vendor or wholesaler, not the maker, absolute identification is often a problem. As the 19th century drew to a close, more instrument makers turned their hands to making concertinas, and more types and variants of the instrument began to be produced. The Duet concertinas, first patented by Wheatstone and Company in 1867 but in existence earlier, was a larger instrument with full chromatic scales for each hand, enabling melody and accompaniment to be played, while the Anglo-chromatic or Anglo-German concertina, in which a different note sounds on push and on pull, achieved a rapid rise in popularity, being much cheaper easier to play by ear, and just right for country dance and the songs of the folk. By 1905 Lachenal and Company had produced up to 300,000 of their 30 key anglo, which sold for from 12/6d. to 25/-. Also G. Jones, H. Crabb, and Jeffries were producing and exporting high quality Anglos in great quantities.

Thus the concertina, from being a musically "respectable" instrument, written for by Tchaikovsky, Berlioz and Rossini, began to be more popular with the working people of this country, being adopted by many music hall artistes, such as the great Percy Honri, and popular concert performers, of whom the greatest was the duet player, Alexander Prince, both of whom recorded vast numbers of 78 rpm records, and also by traditional music makers, notably the musician of Headington Quarry Morris, William Kimber, from whom Cecil Sharp learned so much of the music and lore of the Morris. Many Concertina Bands were formed in the first decades of this century, and more needful than ever of new customers, both Wheatstones and Lachenals turned out Contrabass, Bass, Baritone, Tenor-Treble, Treble, Soprano, Piccolo and even miniature Concertinas, enabling complete orchestral and band scores to be played by gatherings of concertina enthusiasts.

But for all the new uses to which the instrument was being put, its popularity was clearly on the decline by the 1930's, for a variety of reasons: home-produced music in general was dying, the gramophone and later, the radio, rapidly taking the place of the musical evening; though high quality concertinas were still being made, prices had risen continually, large Duets often costing well over £100 in 1935. Mass production of cheaply made instruments, and the flood of inexpensive German and French Melodeons, Accordions, Harmonicas and crude Anglo-German concertinas did much harm to the remaining British concertina makers: Lachenal and Co., Wheatstone's main competitor, went out of business in the late 1930's, leaving a much reduced Wheatstone & Co., and the small family firm of Harry Crabb as the world's sole makers of quality concertinas. Also, the concertina did not seem to be an instrument readily taken up by the younger generation of those days, and the instruments of old players were consigned to attics, junkshops or just thrown away.

The last few years, however, have seen a remarkable revival of interest in the concertina, its history and its music, arising mainly out of that other great revival of the last decades, the Folk Revival. Far from being a dusty curio that Grandad once played, many hundreds of young people are rediscovering the concertina as a superb instrument for folk song accompaniment, Morris dance playing, and as a solo instrument for Ballads, Airs, Jigs, Shanties and Reels. Few are the Folk Clubs that do not see at least one concertina player a week, and few too are the Folk groups and singers who have yet to realise the charm and musical individuality that these old instruments can lend to any interpretation of traditional music. As some indication of this revival, within three months of its first issue the number of subscribers to the Concertina Newsletter multiplied nearly four times, almost all becoming interested in the instrument through contact with it in Folk Clubs. Even the great potential of the instrument for classical and light music is being rediscovered, and the International Concertina Association, based in London, sponsors three evening classes for beginners and more advanced players, and holds regular meeting for playing and practice of such music.

Neil Wayne

6. Why I Play the Concertina - by Richard Cross

I inherited my father's concertina. He was a Geordie miner, and one of my earliest recollections is of him playing "The Bells" - a great favourite.

A lot of miners played the concertina, and now it seems strange to me that these tough young men, with their coaldust scarred hands, could raise such delicate and gay music. But at any party, just as sure as some of the men would dress in womens' clothes for the delight of the "lasses" (an English tradition?), there would be a concertinist playing jigs, ballads, and hymns.

continued.....

Then, while I was still very young, came radio, and later the talkies - and home entertainment faded.

In the depressed and depressing thirties it was so much easier to step into a "dream palace", and watch Judy Garland, and Astaire, and Rogers. Also in this period the accordion boomed (in all senses); and this big voluptuous Latin ousted her smaller and sweeter sister. The concertina, like a true Victorian, went into a decline.

