

# CONCERTINA NEWSLETTER

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1.

## EDITORIAL

Another bumper issue, with lots of subscribers' letters and articles, including some held over from Issue 4, the photocopies of the Wheatstone catalogue at last, information about Alistair Anderson's important new record of Concertina music which is due for release on May 5th. Articles in this issue include the Tommy Williams interview part 2, Singing with the Anglo, lots more music for the concertina, and many tips and suggestions in the letter section. By the way, I'm rather short of articles from subscribers now. Anyone out there thinking of writing something.....

We now have just under 400 subscribers, including many new ones from overseas, and I'd like to set a target of 1000 by November, which is our first anniversary. I feel that when we reach this figure, no-one can doubt that there is a concertina revival, and also, we can then confidently produce the Newsletter in a magazine format, with proper photographs and printing. Thus, a publicity drive should get under way soon and the subscribers can help in several ways. Firstly, if any players who are lucky enough to get exposure on the Radio (local or National) TV, or at concerts, could make a point of talking a little about their concertinas, and give the Newsletter a mention,

I'm sure more players could be found who'd be interested to read it. Secondly, club organisers and subscribers who play regularly at Folk Clubs are in a good position to publicise their instrument, and its specialist Newsletter. Thirdly, should you see anyone in the street or pub or concert or Festival or anywhere carrying those mysterious leather or wooden cases, chase 'em down and rope 'em in! Lastly, in these days of an ever-growing interest in the music and life of times past, as a backlash against the obscenities of over-technological consumerised "society", many people find our instruments fascinating and evocative of a past gone forever. So let's use the local papers and local radio, to give the concertina more exposure. Most local papers are keen to feature the unusual, so go along to the paper or radio station and offer to talk about your instrument, its history, and the current revival of interest - I'm sure they'll find it interesting enough to print or broadcast!

Early this month, Alistair Anderson, the Concertina player of the high level Ranters releases a solo album of Concertina playing that is certainly the finest and most important recorded concertina music since the days of the old 78's. On the Trailer label, and recorded 16 track in stereo by Bill Leader, the record includes Irish slip jigs, set dances with pipe variations, including the famed "Madam Bonnepart", Two Minuets and Bouree from Sonata No.6 in E major by Bach, a set of both Irish and Shetland reels, Bach's polonaise from the 'B minor suite, some Hornpipes, The Entertainer, which is a ragtime piano piece, a Northumbrian 9/8 tune, one of the most complex in the British tradition, and then some! We can get the record cheaper than the fl.40 shop price, and the first 100 requests for it via the Concertina Newsletter can buy it from me for fl.25 post free. In this way, the Newsletter gets a bit for funds too! This is the record to have for it shows us beginners just what a concertina can do, in the hands of a dedicated amateur.

With a bit of luck, address lists, arranged county by county, should be on their way to you with this issue, and issue 6. I hope you'll then get in touch with subscribers in your area, and help each other out with playing and repairs, even forming local groups and workshops. As usual, write in if you need any assistance, I'll do my best.

I did some visiting at Easter - up to the Black Gate museum in Newcastle-on-Tyne to see Stefan Sobell, who is assistant curator at the newly opened Bagpipe museum, which is really worth a visit. Stefan and I visited John Gall, another concertina fanatic, and we all talked reeds and things until the small hours and went over John's collection of flutinas, concertinas and lap organs with a fine screw-driver! The following Sunday I went to the famed "Folk Union One" Club at the "Bluebell", Lowgate, Hull, and met Steve Gardham, Mick and Nancy Robinson and Sheelagh, all subscribers, and had a fine time in a club that's surely one of England's finest! Many thanks to you all.

Issues 1. 2 and 3 are being reprinted soon in time to go out with this issue, so let me know if you're still short of any.

Neil Wayne

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## FINANCE OF THE NEWSLETTER

Once again, satisfied subscribers have come to the rescue, and we're still solvent! At time of writing, I'm not quite sure how big this issue is going to be, but I feel we've enough to pay for both this one and the reprinting of another 250 of each of issues 1, 2 and possibly 3. There may be some advertising in this issue, which helps a bit, but it's largely the subscribers I have to thank, especially the undermentioned, who've helped out since issue 4. Thank you.

Moirra Woolsey	Graham Symons	I Haigh
N. J. Knowles	Keith Kendrick	John Gall
Ewart Russell	Peter Honri	Reg Hall
Dave Calderhead	Andy Mackay	A. A. Richards
David Blayney	Tony McCarthy	Harry Hatton (yet again!)
E. A. Garner	A. E. Beddard	Mary Sharpe
Mr. & Mrs. Wrigley	David Peel	A. L. Lloyd
Mindy Robinson	Margaret Burgess	J. Price
Frank E. Butler	Wendy Lutley	Mick Butler
Martyn Woerner (again!)	Alison Monkton	Ru sell Wortley.

Not forgetting the donor of the photocopies, who tactfully remains anonymous, and the many of you who've sent stamps and envelopes.

3.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### A Note on Wheatstone 48, No. 8222

In Newsletter 4, John Gall's letter on page 8 refers to an old Wheatstone that he acquired recently and thinks it may have been made at the time of Wheatstone's changeover from 20 Conduit Street to 15 West Street, Charing Cross.

When I was up in Newcastle at Easter, I saw and dismantled this instrument and made a few notes about it. It was a typical mid-Victorian Wheatstone 48 key - flat rosewood ends, flat, silver topped metal keys, and brass scrolls inlaid in each corner of the end fretwork. All parts were stamped 8222 and the Circular paper label bearing names and sizes of notes (to be found on the inner faces of the reed-pan) bore Wheatstone's Conduit Street address. Bellows were green leather, gilt embossed with green paper designs, and the Conduit Street address repeated on the paper of one of the lower folds.

