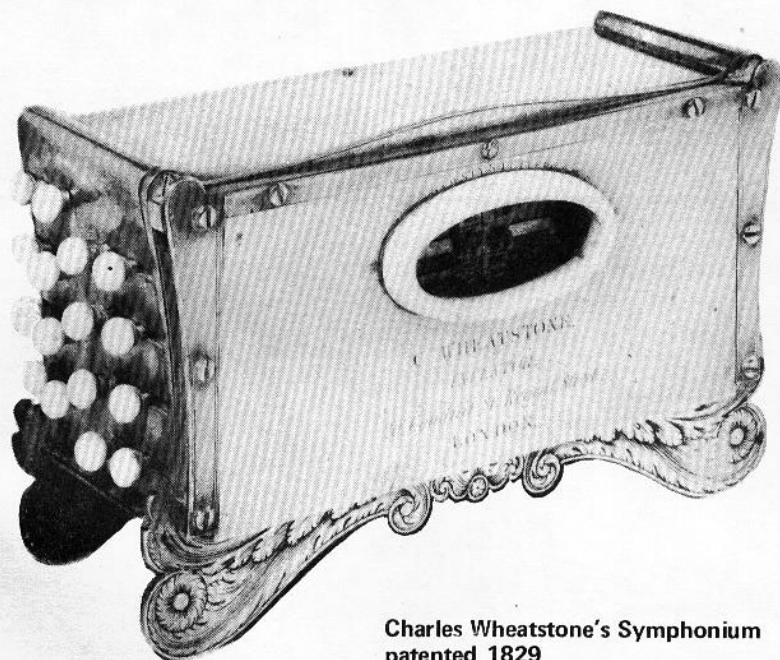


FreeReed

The Concertina Newsletter



No. 18 June/July 1974



Charles Wheatstone's Symphonium
patented 1829

DEAD EASY CONCERTINA COMPETITION

ANSWER THE SIMPLE QUESTIONS BELOW AND POST THEM OFF TO "FREE REEL" VERY QUICKLY. FIRST PRIZE IS A SIGNED PHOTO OF OUR RETIRED EDITOR NEIL WAYNE. SECOND PRIZE IS 100,000 SIGNED PHOTOS OF NEIL WAYNE. ARE YOU READY? GO!

1. WHICH OF THE OBJECTS BELOW IS AN ENGLISH CONCERTINA?

a.



b.



4. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INSTRUMENTS IS EASIER TO PLAY?

a/ ELECTRIC CONCERTINA

b/ ELECTRIC CHAIR

5. IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW, WRITE IN YOUR OWN WORDS (OF NOT LESS THAN 1000 WORDS) WHY YOU THINK "FREE-REEL" IS SO GOOD.

Here are a few words which may help you - SUPER, GREAT, FAB, FAB-GEAR, SWITCHED-ON, NICE

2. WHO OF THE FOLLOWING FIRST INVENTED THE ENGLISH CONCERTINA?

a/ MICKEY SPILLANE

b/ DORIS JAY

c/ NEIL WAYNE

d/ A. SAJIST

e/ I DON'T KNOW

3. A CONCERTINA IS USED FOR WHAT PURPOSE?



EXPANDING CHEST MUSCLES?



CRACKING NUTS?

6. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS THE CORRECT WAY OF HOLDING AN ANGLE CONCERTINA?



7. WHO WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO PLAY A CONCERTINA UNDER WATER, WEARING ASBESTOS GLOVES, SEE-THROUGH Y-FRONTS AND JIMMY YOUNG'S TOUPÉE?

a/ JIMMY YOUNG

b/ NEIL WAYNE

c/ KING KENA or SOPHIE LOKEN

8. USING BLOCK LETTERS ONLY, SPELL "CONCERTINA".
Clue: It has ten letters...

ANSWER.....

HAVE YOU ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS? GOOD! WASN'T THAT SUPER FUN? REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR ANSWERS OFF TODAY. (COMPLETE WITH ANY 3 CENTRE-PAGE PULL-OUTS FROM "PLAYBOY" MAGAZINE.) THE JUDGES DECISION IS FINAL, SO THANKS!!

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EDITORIAL

As the many of you who have written in lately will have learned, Free Reed has been going through a crisis patch lately, with a very long delay between last issue and this one.