Mine was in retirement for many years until, on reading "FLOODLIGHT", I realised that there was a concertina class at Battersea Adult Education. This was a real find - as the great difficulty for would-be concertina players is to find a teacher. I joined. Mr. Frank Butler, our teacher, is not only a brilliant concertinist, but a fine musician and teacher as well. And soon I had that wonderful experience of being able to create my own music.

As the English concertina plays only the treble clef, (which is why I call her "she") she has two brothers - a baritone, and a bass. Not as agile as their sister, but giving wonderful support when they "sing". There is also a cousin in the family, called the "Duet", which plays in both clefs at once. But this bi-sexual instrument is very difficult to play, and needs expert attention!

The concertina is a complete instrument, and can play classical, folk, and popular music. In the last century it was featured as the solo instrument in concertoes, which were especially written for it. But even during her declining years she has her admirers, and the recent "folk" revival has brought younger musicians to her court. As yet the "pop" boys have not discovered her, which might be a good thing, as many of them are no respecters of instruments. Yet it must be said to their credit that they have added new dimensions to many instruments; and if they should strip the Victorian cloak from her they might find an elating pair of "hot pants" beneath. Also, as the instrument is light and small, it is ideal for women players; having the added attraction that a lady can play and still look elegant; which is more than can be said of some other instruments!

The concertina has had a gay and glorious past, and we concertinists of today are trying to make sure that this lovely instrument will not fade away.

Perhaps this will explain and answer the inevitable question we are always being asked : "But why the concertina".

7. Reminiscences of A Busker

I first got interested in the concertina when I used to see many buskers with concertinas and often thought, that I would like to be able to play one. At the age of about 17 just after World War I, I bought a Lachinal twenty key 'tina, price 12/6d., but had it on weekly payments from (Charlie Rutter's) pawn shop, in Penge S.E.20. I had it for some considerable time, and seemed to get on with it very well, and then started doing a bit of busking, with the same instrument, at week-ends. After two years with this 'tina, I was in Trafalgar Road, Greenwich, when I spotted a second hand Jefries 30 key, which appeared to be in very good condition, and purchased this 'tina for £8.10.0d., again on weekly payments. Apart from one or two flat notes is still in very good condition today. I took up the regular

continuing the Reminiscences of a Busker.....

busking job, week-ends and continued for about nine years, with this same 'tina. I have played in the queue, outside many London Music Halls, just to mention one or two, Finsbury Park Empire, Bedford, Camden Town Metropolitan Edgeware Road, Collins, Islington, New Cross Empire, right down to Lewisham Hippodrome, sometimes it was as low as 3d. or 4d. and sometimes a couple of bob, if too many buskers had not been before me.

During my Public House busking, mainly Friday, and Saturday nights, and during the Summer months, I got many engagements for Public House coach outings, commonly known as ch-a-bangs, at that time of day. Most of these outings were either to Brighton or Southend on Sea, and the price paid for that was a fl up to 30/-. I claim to have ridden in the first cha-a-bang that Bourne and Balmers of Croydon, with there solid tyres and canopy went to Southend-on-Sea.

The odd occasion, I needed a slight repair, such as a new note or spring, I used to go to a man in Blackheath Road, London, who's name was James McLean, who was, always, very pleased to do any repairs for a busker on the spot, and in my estimation, was a very experienced man as regards repairs, to any make of concertina.

By the way, the concertina in question, which is a Jefries, and was made in a little shop in Praed Street, Paddington, London must be at least 75 years old, and looks as good as new today, I still play it at home and at occasional parties.

Albert Dyer

8. Small Ads

WANTED : English Concertina and 48 bass (or lower), piano accordion, both good quality, with cases, reasonably priced. Full details, especially condition to :

David Peel, 107 Clumber Drive, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham.

WANTED : A 36 key Anglo-German Concertina in good condition - second-hand modern Crabb would be ideal, to be used outdoors for morris. Philanthropic price would be appreciated, due to recent financial disaster!

Mr. M. R. Ball, 3 Hensley Road, Bath, Somerset.

WANTED : Melodeon 3 row in G/D/A or 2 row in G/D. Must be in good working order. Quote price and particulars to :

Frank Loach, 40 Park Road West, Wolverhampton. WV1 4PL.
Telephone Wolverhampton 772247.

FOR SALE : Mr. Prescott of 15 Osborne Street, Annesley Woodhouse, Notts, has a Lachenal Edeophone duet for sale, in good condition. He will sell this for £20, no offers.