However, it had steel reeds - not brought in until 1862 and also two lever-type, rather than button-type, air valves, one which worked on the push, one on the pull. The fitting of these air levers appeared to have been done professionally, as all Wheatstone levers, springs, pads, and valves were used. The box was also of interest, being an oblong, paper covered cardboard one, such as contain the early pre-Victorian single-action concertinas. But its label read :

*"C. Wheatstone and Co., late of Conduit Street, W1.  
Inventors, Patentees and Manufacturers of Concertina and Aeolas.  
15 West Street, Charing Cross Road, London WC."*

I have two such instruments, both brass reeded, and both without air valves - number 6768 and 10,934, both with Conduit Street labels on the instrument and box. It would thus appear that this instrument has been returned to Wheatstones at some time, probably after the 1890's, since the label mentions the Aeola, and had air valves and steel reeds fitted. Its old box, though probably not original, was at the same time fitted with a new label; this would bring the date of Wheatstone's move towards the end of Victorian times, and I'll try to find out the exact date as soon as I can.

#### The Wheatstone Price List

The "special free gift" in this month's Newsletter is a photocopy of The Price List of Wheatstone English Concertinas and Aeolas. I've got quite a range of these, as they kept printing new ones and enlarging the range and types of instruments available (a major factor in their eventual decline, according to well-informed services). This one was printed in June 1934, and still contains prices, but late printings such as January 1938 left spaces for the prices to be written in - precaution against the beginnings of inflation, no doubt!

The two sheets you have should be placed back to back, with the side headed "The Aeola", backing onto the side headed "The Wheatstone Concertina". They should then be folded down the middle, then folded again to bring the bit with the medals and concertinas to the front and the fingering chart (which I hope you struggling English players will find useful!) on the back. Then pull the paper slip marked "A", - and the bird will flap its wings.

#### Later Wheatstone Addresses

Wes Williams writes later in this issue, of a concertina tutor bought from Wheatstones in July 1959 which has the "15 West Street" address crossed out, and "Duncan Terrace, Islington" stamped on. The bill for this tutor mentions "Ives Street, Chelsea" as Wheatstones address! I can clear up this last one, for this was the address of Wheatstones and Co's final factory. But can anyone tell us about Duncan Terrace?

David Ritchie of 7 Pork Avenue, St. Albans, writes :

*"I am a canal enthusiast, and I am writing to ask you to publish an appeal for information. There was an established tradition of singing among canal boatmen, as you probably know, but I can discover very little of what went on. Since the popular instruments were melodeons and Anglos, some of your older subscribers may recollect hearing boatmen singing in pubs. I would like to know anything about the circumstances, the personalities, and the songs. A good many boat families seem to have been professional entertainers, and in hard winters sometimes lived on what they earned in the pubs. It seems clear that the songs I am looking for are not folk songs in the normal sense of the phrase, but a rag-bag of popular songs of the day, music hall songs and the like, probably often with odd verses added by the singer. Two things I would like to know particularly are whether boaters adopted the current songs of industrial unrest, bearing in mind that their trade*



took them between most of the principal industrial centres, and whether anyone can confirm the slight evidence I have that there were a number of skilled step dancers among the Midlands boatmen. What is established is that many boatmen were talented players of melodeon or Anglo, and much in demand for dancing. I hope your subscribers will be able to help. Any item, however small, will be welcomed, and all letters will be acknowledged. "

Any canal fans amongst our 400+ subscribers? I'm sure David would appreciate a bit of help. NW.

#### THE ANGLO CONCERTINA AND FOLK SONG - Ron Wheeler

Strictly speaking the Anglo seems more suited for folk dance than song. It produces a considerable volume of sound in relation to the size of the instrument and this plus other features would account for the fact that the Anglo seems particularly suitable for Morris Dancing.

However for those singers, like myself, who have a strong affection for the instrument, the following experiences I have had may be of interest :

When I acquired my first concertina some years ago, (a Lachenal Anglo), I set about learning to play it, with a view to accompanying myself. This proved difficult because some of the notes on the treble side were out of tune, but once I had realised that the Anglo notation was basically the same as the mouth organ, I made rapid progress although I had little musical training and could not read music.

Like the mouth organ, Anglo's are tuned to different keys and when I got round to attempting accompaniment I found it a great strain on my vocal chords - my concertina was based on C.G. tuning and the key range which suits my voice best is that based on E#. As a result my early attempts were disastrous and very nearly finished my interest in the concertina, my singing remained almost exclusively unaccompanied.

Time passed. I acquired two more concertinas - one a very fine old Lachenal with a superb tone, key based on D. (From none other than Neil Wayne), the other a very tatty late Lachenal based on E#. Neither was entirely suited to my needs but they were both steel reeded instruments and recently tuned by Tamburro of Birmingham so I swapped the reeds over.

This gave me the very instrument I wanted. An Anglo-Chromatic Concertina of fine tonal quality based on E# tuning. Incidentally this seems to prove that the materials of which a concertina is made do have an important bearing on the tonal quality.

Since I "produced" this Anglo I have enormously enjoyed working out accompaniments to songs in which the better parts of my vocal range can be matched against the sound of the concertina.

So - summarising briefly :-

DO use a concertina which is not only mechanically sound but has also good tone production quality - this applies to Anglos, English and Duet Concertinas and .....

DON T waste time trying to accompany yourself on an Anglo which forces you to sing in keys detrimental to your singing ability and the natural quality of your voice. Having, probably with difficulty, acquired your first concertina, it may seem extremely difficult to follow the above advice but, believe me, nothing is more discouraging than a performance resulting from an unequal fight between your voice and the "wrong box".

Ron, one of the first Folk Concertina players in Birmingham, founded The Folksles group, and ran their successful club in Brum for years before moving to sunny Cornwall. NW.

5.

## THE TOMMY WILLIAMS INTERVIEW - PART 2

Continuing the interview with this Founder Member of the International Concertina Association, who worked as a tuner and reed-maker at Lachenals for many years and now has a small business buying, selling and repairing concertinas.

Neil : What did you do between leaving the army and starting at Lachenals?

Tommy : *Pay was so poor, I used to have to go busking of a weekend, playing outside of pubs. But all I wanted was the experience.*

Neil : Did you stop in London all the time?