A combination of factors is to blame, stemming from the shortages and delays brought about due to the 3-day week, and complicated by really huge price increases in virtually everything I use to bring out the magazine — envelopes, postage, typesetting, printing, to name some of the more significant increases. Issue 17 cost £306 to print, £85 to post and £30 to layout and transport. Money's been a problem, since I don't want to put subs or advert rates up, even though they're by far the cheapest in the country, so I'm relying on the Free Reed mail order record service to finance Free Reed until the majority of subs become due again in November. Anyway, I have now edited and laid out the next two issues, 19 and 20, which will be released in early August and mid-September, and will try out the plan of smaller, more regular issues.

Apart from that, it's all good news folks. We have a backlog of really interesting articles held over for future issues, including an important series of articles on Cajun melodeon music, John Wright's article on the Jews harp and how to play it, Steve Wood's tune swap, features on repairs, and interviews with the Crabb family and some ex-concertina bandmen.

Our many North American subscribers will know that Alistair Anderson and your harassed editor have planned an extensive tour to the United States and Canada between 7th August and 19th September this year, and we're both really looking forward to meeting the subscribers over there — for further information on

the tour you can contact Janet Schneider, 64 High Point Road, Bloomingdale, NJ 07043 telephone (201) 838 4057.

I personally will be taking a few concertinas along as 'swaps', and would specially like to meet folks with an interest in old or unusual instruments on the trip.

Free Reed will, of course, 'carry on' while I'm in the States, and I'd like now to introduce you all to Vicky, our first full-time worker on the magazine, who will be handling the office side of Free Reed from mid-July. You can call Vicky on Derby 840935 to enquire about subs, orders, repairs, etc. Vicky will be producing issue 19, and issue 20 in September will be, I hope, a North American issue, featuring interviews with, and articles by, American and Canadian players, and the music and history of the concertina in America.

Frank Butler's most excellent English Concertina Handbook and tutor, published in May, received an encouraging welcome, and has been reviewed all over the world. I know that many of you were lucky enough to obtain copies of this essential book at special pre-publication price, but for those who missed that opportunity, there is an order form in this issue — I might add that 'The Concertina' was a relatively limited edition which is unlikely to be reprinted in the near future and if you're at all interested in concertina playing, you should make sure of a copy.

The BBC Radio programme 'Folkweave' (Radio 2 8.00 p.m. Thursdays) is worth a listen — live club recordings, record reviews by the very knowledgeable Tony Foxworthy, an archive recording spot, club dates, and interesting workshop sessions — it was nice to hear on a recent club spot Alex Atterson and Tim Laycock of Norwich both

giving their songs an excellent English concertina accompaniment.

Britain's newest folk label, TOPIC-FREE REED, presents its first release this month, 'Concertina Workshop', the second solo record from one of the great players, Alistair Anderson. 'The Concertina Workshop', as well as being instructive and informative, is a pure delight to listen to. Ali is joined by Tich and Dave Richardson (mandolin, guitar, banjo and for a treat, hammered dulcimer) and Graham Pirt, whose two songs serve to illustrate the various techniques of song accompaniment on the concertina. As usual, Free Reed subscribers can get this record on day of release at a substantially reduced price, and there's an order sheet in this issue.

Free Reed, when it was the good ole duplicated Concertina Newsletter, started off supplying Alistair Anderson's first record extra cheap as a service to its readers, and gradually added more specialist recordings to create a useful catalogue of recordings featuring free reed instruments. This discount record service, now open to the public, has grown considerably, as you can see by the latest list in this issue, but I'd like to draw attention to some of the new additions to Free Reed Records which feature concertina and related instruments, as evidence of the continued revival. I've mentioned Alistair's newest record - but staying in the North-East, 'Bonny North Tyne' one of Topic's latest batch features, amongst other fine instrumentals, the excellent mouth-organ playing of Billy Atkinson, one of the finest players I've heard and a delight to hear. The fine debut album of Richard and Linda Thompson, 'I Want to See the Bright Lights Tonight' features John Kirkpatrick on button accordion and anglo concertina, while on Topic Sue and John Kirkpatrick's new record 'Rose of Britain's Isle' introducing a good deal of rare English country dance tunes as well as excellent song accompaniments on anglo and button box. John K is, of course, a mainstay of the legendary 'Morris-On', and now, on its follow up 'The Compleat Dancing Master' assumes a major role. For those interested in song accompaniment the two A.L. Lloyd and Ewan MacColl albums on Stinson records (U.S.A.) both feature concertina accompaniment throughout (I believe it's Alf Edwards), while on the recent release from Shirley Collins and the Etchingham Steam Band - 'Adieu to Old England' (Topic),

you can hear the anglo playing of John Watcham, musician to the Albion morris, as well as some fine mouth organ playing from Terry Potter.