FOR SALE : Old "Milano" organette, 11" x 6" x 9½" (closed) 30 pearl buttons, bellows (13) good, needs tuning, otherwise excellent condition, £4.00

"Univox" electronic organ and amplifier, 37 keys, 30 tabs, knee-swell, chrome stand, as new, £30.00

on with the Ads.....

FOR SALE : "Nicolas Amatus" violin, lovely wood, good tone, £7.00
"Hohner 64" Chromonica professional Model, four
chromatic octaves with slide, in fitted case. £3.00

for purchase of these four items apply to :

T. Edmundson, 127 Ribchester Road, Salesbury, Blackburn.

9. COURSES AND FESTIVALS

Easter Course for Leaders & Teachers

April 1-7

Blackpool. Ethyl Anderson, Pat Shaw, (Organised by the N.W. Counties Physical Education Association in co-operation with the North West Area, EFDSS). Details : EFDSS N.W. Office, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool 1.

Folk Dance Course

April 4-8

Zeist, Holland. Organised by the NVS for English and Dutch Folk Dancers. With S. A. Matthews and R. Chipperfield. English Contra, Morris, Sword and Scottish. NVS Band. The Henri Dunant house is near Zeist, about 5 miles from Utrecht. All bedrooms (2-4 persons) centrally heated. Details : Mrs. G. Luit de Haan, Annerstreek, Annen (Dr.) Holland.

Berkshire District Residential Weekend

April 7-9

Halway Manor, Somerset. John Chapman, Bidford Square Dance Band. Details : Berks. Dist. Sec.

Cliftonville Week-end

April 21-23

Holland House, Hotel, Edgar Road, Cliftonville, Kent.
Details : Kent District Secretary.

London Workshop

April 23

Cecil Sharp House. 11.00 am. to 4.00 pm. Peter Dashwood -
"The Art of the Ceilidh Chairman." Ian Graham - "A Look at Some
Irish Ceilidh Dances." John Tether, Jack Hamilton, The Southernns.
All Welcome.

St. Albans Folk Festival

May 5-7

The Yetties, Martin Wyndham-Read. Ceilidh, workshops, etc.
All-in football match. Details : Alison Macfarlane, 2 Hart Road,
St. Albans, Herts.

9. Festivals and Courses contd.

West Surrey At Halsway

May 12-14

Paddy O'Neill, Robin Shallams, Details : Miss E. J. Wood, 5 Bray Road, Stoke D'Abernon, Cobham, Surrey.

Felixstowe Folk International

May 19-21

Dance Group Zajednica (Amsterdam), John Foreman, Hugh Rippon, Dennis Smith, Rangers Band, Geoff Hughes, Eastern Folk. Big Nights Friday, Saturday and Sunday, morning and afternoon workshops. Seasons £1.50, (£1.35 for members before May 12). Details : Peter Dashwood, Cambridge Arts Centre, 27 Warkworth Street, Cambridge.

Wayfarers Folk Festival

May 25-June 4

Birmingham. Includes Hungarian Dancers.

Cleethorpes Folk Festival

Spring Bank Holiday May 27-29

Including The High Level Ranters and Nic Jones. Details : Mrs. K. Compton, 44 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes.

Christchurch Folk Festival

June 9-11

Details : Western Region Office.

Folk Night at Michelham Priory

Sat. June 17

Upper Dicker, Nr. Hailsham, Sussex. High Rippon, The Ranchers, Cyril Tawney, Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men. 7.30-11 pm. Adm. 60p. or 50p. in advance. Application with SAE to Mr. R. Taylor, Rousden, Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham, Sussex (Hellingly 644).

Heart of England Mid-Summer Folk Festival

Sat. June 24

Broadwater Farm, Maxstoke Lane, Meridan, featuring all the leading Midland Folk Groups.

Wells Folk Festival

Sat. June 24

Details : Western Region Office.

Loughborough Folk Festival

June 30-July 1-2

Details : Cecil Sharp House.

I have included this for the information of subscribers, and so that you can let me know at which Festivals you'd most like to try and organise some form of concertina workshops or "squeeze-round". I hope to get a small display arranged by the Newsletters at most of the larger Festivals, but what do you think.

Some of the items in the mentioned in this issue have had to be held over to Issue 5 - sorry the typist went on strike.

N.W.