Tommy : *Oh, I travelled about - I travelled with this here fellow who taught me. His wife, whenever I went there used to tell me, "he's out" - He wasn't out at all, of course, he was under her thumb! His brother 'd say, "lets go over and see Mr. So and So"; he had to ask his wife if he could go! I got no time for a man to be domineered by a woman: Oooh she was a cow!*

*Talking about this here brass reeded instrument, I thought it'd sound alright with a set of steel reeds in it, so I went to Charlie Jeffries to get some of his steel, but he wouldn't part with it, kept it to themselves.*

Neil : Was it fear of competition?

Tommy : *No, it wasn't that, there was plenty of room for all of 'em, the concertina was very popular, they was in demand.*

Neil : Were there any clubs or organisations then?

Tommy : *Well, they used to organise competitions, the audience was the judges, and usually the majority went for a favorite player, one usually wiped the floor with the rest. There was no adjudicator, as such. I never entered any, but I just used to go to the pub, and have a good tune-up!!*

Neil : What were prices like in the early days?

Tommy : *Well, for 18/-, second hand, you could get a real good instrument - not a professional model, but quite a good one. Them days, you could get 'em cheap, a Jeffries Anglo for 5 gns.*

Neil : A little more about work at Lachenals: Why was most tuning done at home?

Tommy : Well, it was piecework, you could wear your eyebrows out tuning a set of reeds. You didn't work in the factory, as they didn't have separate rooms, and you'd interfere with another man's tuning. About 50 worked in the factory, it was quite a big place and everybody had their part to do. No man made a concertina all throughout; the only man who makes 'em throughout is Harry Crabb, and the Chidleys when they was alive.

All the materials were British then; now they've got to have 'em imported 'cos they've got nobody to make reeds, that's the trouble. Harry Crabb makes his, he stamps the frames out. Not many of the workers were players, only Ballinger (one of the bosses) his two sons, my mate, and another one or two.

Neil : Were there any of the Lachenal family left when you were there?

Tommy : No, they'd all died out, I don't know when. Lachenal's wife sold the business to five workmen who'd pooled their resources. Harry Crabb's grandfather were one. When I come, it had dwindled down to two, named Ballinger and Sanders. The others had sold their interest, perhaps they'd passed out. But Sanders had the biggest share - he owned the property and bought the others out. This was at little James Street, just along the Grays Inn Road. They've pulled it all down now.

This Charlie Jeffries never knew a thing, never been taught anything - most extraordinary, as he turned out an instrument that no other maker could equal. He used the hardest steel there was, and the general construction of them was very solid.

Neil : Is it true that Harry Crabb's grandfather made them for Jeffries?

Tommy : That is correct, he done the woodwork, but later on, the first Charlie Jeffries became independent - he used to be a tinker. Then, of course, there was four sons - the last one did some time back, and the ones he turned out was shocking!!

Neil : What of the other workers at Lachenals when you started?

Tommy : They was all pretty old, perhaps been with the firm since it started, around 1829. Lachenals were the first makers, you can bet on -that - Sir Charles Wheatstone, he commissioned Louis Lachenal to make them for him, under the name of Wheatstone. You often see some Lachenals, even though they've got Wheatstone's plate on, inside they've got the names of the notes on a paper circle, well, the name and address of Lachenals has been cut out! They are Lachenals, even though they've got Wheatstone labels. I've never seen a Wheatstone with Wheatstone's name on the paper inside.

Neil : I have some in my collection .....

Tommy : You can bet that its a Lachenal proper.

To Be Concluded Next Issue

G.

## MUSIC FOR THE CONCERTINA

A useful source of music for both Anglo and English concertina is "The Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems. Double Jigs, Single Jigs, Hop or Slip Jigs, Reels, Hornpipes, Long Dances, Set Dances etc. - collected and selected from all available sources and edited by Capt. Francis O'Neill". Available from Walton's Musical Instrument Galleries Ltd., 2-5 North Frederick Street, Dublin. Or from J. B. Cramer & Co. 99 St. Martins Lane, London W.C.2.  
English price .. .. . fl.75.

Cramers also stock a book of Concertina Music, "Selected Favourite Melodies", which is 15p. + 5p. postage, and "Wheatstone's Instructions for the English Concertina" by Alfred Edwards which is 1.05 plus postage. They also have "Shetland Fiddle Tunes at 50p., Irish Fiddler at 25p., Madrigal Books, Praetorius and Susato Mediaeval Dance Books-

Mention the Newsletter if you write to them.

The International Concertina Association has an extensive music library of over 121 classical and popular pieces for English and duet concertinas, both solo and group work, much of which is exceedingly rare.

ICA members may borrow items of this music on payment of postage, from the Librarian - Mr. F. J. Hutcherson, 45 Valentine Avenue, Bexley, Kent. For those of you who haven't joined the International Concertina Association, you should write to The Secretary, Mr. Jim Harvey, 42 St. Barnabus Street, London S.W.1. who'll send information about the ICA and about the music library.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope!!!!

### Other Magazines of a Musical Nature

Since few of us are interested in just one instrument, I've listed a few more publications some of you might find of interest.

The American Recorder - 141 West 20th Street, New York NY10011, U.S.A.

Sing Out! The major U.S. Folk Magazine from Dobells, London or most good newsagents.

The Recorder and Music Magazine. Quarterly 25p. from Schott & Co.  
48 Great Marlborough Street, London W.1.

English Dance and Song : Quarterly from EFDSS, Cecil Sharp House,  
London N.W.1.

Folk and Country, On National Circulation or from Hanover Publications  
61 Berners Street, London W1P.3AE. 20p. post free.

The Galpin Society Journal. Publishes original research into the history, construction and use of musical instruments. Internationally famous, and unique in its field.  
Information from Hon. Sec. Dr. I. Byrne, School of Physics  
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL. (Send SAE please!)



To the World's Bassoonists \$2.50 per year from Gerald Corey,  
1522 Upshire Road, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218, USA.

Folk Southern . Fine folk mag. for the south of England. Cheap  
advert rates too. 8p. per issue or 88p. for 12 from  
Pete and Jo Sparks, Slades Hill Nurseries, Templecombe, Somerset.