Our Jews harp enthusiasts, often a neglected minority, have their interest well served by 'Lark in the Clear Air', again on Topic. Described as Irish traditional music on small (Pocket) instruments, the record features the unique Jews harp playing of John Wright and his two brothers in conjunction with John Doonan on piccolo, and with mouth organ, flute and spoons - it was recently 'folk record of the month'. To conclude, I've recently located a supply of rare Australian records of bush bands and solo musicians, all of which use anglo and melodeon in their line up - but more of these musicians later.

Incidentally, two new English country dance bands have recently risen to prominence in the ceilidhs and folk dances of England - 'Whistling Rufus', led on one row four stop melodeon by Tufty Swift, with John Tams and Derek Pearce on lead and rhythm banjos, and 'Umps and Dumps', John K's new band (including Rufus' musicians, which John and Sue lead on anglo and oboe - an excellent free reed sound).

Folks still struggling to repair or overhaul their ailing or ill-used concertina will be glad to know that there is at last a reliable repair service, independent of, but approved by Free Reed - in addition to all the usual tuning, re-padding, Free Reed Repairs of Ambergate can make bellows, restore old instruments and supply in large or small quantities, all the spares necessary to repair and recondition concertinas - I hear they're planning to make them eventually.

What a long editorial. But the gap between issues should grow shorter now. Keep sending in your comments, criticisms and contributions and spread the word. Special thanks this time to Bill Tidy and Paul Richo for cartoons, to Jill Ford for sorting out office chaos, to Frank Butler for musical draughtsmanship, to Tufty, Vicky, Tam, Mary and Derek for everything, and to you for staying with Free Reed despite it all.

Have a really smashing summer.

Neil

NEIL WAYNE

The Broadside from Grimsby



John Conolly, Tom Smith, Bill Meek, Brian Dawson, Mike Lee. (Guitars, accordion, melodeon, banjo, fiddle, dulcimer, mandolin, whistle and voices).

Contact:

John Conolly,
18, Scrivelsby Court,
Cleethorpes, Lincs.

or

Bill Meek
249 Humberston Road
Cleethorpes
(N) Grimsby 77449
(H) Humberston 2209

READERS' LETTERS

A.L. Lloyd writes . . .

"You may be amused by this little cameo. It comes from a book of short stories, *On Our Selection*, which was staple bush reading when I was a young fellow in Australia. It's hardly known in the cities, but in the outback its two main characters, Dad and Dave, are legendary.

"Sandy Taylor passed our place every evening and always stopped at the fence to yarn with Kate about dancing. When the dancing subject was exhausted, Sandy would drag some hair out of the horse's mane and say: 'How's the concertina?' 'It's in there,' Kate would answer, and she'd call out 'J—oe, bring the concert!' Joe would strut along with it, and Sandy for the fiftieth time would examine it and laugh at the kangaroo-skin straps that Dave had tacked to it, and the scraps of brown paper plastered over the ribs of it to keep the wind in; and cocking his left leg over the pommel of his saddle, he'd sound a full blast on it as a preliminary. Then he'd strike up *The Rocky Road to Dublin* or *The Wind among the Barley*, or some other beautiful air, and grind away until it got dark, till mother came and asked him if he wouldn't come in and have supper, and of course, he always would, and after supper he'd play some more. Then there would be a dance."

From : Steele Rudd: *On Our Selection*

CONCERTINA EVENING CLASSES IN YORKSHIRE

Mrs. Nellie Power, the noted Concertina player and teacher from Dewsbury has agreed to take an evening class in English concertinas at a local technical college, starting early in September. Mrs. Power, for many years closely associated with the Heckmondwike Prize Concertina Band has starred at previous West Riding Folk festivals, and has been teaching privately for some time. This class will be a great opportunity to learn from an expert, and any readers who'd like to enrol should contact Wendy Price, 24a Halifax Road, Dewsbury.

THE CRITICS CORNER

Here are some readers' comments and criticisms about Free-Reed — please write in if YOU'VE any suggestions for improvements.

"Many thanks for Free-Reed — but how about a binder for it? The EFDSS do a nice one for 'English Dance and Song, which has gold lettering and retails at £1.10." — PETER HOWARD

"It would be nice to organise a small concertina band, with perhaps other instruments, to rehearse once a month in London. Would anyone be interested?" — DICKIE CROSS

80 Redcliffe Gardens,
London, S.W.10.

(I'd be glad to lend basses and baritones for use in such a band — Neil W.)

"Just received the Frank Butler Tutor — Great! ! Now, what about Free Reed having a go at John Kirkpatrick for one on the ANGLO? He tells us that it's NOT inferior, so now is the time to get something to paper!" — PETER WALLER

(As you'd expect, John K. is very busy, but he is collaborating on a handbook for the Anglo, and a Free-Reed-Topic record on the music of the Morris, featuring Anglo concertina. N.W.)

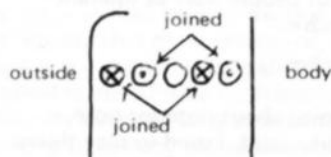
"I think that there should be less history and more opportunity to purchase concertinas through Free-Reed. Also, there ought to be a melodeon tutor, written the same way as the Frank Butler 'English' Tutor, which a beginner could understand."

(The New Standard concertinas introduced to readers in the last issue will be available soon, and applications for them dealt with in order. As for a melodeon tutor. There'll be some articles on Cajun melodeon style soon, and you'll find that a lot of anglo instruction suits the melodeon too. See John K's articles in Issues 9, 10 and 13 and the Melodeon article in Issue 13. Neil Wayne.

SOME NOTES ON THE 5-ROW DOUBLE ACTION BUTTON ACCORDION —

From Mike Slocum, — Australia.

My accordion is a Hohner 5-row button accordion (pretentiously called Maestro III). It is double action viz. the same as English Concertina. These accordions, (as well as six & seven row) are the most popular in Italy and Germany. Two arrangements exist a B arrangement and C arrangement, which is almost a mirror image of the B arrangement. The C is popular in Italy and B in Germany. The instrumental keyboard is actually only three rows as the second row from the body is joined to the outside row and the row closest to the body is joined to the row 2nd from the outside viz;



The advantage of this is that by playing on any three rows the fingering can be transferred to another three consecutive rows to play in another key. e.g. I play in D on the inside three rows, and in G with the same fingering on the middle three rows and in A on the outside three rows. I hope this may help someone who has one of these. Anybody who can understand what is written is well on the way to being proficient.

Note: I play with 4 fingers and not the thumb and the bass is the standard English accordion or piano accordion bass.

CHOPIN AND THE CONCERTINA

Scathing remarks about the British were made by Chopin, the composer, in a letter which on Saturday will have its first public reading at the Wigmore Hall.

He wrote it while on a visit to England and Scotland in 1848, the year before he died.

In a programme of Chopin's words and music, the letter will be ready by **Gabriel Woolf**.

In the letter Chopin said : "One of the most important ladies here, at whose castle I spent a few days is said to be both a *grande dame* and a musician.

"After I had played and other Scottish ladies had sung various songs, they brought out a sort of accordion (a concertina) and she, with the utmost gravity, began to play the most dreadful tunes on it.

"But what can you expect? It seems to me that every one of the creatures has a screw loose. What a queer lot! God preserve them!"

Contributed by Mrs. V. Wayne

LONDON NOTES

Frank Butler's new Tutor for the English Concertina was announced by the B.B.C. in their Nationwide Programme. It was introduced to a background of students from the Battersea and Holloway classes playing Bach's "Sheep May Safely Graze", following which Neil Wayne was interviewed on the revival in concertina playing, and himself played a Morris Dance on an Anglo.

The programme concluded with a two-minute shot of the group, playing again, "Sheep May Safely Graze", and the producer insisted that this was a special honour, to be given a second showing to close the programme.

At the first run-through the camera men and floor staff applauded — an encouraging start. In addition to Frank Butler and Neil Wayne, those taking part were Vena MacDougall, Anne Foster, Jeanne Dawson, Doris Butler, and Dick Cross. "Sheep" was arranged by Frank Butler as a test piece for groups in the forthcoming I.C.A. Festival and the music will be available for purchase in the autumn, through Free Reed.

Miss Maude Evans, formerly, Group Secretary of the London Music Festival tells us there is doubt if that Festival will be held again, but she has been able to arrange for concertina classes to be included in the North London Music Festival in 1975. It is held in Muswell Hill, London in May of each year.

FOLK AND THE CONCERTINA REVIVAL: A READERS' FORUM

Michael Castling's letter in Issue 17, on the nature of the folk and concertina revivals has provoked quite a flood of correspondence — I here publish a representative selection of views, from subscribers old and young — so re-read Mike's letter before commencing!

Neil Wayne

Dickie Cross writes . . .