New City Songster . Monthly, with NEW songs of Vietnam, Britain,  
America, love, money, work etc.  
15p. from MacColl-Seeger, 35 Stanley Avenue, Beckenham, Kent.

Glynn Hughes' Ukelele Newsheet. A must for Uke fans! from 26 Lusitania  
Road, Liverpool 4.

Lute Society of America Newsletter - c/o Nancy Winters, 11725 The Promenade,  
Santa Monica, California 90401, USA.

"Treoir" - the Magazine of Irish Traditional Music - c/o Commaltas  
Ceoltoiri Eireann, 6 Sraid Fhearchair, Baile Atma Cliath 2. Eire.  
Most in Gaelic, but full of good stuff.

## 7. THE BANDONEON

This reprinted article was sent in by Bruce Bollerud , concertina  
Bandoneon and Accordion player with "The Goose Island Ramblers" of  
Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A. I'm afraid there's no information on the  
magazine from which it came. I believe there's a few historical  
errors in it, but it is a fine review of the history of the Bandoneon.  
How many subscribers play one?

The Bandonion, an instrument that has the same tone as the German style  
concertina, was developed in 1846 by Heinrich Band, hence the name  
BANDonion. It was a combination and improvement of the keyboards of  
the concertinas ranging from 76 to 128 keys, or tones. The concertina  
had been invented by Carl Uhlig 12 years earlier in 1834, and almost at  
the same time the English Wheatstone concertina appeared. This improvement  
of the instrument, giving it a concert range resulted in the adoption of  
in Germany as well as all over the world, so that today players of the  
bandoneon can be found in every country. The concertina ranging from  
76 to 104, 124-128 keys, embodying the Chemnitzer or Scheffler system,  
is now played only in America, this result being the effect of the  
promotion in the early days of the concertina and bandonion by certain  
importers, such as Otto Georgi, Silberhorn and others, who found a  
ready acceptance and market for the 76 and 102 key concertinas among  
learners who could easily master the instrument in ear-playing of the  
simple folk tunes. This success was followed by the ~~writing~~ and publishing  
of much music for this system of concertina, which permanized the 76, 102,  
104 key concertina. There are today over 6,000 concertina arrangements  
in the U.S. for this type of concertina.

Many Americans have never of a "Bandoneon", and will be amazed at the popularity of the instrument throughout the world as denoted in this issue. For example, at one time just before the War II, there was a count of 686 bandonion orchestras throughout the World, being scattered in Europe Asia, Africa, South America and Central America.

The Bandonion, concertina and accordion are of the group Harmonika. The definition of Harmonika is that it is an instrument that produces harmonious tones, chords, etc., that are not produced by rhythm and single tone instruments. This Harmonika group encompasses all instruments that are not rhythm or single tone instruments - one of the first being a Chinese instrument of tubes (canes) - joined together to be played by one blow hole and fingered for chords in a kind of bottle-shaped instrument, next was the Sackpfeife with a bag and several fingering outlets for the air with reeds, later the bag-pipes. In Germany was the "glasharmonika" which was a series of bottles filled partially with water, being the forerunner of the piano. Today the accordion, concertina, bandoneon, and all other instruments that produce chords or harmonic tones and operated by hand are classified in Germany as hand-harmonikas.

The other class is the "mund harmonicas" (mouth organs), operated by air from the mouth. Guitars, Mandolins and Zithers are called "Streich Harmonikas" (Strike Harmonikas) denoting that tone is made by striking two or more harmonically tuned strings. Accordians in Italy are called fizz-harmonicas or phys-harmonicas.

In addition, throughout Germany, Austria, Argentine and many other countries, bandonion schools are in progress, and the instrument is taught same as the piano as a concert instrument. Bandonions are imported by the Watters Distributing Company, 2219 East 42nd Street, Minneapolis, Minn., 55407, and through them are available to dealers and players. Bandonions are also made to order by the Star Company in Chicago and by the Karpek Mfg. Company in Milwaukee.

Important in the bandonion world, besides Heinrich Band, the instrument's heritage, are August Roth and Walter Porschmann, both deceased in recent years in Germany, Orhan Avsar, Istanbul, Astor Piazzolla, Buenos Aires, Argentine, Anibol Troilo, Buenos Aires. Troilo's name and that of Piazzolla is well known internationally. Troilo's name is prefixed on current bandoneon music in Buenos Aires with the nickname "Pichuco co". Russ Enokson, to whom we are indebted for the South and Latin American information, gathered on his travels there last year, says that Chile has Stanley Black, and in Ecuador there is Hector Varela and orchestra as bandoneon representatives, as well as Lorenzo de Garaicoa in Ecuador. Russ says that the missions use the bandoneon, in South America up and down the Amazon Valley and some natives are even able to read hymn music for it. He reported that Alexandar Barletta, of Buenos Aires, was at that time just back from a world tour. He says that the bandoneon appears in most South American countries, although it is a favourite of the Argentines. One source estimates that there may be as many as 20,000 players of bandoneon in Argentina and Uruguay alone. It is estimated that the bandoneon was introduced into Argentina about 1900.

In the U.S. bandoneon players are pretty well scattered, being found in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan in more numbers than anywhere else, but some are on both Coasts, and we hear about a very fine lady bandoneon player in Alabama, and some other good players in Florida. A year or so ago a fine player with Spanish name appeared on Arthur Godfrey program and had been appearing at a New York Club for a long time. Walter Porschman, Kurt Mueller and others from Europe have been on tours in the U.S., as well as Astor Piazzolla and others from Latin America; and at one time there was a bandoneon orchestra that toured the West Coast - and possibly other parts of the U.S. Peters Brothers out of Milwaukee, toured numerous sections of the U.S. several years ago with their bandoneon group.

Some Bandoneons are diatonic, giving different tones on Press and Draw of the bellows of the same button, or key, and another system is the Kusserow that has the same tone on both directions of the bellows, like piano accordion. The first has numbers and other signs on the keyboard and on the music sheets, and is usually a 142 toned instrument; the latter is called chromatic, although the first is fully chromatic, and has no numbers on the keyboard or the music sheets, enabling the player to become proficient in playing from piano music. There is considerable discussion in Germany about these two systems, and many feel that the trend is towards the Kusserow system, which is usually 142 or 146 tones. The bandonion is fundamentally a "key of C" instrument same as piano, piano accordion, organ, marimba, xylophone, violin, guitar and others, and the range is in the treble cleff, from G below the staff to 2nd A above, and in the bass cleff from C# below to the 2nd B above giving them concert and symphony range. Much orchestra arrangements carry bandoneon parts.

One may ask 'since the bandoneon is such a fine instrument, why are there not more players, such as on the accordion?' The answer is that it has not had the promotion due to the circumstance of World War II which closed with all of the manufacturing sources of the bandoneon, likewise the concertina being behind the curtain in Eastern Germany. During the years after the War to 1952 or 1953 while the accordion makers and promoters were establishing that field, there were no bandoneons or concertinas made in Europe. In the years mentioned, Arno Arnold was able to remove himself, from East Germany and to start making the instruments in West Germany. In this period some concertinas were made in the U.S. but they were too expensive for school promotion for the purpose of creating new players, whereas the accordion promoters had low priced 12 bass accordions for the purpose of teaching beginners on a trial basis at a low cost to the student. But during the last 10 years the interest and the number of players in the concertina bandoneon instruments have more than tripled and is growing steadily..

### 3. SUBSCRIBERS' LETTERS

Ronnie Robertson of 43/4 Muirhouse Green, Edinburgh 4 writes :

*"I hope with the aid of the Newsletter to get some interest going up here, as there's always plenty of requests for information and questions about the tina wherever I play. I would certainly like to help organise a "squeeze-in" or workshop in the area - please ask anyone interested to get in touch with me to organise one. I'm sure a workshop would be well received at the September Festival of the Traditional Music and Song Association. Similarly a workshop at the Alnwick Gathering, judging by the number of players at last year's."*

*A couple of melodeon players and I get together every fortnight to play, and we'd like to hear from any other players and singers interested in lesser known traditional music and song".*

Phill Evans of Derby writes :

*"On May 20th 1972, there's a Ceilidh in the Great Hall of the Technical College, Kedleston Road, Derby (opposite Markeaton Park). The caller will be Phyllis Guildford and the music will be supplied by the Phoenix Folk Entrance is just 20p. and festivities commence at 7.45 pm. until the late bar closes at 11.45 pm. Hope some of your subscribers can get along!"*



Reg Hall of Croydon writes :

"Thanks for No.4. It's nice to see your efforts expanding and to see some satisfying response. I'd like, if I may, to offer some criticism which I hope seems constructive, which its intended to be. I feel you're wide of the mark with your discography feature, and feel concerned enough to make some comment.

I don't know if you have any interest in jazz or the blues, but over the last 30 years or more there has evolved a considerable amount of discographical material; so much so that discography has become a highly skilled occupation (some may say art, others say science!) The better practitioners collate material from catalogues, trade papers, newspapers etc. which is compared with the records (visually and aurally and in some cases with the existing files of the recording companies. Many of the recording artists have been found and interviewed and even the recording technicians!! The published work of people like Brian Rust and the Storyville Team, represent 1000's of manhours' work - and very highly skilled at that. In view of that I feel it is hardly fair to describe your listing as a discography, particularly if acceptance by the Library of Congress is a measure of your serious intent.

If at the moment, you only have lists of records sent in by subscribers then I suggest you publish Lists of Records though I'm not sure I quite see the purpose. I would see a little more value in collating the materials you've got rather than printing the materials raw as you received it. Already ambiguities and errors have crept in :-

1. The instruments played by the artists haven't been identified.
2. The numbers after Columbia (i.e. 28833, 27909) are matrix numbers and there should be a different one for each title not one for the record.
3. Lads of Scotland is called Lads of Scotland and March and the matrix no. is 28055 not 18055, that makes a difference of several years in the recording date!!
4. The anon. concertina on Phoenix 023 is a violin or at least it is on one side - Walter Biedermann of Prince's Orchestra. I can't be more specific as I passed the record on.

As I wrote in my earlier letter I have a lot of material on the records I have, but I don't think I have enough to publish yet. I realise its unconstructive to say I have a lot of material and then do nothing about, but I really don't know what we can do about it, except perhaps I could offer you an invitation to come over some time you're in London to talk things over.

As an example of what I mean about discography the Bill Kimber entry should read :



WILLIAM KIMBER Anglo Concertina

London. November 1946

OEA 11335-1	Haste to the Wedding	HMV. B9579
OEA 11336-1	(Getting Up Stairs (Blue-Eyed Stranger	) HMV B9578
OEA 11337-1	(Rodney (Rigs of Marlow	) HMV B9520
OEA 11338-1	(Double Set Back (Hunting the Squirrel	) HMV B9578
OEA 11339-1	Double Lead Through	HMV B9519
OEA 11340-1	Over The Hills to Glory	"
OEA 11341	Trunkles	HMV B9579
OEA 11342-2	(Bean Setting (The 29th May	) HMV B9520

London. May 1948

OEA 13093-1	Laudnum Bunches	HMV B9670
OEA 13094-1	Constant Billy	HMV B9669
OEA 13095-1	Country Gardens	HMV B9669
OEA 13096-1	Shepherd's Hey	HMV B9670
OEA 13097-1	Headington Morris Reel :- Soldiers' Joy	HMV B9672
OEA 13098-1	Jockie To The Fair	HMV B9671
OEA 13099-1	Old Mother Oxford	"
OEA 1301-1	Bacca Pipes :- Greensleeves	HMV B9669

There was a pre-war HMV session, but I don't have details and then there should be dates/locations and titles of the EFDSS LP. The 3rd take of Trunkles and the second take of Bean Setting/29th May have been at a different session and the missing matrix 13100 may mean there was an additional recording."