"I was enchanted by Michael Castling's letter in Issue No.17. As an exiled Geordie I recognised our regional trait of handing out a few bouquets then swiping out at everyone and everything within reach.

First I would like to comment on his statements of 'cliques and the elite'. There will always be those who take up an unknown artiste and make him or her into an "in" artiste — which really means: "not popular". Usually this performer has talent, which is why they were noticed in the first place. When the artiste in question becomes popular then they desert him, and start the whole cycle all over again.

Regarding artistes who copy, this is a natural thing, and good — as long as the performer they copy is a true artiste and not an inferior one. As a budget controller on many musical programmes on T.V. I have had to attend numerous auditions. Experience has taught me that a really ORIGINAL talent is very rare — and it is not always a good thing for the performer in question, who is often picked up and forced faster than his talent can mature. Most fine performers start out as copyists, then through experience develop their own style. So give the beginners a hand!

As far as fanatics are concerned, they are a necessity. If it hadn't been for Neil Wayne and his fanatical attitude to concertinas you and I wouldn't be in print. If it hadn't been for Mr. Frank Butler's fight for half a century to remove the stigma of the "boot in the pub door" image from this instrument, then we wouldn't recently have got a standing ovation from the crew of the BBC-TV "Nationwide" programme when they first heard our concertina ensemble play "Sheep may safely graze". Nor so many people amazed that the old squeeze box could produce such beautiful sounds.

I do think, Michael, that 'Free Reed' does cover most events, and remember that it is NOT a Folk Review. Quite a lot of subscribers are not 'folkies' but class themselves as concertina players. And don't you think your attitude about "not being a master of the instrument but supporting those who are" — may sound benign, but is really just a 'cop-out'? It is rare satisfaction to try and master the instrument which will give you a keener insight and pleasure into the talent of the "big boys". Get a copy of Mr. Butler's self-service tutor, and start practising!

Lastly: for once I do agree with you that the diversities occur in the people, not the music. Music covers all aspects of life, and all stratas. Even the greatest composers often use folk songs in their music, and 'rock-and-roll' is entering the realms of opera and ballet. I, also, wish that the minds of people were as tolerant and as open as the music."

Nigel Chippindale writes . . .

"I feel that Mike's point about note for note impersonations is fairly valid, I used to play things myself exactly as on a record, but I think every performer of any value at all gradually develops his own style and methods of performing. This cannot be rushed, and if in some people it cannot occur at all, it is still better to hear note for note impersonations than horribly distorted versions of songs, contrived for the mere sake of putting your own stamp on a song, as can be found at its most ghastly in alleged "ballad" singers like Tom Jones and Vince Hill. To go back to Steele-eye Span again, Mr. Castling's own points can be used against him. He refers to Steele-eye Span and the Spinners as a colossal fraud, and then later says that "the music and the people who keep it alive are the important things" — Steele-eye Span and the Spinners do more than merely keep the music alive, they spread it to thousands of people. Let us not forget Fairport Convention, featuring the brilliant fiddling of Dave Swarbrick, The Spinners, who were my first introduction to folk music, apart from uninteresting school music lessons. This must be true of countless people, who, like myself, later move on to more artistic performers, like Steele-eye, or more traditional performers like John Kirkpatrick and Alistair Anderson. Even if one detests Steele-eye Span and the Spinners, one should not be able to deny the good work they are doing, and if they are able to make out of it, good luck to them."

"Michael Castling gives freely rede of great worth, I reckon. Personality thingies in folk are pretty revolting, but in one sense at least they are traditional. In this part of the world there is a long tradition of one performing to many; we have it in everything — the classroom, the political arena, every sphere of entertainment and in all folk clubs which are not singarounds. This is why I am pro Singarounds and anti The Big Name Guest thing, and it's pretty silly of me to say this because I become a full-time professional in July this year. But I can qualify this view a little; I am anti the attitude that the singer is great and the song is the vehicle to demonstrate that greatness. A particular archetype of singer that I don't clap at the end of the song is the one who makes it evident that they are — in their own estimation at least — the bees' knees. That other archetype, the singer with a poor voice and the wrong chords on an unfashionable out-of-tune instrument, who somewhat diffidently sings his song because the song is there deserving to be sung will receive much more applause from me. As for the dangers of being ethnic, that Michael mentions, I understand that he means the word perjoratively and as such right is on his side again, I feel. But it is possible just to like singing songs with people, you know, and I don't mean glee-ful "fatty bacon" songs (as they have recently been called). If you just enjoy singing some songs there is a fair chance, I tell myself, that audiences will go along with that enjoyment, and that organisers will book you, and it should be possible at the same time to avoid being stigmatised as a Big Name. What the scene needs, it seems to me, is an infusion of Little Names (with capital letters); people who don't want to be stars of electricity. French Folk Festivals and Steam Radio. A great lot of people think like this, I am sure, so where is the difficulty? Easy; it lies in the fact that folk club audiences pay the money to keep the whole thing going, and that many in such audiences are more affected by record labels and radio programme glibness, than by straightforward delight in the singing bit. In short they come to folkclubs hoping to recapture the non-atmosphere of vicarious folkiness purveyed by records and radio; isn't that a revolting thought! What to do then if you are an organiser; pay particular attention to Little Names who espouse singing-delight above £-notes. If you