A most helpful letter from Reg Hall, melodeonplayer and record collector. I wish more subscribers would write in with criticisms and suggestions, for though it's great to receive the many kind remarks and praise for the Newsletter, it's difficult, as it's produced "single-handed", to correct errors and improve the service without some constructive criticism from subscribers. So write in with your complaints, especially if you think your particular interest has received incorrect or insufficient coverage.

NW.

Tommy Williams of 71 Tennyson Street, Battersea, writes :-

"Read your Newsletter with great interest - one point I'd like to correct you on is that you say Wheatstones largest concertina made in 1935 cost £100 - well the price at that time for an 81 duet was £36. My old firm Lachenals, their price for an 81 Edeophone was £28. They were a lot cheaper than Wheatstone.

One of the subscribers compares English with Anglos - Anglos may suit Folk Music but they are imperfect as regards rendering classics in my opinion. The German Anglos were 2/6d. retail, supplied to the trade for 1/9d. The same thing nowadays costs £8 - wouldn't give you 8/- for 'em. They're only the shape of a concertina, doesn't have the sound or the workmanship of an English make.

Another point, when I had my first brass reed duet, a man offered to make a set of steel reeds. He said, "I'll ask Charlie Jeffries to let me have some of the steel they use". Well, he showed me what Jeffries gave him - a solid block of steel! Course, he was having him on. He eventually made a set from clock springs, but couldn't get the right sound.

A few remarks on ear players: As every ICA member knows, I myself play entirely by ear. Now, some players have utter contempt for us, and there are bad ear players. But I point out that before a tune can be written down, it has to be created in the composer's mind. We have famous musicians who can 't read, and composers who can't write their own compositions down, nevertheless they are the true musicians. I've composed some 20 tunes and one waltz has been orchestrated by Alfred Edwards. My idea of the perfect musician is one who can do both.

Regarding chamois leather, quite good for the pallets (pads). I use that myself. To obtain the felt, a firm in Oldham supply it, Royal Mills, Oldham. Just send 'em a sample of what you require.

Regarding the great early performers, Regondi etc. How could they perform the stuff they played? The type of tina in their day was four-fold bellows brass reeds, sluggish action too, - like expecting a modern pianists of note to play a piano of Chopin's time!

Well that's yer lot  
Tommy.

Jamie Carlin of North Purramatta writes :

I was interested to see in the EFDSS magazine the notice that you were about to publish a Concertina Newsletter. As a player of some 15 years standing I would appreciate being put on the mailing list.

In the early 1950's there was a "bush type" band operating in Sydney known as the "Bushwackers". This was probably the first ensemble deliberately setting out to play folk songs and exclusively Australian material. This group had marvellous support of whom I was one, In 1954 in order to hold together all the fans and to further their aims in promoting Australian folk songs, they formed an organisation known as the Bush Music Club, with which I have since been associated. The Bushwackers devoted themselves to roughly traditional instruments, Melodeon, tin-whistle, mouth organ, guitar etc. but for some reason could never find a concertina, not even to look at. When a visitor arrived from England with a concertina in his possession, we were enthralled to finally have a look. It was strange but once the instrument appeared they were then found in all the most unlikely places. I purchased my first one second-hand in Sydney, as it was in poor repair (48 key (English) Wheatstone) I sent it over to Wheatstone's who told me it was manufactured 1870 not really worth repairing. I then purchased a

second hand 48 key English system from them and restarted learning. With virtually no other players to learn from or copy technique, I have developed a style of mainly melody with occasional vamping which is rather suitable for ceilidh music.

Concertinas are by no means uncommon in Australia except that the high cost has apparently prevented many of the music houses from importing them to sell. Every second farm house in the bush seems to have either a Hohner Melodeon or an Anglo-Chromatic concertina on top of the wardrobe. Usually, the concertina is one of the cheap Lachenal brand & in very poor condition, although you occasionally see a good one. The 20 button variety is the most common. The English system models are scarce and seem to have been mostly imported by the actual players. I suspect the Salvation Army.

You may hear also some time of John Stanley of Bathurst (NSW) who was reputed to be a maker of concertinas. His practice was to cut JOHN STANLEY - BATHURST in the fretwork on one end, and if the instrument was being made to order, to cut the customer's name and town in the other.

If you happen to get hold of a copy of "Folk Songs of Australia" - (Meredith & Anderson) published Are Smith, Sydney, 1968 - you will find a photo of FRED HOLLAND - MUDGE who played a J. Stanley/Bathurst concertina. It also carries a photograph of his sons who have followed a definite folk tradition in Australia in playing the Melodeon. I know of at least 2 other instances in which this has happened, possibly only because concertinas became hard to come by.

As an active player (English system) I receive constant enquiries for advice and always try to put people on the right track. After attending this year's national folk festival I am pleased to find that the concertina renaissance is booming and people from all states are now playing, many extremely well. The "expert" in Melbourne is Mr. Frank Pitt, 51 Birdwood St Box Hill, Victoria, who would probably appreciate being on the mailing list also.

Welcome to our most distant subscriber - I hope we'll hear more from the Australian scene soon. I'll be sending some Newsletter forms for Jamie to spread around shortly!

NW

Mick Butler writes :

"One of our folk clubs on the island is organising a Folk Festival to be held on July 1st/2nd at Shanklin on the Isle of Wight. We have main guests Yetties and Peter Bellamy booked for the evening concerts and ceilidh, but we would also like to present workshops during the day. If anyone is willing and able to run a concertina/melodeon workshop on any aspect of the subject, would they contact me at the address below when we can arrange terms to the satisfaction of all.

Mick Butler  
Crown Folk Club Festival Committee  
c/o "Fairleigh"  
off St. Johns Road,  
Newport, I.O.W.

Sounds a good idea, especially as the Yetties feature English and Melodeon, Peter Bellamy plays a nifty Anglo. I hope some of the southern subscribers can get to this Festival and get together at a workshop. Do write to Mick Butler if you can.

NW



Andy Mackay writes :

"I have just received my first issue of your Newsletter (C.L.4) - very good, I wish I had heard of it earlier. I hope I can have copies of the three I missed sometime. I include my donation to the Cause, may the Newsletter prosper long!!"

I became interested in the 'tina at last summer's Whitby Festival. I returned to London the Saturday night and owned a concertina by the Wednesday (and me on the dole too!) Is this a record? The trouble is the machine is a Wheatstone 'Duet' which everyone agrees (me too now) is rather harder to master.

I don't know if it has been mentioned in earlier letters, but the St. Giles Music Centre, 16-18 St. Giles High Street, London W.C.2. (just off Charing Cross Road, under that Centre Point thing) claims to be the London agent for Wheatstone concertina spare parts. They don't shout about it though, I found them by accident, EFDSS hasn't heard of them and it took three months to get two spare reeds, but if every tina player in London wrote to them they might realise the revival is under way and get the lead out of their supply lines. Phones 01-836-4080 and 01-836-2888. "

Sorry that I've run out of copies of Newsletter 1, 2 and 3. More are being printed soon. Thanks for the information about the Wheatstone spares supplier - I do indeed think it would be a good idea for anyone needing bits to phone and write to them! I think most people find the duet a little difficult - I only know of four or five younger players. Incidentally, I have a couple of tutors for duet concertinas, if anyone wants to borrow them". NW.

Howard Elliott of 3 Queens Place, Kendall, writes :

"One thing I should like to comment on is that I am having great difficulty in obtaining books about the concertina, its manufacture and playing. I've tried my local library and they have said they would try to get books about the instrument but so far no luck, mainly because I have no titles etc. for them to go on. Is there any chance of you publishing a list of books to read up on, particularly on the manufacture and playing of the instrument? Would be greatly appreciated by me and others no doubt - thanks very much. You were asking on one Newsletter about the type of concertinas people had, mine is a 48 key Lachenal No.40943 which I picked up for £7 at an antique auction - very good I thought - only thing is it needs retuning and one or two pads replacing, which I am in the process of trying to get done by writing to the people you mentioned in your Newsletter, otherwise it is in excellent order.

Another instrument I am interested in is the Hurdy Gurdy. Would it be possible for you to do an article on these as well?

I would be interested in getting in touch with anyone else in this area who plays concertina. Any chance of doing so through the Newsletter? Many thanks for an interesting publication keep up the good work. I've sent £1 of stamps, hope they will be useful if only to send me the Newsletter."

I had the same trouble finding information several years ago when I became a concertina collector! I'm afraid there are no books on the manufacturers and history of the Concertina, until I finish the book I'm writing! But there are useful tutors and books of music available, and I'll publish details of these in the Newsletter. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a lot of Hurdy Gurdys, and publish pictures of them. Also the Galpin Society Journal, devoted to musical instrument research, has featured articles on them.



This is available through your local library. NW.

David Calderhead, The Folksinger and Concertina player of 10 Colville Gardens, London W11, writes :

"May thanks for copies of the concertina newsletter. It is certainly just what the scene needs and I enclose a small contribution and some stamps towards postage.

No doubt you have your own ideas for the development of the Newsletter as an organ (joke?) and means of communication too, and intercommunication for people with a common interest in free reed instruments. I feel this might be extended by encouraging the less inertia-bound readers to get together outside the festival environment, possibly to join the ICA and form local groups of it. This would not only extend the scope of the ICA but also the potential contribution power to the Newsletter. One way of stimulating this activity would be the extension of normal Folk Club activities to occasional or even regular, workshops or squeeze ins' (an expression which has fantastic potential - all power to the originator).

The growth of this sort of activity could also be extended to production of "learning tapes" (maybe even limited edition discs?) for exchange between groups or individuals or on a lending circuit basis. There must be many potential contributors amongst the readers of the Newsletter and a service like this might be a good means of propagating more interest and activity in the ICA. By making the association the central controller of such tapes for archival purposes, this would encourage people to join and be more active, even if they can't get to all the meetings.

(I hope you don't mind me rambling on like this, I'm trying to scatter some seeds of my own thoughts in the hope that some of them could take root, and hopefully flourish).

Back to the Newsletter itself!. I certainly agree with John Kirkpatrick's comment about the implication that the Anglo is a poor relation. Certainly not, as the playing of people like Kimber, Sean Tester and John K. himself demonstrates. I personally think that although the English in less experienced hands can produce a more flowing accompaniment, the Anglo is different in the way it is played and this can be used to great effect (n.b.) Pete Bellamy, Toni Arthur and others.

It seems to me that the English is adopted by singers and musicians who find the action easier to accomodate than having to learn the Anglo system from scratch. For my own part I am now endeavouring to get to grips with the English (and have been for some time now) and find that my progress is much slower than with the Anglo in terms of reaching a level of competence I would require to play in public.

I hope you are able to maintain the high standards you are setting with the articles and interviews and look forward to receiving many more copies of the Newsletter in whatever form it takes.

I would be interested in more details of Wheatstone's numbering system as the "Bass profundo," half action in my collection appears to have no numbers whatsoever. Any comments on this?

A letter full of good ideas from my old mate Dave Calderhead. As I mentioned in Issue 4, Regional groups, possibly centred on local Folk Clubs and publicised in conjunction with the ICA would be a valuable asset to the concertina revival; but it's the subscribers themselves who must take on this organisation. Several of you have written in about this, and when I manage to get everyone sent a copy of the address directory, I'll write a list of those who are interested in taking on a little of this regional organisation. But we need more volunteers - could Folk Club organisers who might be able to help please get in touch?

On tape exchange I hope you're all taping as much playing as possible, both recorded and live; if some form of exchange service for tapes could be set up, a lot of isolated players could get a good idea of various styles, and learn new tunes etc. Anyone able to make such tapes - Mono 3'3/4 I.P.S. should do so, and let me have details soon! Jim Harvey of the ICA has a large and unique collection of Concertina performances and it'd be nice to build a collection of tapes from the Newsletter subscribers. As for Dave's Bass, I'm stumped - all my Bases have numbers somewhere in the instrument, especially post 1900 Wheatstones.

NW

#### 9. Forthcoming Events

##### International Concertina Association Meetings

Jim Harvey, Secretary of the International Concertina Association writes :

*"Here are the dates of Forthcoming I.C.A. Meetings, any subscribers and other visitors will be welcome.*

May 27th - 2.00pm. to 5.00 pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square  
Holborn, London N.7.