don't, then you are encouraging the swing into plasticity by further promoting the Gary Glitters of folk music, and you are squeezing out of business of only line of defence left, these same Little Names that I mentioned before.

I am not despondent; the swing into the fame game, like all other swings begets its own counter-swing. Sheer economics will (and has already) moved some clubs away from the famous to the less famous guest, or away from straight clubs towards singarounds. Some more good news for Michael is that I know at least two people who have given up playing the concertina because it is too 'in.' The present trends into the bright sparks of electric folk etc., etc., will have this effect, it seems to me; they will move some artists out of the reach of folk clubs, taking lumps of the most unreflective part of the audience with them. The residuum will be forced into doing something much nearer what Michael, I and many more want to see; taking proper unalloyed delight in singing the songs they want to sing with Little Name Guests who feel about the same. There's a rift amidships and it will grow; choose your side of the rift — there's still hope, I believe; I wouldn't be going full-time if I didn't think so!"



Bill Tidy

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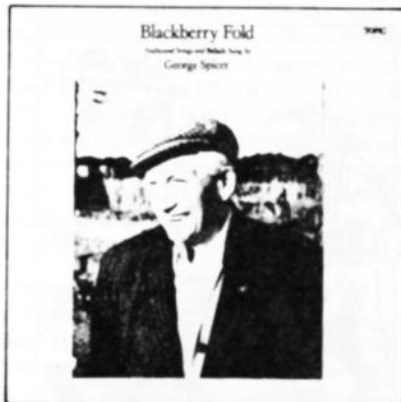


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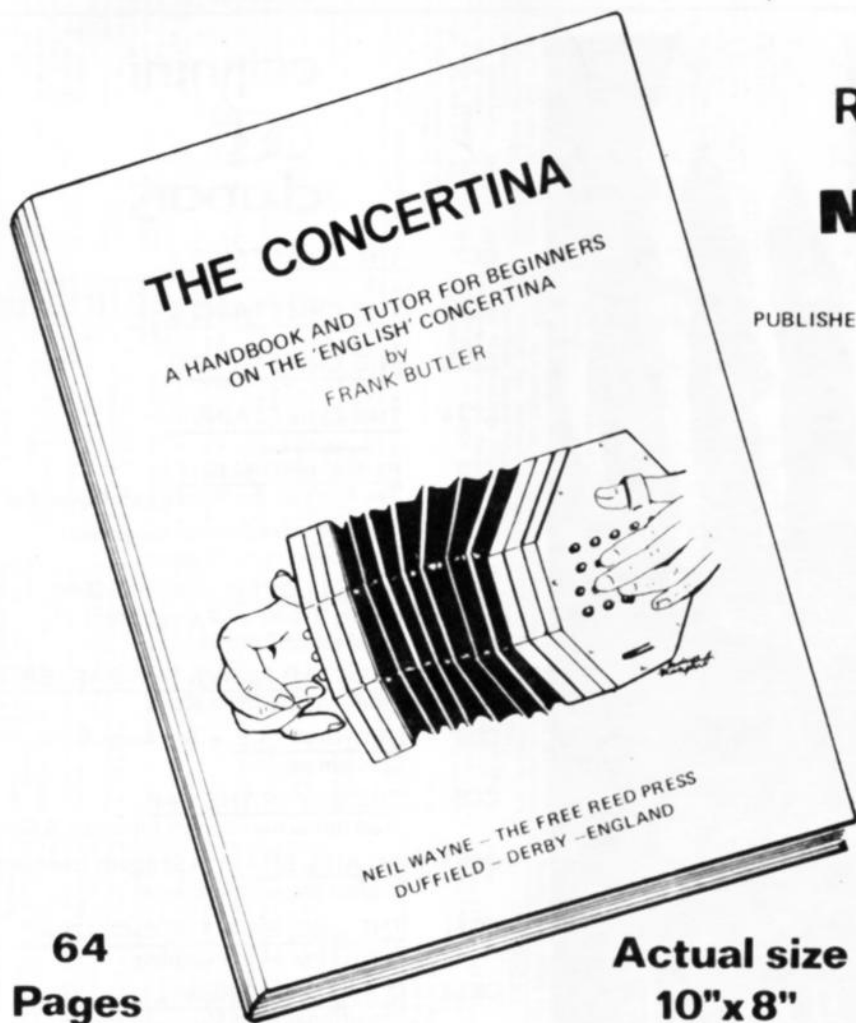
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DAVE BULMER