June 24th - 6.30 pm. to 9.00 pm. Holloway School, Hornsey Rd.  
London N.7.

July 29th, - 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm. Conway Hall.

September 30th - 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm. Conway Hall.

October 28th - Social - 5.00 pm. to 9.00 pm. Holloway School

December 2nd - 6.00 pm. to 9.00 pm. Carol Meeting - Conway Hall.

January 27th 1973 - 2.30 pm. to 5.00 pm. - A.G.M. Conway Hall.

February 24th 1973 - 6.30 pm. to 9.00 pm. Holloway School

March 31st 1973 - 2.30 pm. to 5.00 pm. Conway Hall.

*Its usual to have a committee meeting before the usual get-together so allow for that in your list, but visitors are welcome if they care to amuse themselves.*

*Our Concertina Festival is the last Saturday in October 1973 as usual  
The Whitfield Memorial Hall,  
Tottenham Court Road  
London W.1.*

##### Cleethorpes Folk Festival - Whitsun Weekend

Apart from all the usual Folk Events and Concerts, on Sunday 29th Alistair Anderson is giving a Concertina playing workshop! Wizard Anglo and Melodeon player John Kirkpatrick will be there too, so it looks like being quite a weekend for tina players. However, though the organiser tells me that the Pier events have been sold out since March, there are some camp site tickets left, where there's always a lot going on. Tickets from 44 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes, Lincs.

*See you there!* NW

10, An American Concertina Concert

Music Club

Feb. 26, 1971.

A program on the English Concertina was given by Adam McGibbon at the Friday meeting of the Fredericksburg Music Club, Virginia, U.S.A.

Program

- |    |                    |                       |
|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a) | Radetzky March     | Johann Strauss        |
|    | Intermizzo Russe   | Th. Franke            |
| b) | The Lost Chord     | Sir Arthur Sullivan   |
|    | Four Chorales      | Johann Sebastian Back |
| a) | Chant Sans Paroles | Tschaikowsky          |
|    | Hungarian Dance #5 | Biahms                |

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A short talk about the instruments with Questions & Answers

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Themes from the Operas

- |    |                              |                 |                              |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| a) | March                        | Norma           | Bellini                      |
|    | Aria                         | Lucrezia Borgia | Donizetti                    |
| b) | Soldiers Chorus              | Faust           | Gounod                       |
| a) | Played on the 48 key English | b)              | Played on the 64 key English |

Mr. McGibbon, a Scot who moved to the U.S.A. in the 1920's, gives frequent lecture recitals with his concertinas, and I hope we hear more of his activities.

NW

11. The Concertina on the Variety Theatre Stage by Fred Osborne :

Writer for "Banjo - Mandolin - Guitar" Magazine, and "The Stage"

In the colourful days of the variety theatres the Concertina was featured as a solo instrument by a number of well-known performers.

Sometimes the Concertina was featured as one of several instruments by Multi-instrumentalists, such as Grock, the famous International Clown: Frank Wilson; the Australian Sundowner, who appeared dressed as a tramp and by Comedy-Musician, Billy Crotchet, (who I believe was a Scotsman.)

However, there were artistes on the Halls who featured the Concertina exclusively in their acts, and some of these were in the virtuoso class. A very popular, well-dressed act was that of Jack Easy, who appeared on the stage dressed as a Merchant Navy Sailor, a most immaculate figure, with white hat. He played semi-classical numbers, and medleys of popular tunes of the day, and terminated his act by playing a midget concertina of very tiny proportions as did some other concertina soloists. The midget-concertina was usually played with a quick in-and-out movement of the bellows to produce a tremolo effect and this sounded very sweet as the small concertina was well up in the soprano register.



A well-known artist on the "boards" was the late George Ross (real name George Taylor) who appeared in a double act known as Ross and Rose - a female partner, his wife. George hailed from Grangetown, near Redcar-by-the-Sea and came of a very musical family, and particularly a concertina family, as his father was a good concertina player, and so was his sister, Alice and another brother. They had a family concertina quartette well-known at local concerts.

Finally George decided to try his luck as a professional soloist on the Variety Theatres and spent something like 16 years of his life as a concert artiste "on the boards". George was well-known amongst his fellow-artistes for his remarkable musical manuscripts as they were so neatly wrought as one would swear they were machine-printed copies and I was even myself deceived by them. He arranged and hand-wrote all the orchestral parts for the Theatre Orchestra to accompany his act, and would also arrange parts for some of his artiste-friends, some of whom the writer knew. George was a real concertina virtuoso with a wonderful technique, and great musical susceptibility. He concluded his act, like some other artistes, with the novelty Midget Concertina. He retired from the stage and became Concert Pianist, and Secretary for concerts at the British Legion Club at Saltburn-by-the Sea. The writer was very proud to have known this extremely friendly man and lamented his death at the age of 60.

George's sister, Alice, was a professional pianist in later years and was accompanist at the "Variety Cavalcade Shows" produced by the writer all over the Teeside Area.

Space forbids quoting all the concertina acts seen by the writer on the Variety Stage, but they were all well received by the audiences.

12. WANTED : Concertina Music (tutors, Studies, Medleys, solos etc.)  
Contact - Arthur Appleby, 12 Leigh Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1.

FOR SALE : Mr. T. Watkinson has a Lachenal 48 key 6 sided 'tina for sale.  
Steel reeds, metal buttons and plated ends, modern case.  
Fair condition, not one of the better models however. (He refused £8 from me, so offers over that may secure this instrument, which needs some attention, NW.)  
Contact - T. Watkinson, Flat 6, Edenhall Gardens,  
Clifton Estate, Nottingham.

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## OBITUARY

LEWIS 'SCAN' TESTER

CONCERTINA PLAYER

DIED ON SUNDAY THE 7TH MAY 1972.

AGED 86.

GOODNIGHT "SCAN".....

FROM CONCERTINA PLAYERS EVERYWHERE.

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