Robin Morton, of the Boys of the Lough writes,

'Here is McMahon's Reel. I saw your appeal for it in the last Free Reed. We play it on our 1st LP, where it is mated with "The Boy in the Gap". Both are good flute tunes and indeed "McMahon's" was 'made' by James McMahon, now in his 70's and living in Belfast. James comes originally from Roslea in Co. Fermanagh and learned the flute and many of his tunes, from his father who is still talked about in the area as a 'true musician'. In fact James' whole family are remembered as dancers, singers and musicians.

Cathal learned the tune from Tommy Gunn the fiddle player with whom we played a lot a few years ago".

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Wes Williams writes . . .

"Just a few notes on Mike Castling's letter in No. 7.

Firstly, the Spinners/Steeleye argument. I still can't see how this is not folk music. The tunes are the same, it's just a different arrangement. If then, it is the arrangement and perhaps the instruments used, all folk musicians should throw away their concertinas as we all know that they aren't traditional instruments away. I personally don't like the Spinners/Steeleye arrangements but the fact is the music is still folk with a capital F.

Another point is that Mike has constantly equalled the concertina with folk music. Its life does not lie completely in this area, but also in classical, marches, music hall, etc., so the changes in 'Vogue' in the folk world don't really mean a total change in concertina people. For me it's the instrument first and the type of music last.

It matters to me who made a certain concertina because they all have different tones. I recently tried a Wheatstone Anglo, which, had it been for sale I would have paid the earth, because the tone and clarity of it was so beautiful. Surely one should aim to get the best sound possible on what you can afford. Scarcity of concertinas is a useful factor in weeding out people who are only interested in them as status symbols.

I don't think that anybody is more interested in the Free Reed family tree than the instrument, but I want to know as much as possible about my instrument, different types, makes, etc., even to the extent of related instruments, like flutinas, melodeons, etc."

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We have to speak lastly, of an instrument which, for beauty of sound, facility of playing, and extent of power, excels all which have been here mentioned — we mean the Seraphine. This instrument, as constructed by Mr. Green and other able makers at the present time, appears to be similar in principle, as regards the more prominent points, to the one alluded to in Mr. Faraday's lecture, but a continued series of improvements has brought the instrument to a high degree of excellence.

The Seraphine is about the size of a chiffoniere or small pier table, and the bulk of the instrument is occupied by a cavity serving the office of a wind-chest, into which wind is forced by means of a pair of bellows worked by the foot of the performer. At the top of this wind-chest is a metallic plate perforated with as many oblong apertures as there are notes in the instrument, generally about five octaves; in these apertures vibrate as many metallic tongues, in the manner before described. The apertures are covered above by valves connected with the finger-keys, so that when a key is pressed down by the finger, and a current of air is forced up from the bellows through the wind-chest to the springs, the spring governed by the key in question is set into vibration, and will continue to sound as long as the bellows are worked. There is thus a considerable difference between the accordion and the seraphine, for in the latter the air passes only one way past the springs, while in the former it passes both ways; one key governs two springs in the accordion, but only one in the seraphine. There is an occasional advantage resulting to the accordion from these circumstances, but the balance is decidedly in favour of the seraphine, since a performer can elicit any number of notes from one to ten at once; or two players could sit down at the instrument, and, if required, could produce twenty notes at once.

The bellows are, as we have said, worked by the foot of the performer by means of a pedal. But as it required some practice to effect this where the performer has not been accustomed to an organ, there is sometimes a handle brought out at the end of the instrument, by which the bellows are worked.

The difference between a sounding-board and

soft cushions in their effects on sound was never perhaps better exemplified than in the seraphine. If the cover of the instrument be removed, the sounds have a power and grandeur nearly equal to that of the organ. If a piece of leather be laid on, the tones are instantly changed in character; and when a soft stuffed cushion is similarly applied, the sounds have much of the sweetness of the Hautboy. The performer is provided with the means of varying the number and thickness of the cushions and covers thus employed, by which a considerable range in the character of the sound is attained. The reader is probably aware that the organ owes much of its power to a facility of producing notes resembling more or less those of several different instruments. A somewhat similar power, together with the compactness and portability of the instrument, has caused the seraphine to be much used in chapels and small churches. Not unfrequently it occupies a place in the minister's pew and is played upon by some of his family. The practical or manual skill required in playing is probably midway between that required for the piano-forte and that for the organ.

The most difficult part of the manufacture of this instrument, and the one in which the makers find fewest workmen able to assist them, is in adjusting the springs to the proper pitch. The minutest particle of metal scraped from them will alter the pitch, by altering the rapidity of vibration. A delicate hand, a correct ear, and great patience are the grand requisites.

In closing this paper we wish to remark that we have not professed to enter at all upon the subject of precedence in the invention of these several instruments. We may however observe that Mr. Green states the first idea of the Seraphine to have been suggested to him by a contrivance of an ingenious mechanic in Germany several years ago. With regard to instruments of the accordion kind, we may remind our juvenile readers of certain little wooden dogs which have been sold at fairs and toy-shops for more than one generation, and from which a queer sort of bark or squeak is elicited by the action of bellows under his feet, forcing wind through an aperture. May we not dignify this with the name of a primitive accordion?

Research by Steve Gardham

H. CRABB AND SON – The History of the Firm.

Two brothers, John and Charles Crabb were engaged in the concertina business. Charles, together with his two daughters remained with Lachenal's for life, but his brother John, after seventeen years with Lachenal's and Wheatstone's as foreman, started a partnership with a Mr. Nickolds in 1848. The new firm Nickolds, Crabb and Co. of Woodbridge Street, Clerkenwell, claimed to be the inventors of the Anglo Concertina.

In 1860 John Crabb started on his own, becoming J. Crabb and Sons, when his sons John and Henry joined the business. They then occupied premises at Spring Street, Clerkenwell until 1891, when the move was made to the present site at 158 Liverpool Road, Islington, N.1.

When old John Crabb died, Henry took over, and in consequence, the business in 1908 reverted to the name of H. Crabb till his own son joined him and the firm yet again took on the style of ' & Son '. The son, the present Henry Joseph Crabb took over in 1930, now being assisted by his son Neville, who shows promise of becoming a very fine craftsman.

With the experience of three generations of concertina makers available (and a fourth in prospect) members of the I.C.A. need not lack advice on their instruments.

The present activities of the firm are only limited by the prevailing shortage of skilled staff. The most popular instrument is the good quality Anglo with 32 or 39 keys, six-fold bellows, best steel reeds, and metal ends. They find a particularly ready market in South Africa and New Zealand. Next in popularity come the Duets, in either "Crane" or "Triumph" system, and lastly the English. These somewhat surprising facts are based on the sales over the last two years.

Among the unusual instruments made by this firm, was a 68 key Cranes Deut with 32 fold bellows. When fully opened it measured 6ft. 6ins. in length, and was made for a music-hall artist who skipped with it while playing.

From an early I.C.A. Newsletter, by permission of H. Crabb and Son.

AN UNUSUAL "ANGLO" - TYPE CONCERTINA : Promoted by

Henry Silberhorn of Chicago in the 1880's.

"To buy a Concertina is a good investment for any young man, to study and play it, is the best employment of his spare time." To those who are familiar with the many tutors for the English Concertina published in the late 1800s, this line might sound familiar. Indeed, we often hear how the English Concertina is ideally suited to young Ladies, who would like to occupy their time playing a "refined" instrument. However, this is Henry Silberhorn's introduction to an instrument that resembles the English Concertina only in name. This instrument has 72, 102 or more "keys," is large and square, and looks something like a small accordion.

Even the photograph of Henry Silberhorn, that is printed both in his "Instructor for the Concertina" and "Catalogue of Music for the Concertina," both printed by himself, has a slight continental air about it. Silberhorn wears wire glasses, has a brushed moustache, and looks sternly at the camera. He does not look like a German immigrant. Yet his catalogue of music is made up almost entirely of arrangements of



"... As our organist is
still indisposed with the
flu ..."

Cambridge Evening News

polkas, hornpipes, and quicksteps, which were not the standard fare for those interested in playing "good" music on any instrument at the time. On the wooden end of the instrument shown on the cover of his music catalogue, "Concertina" is written in script, although the instrument does not seem to meet any of the requirements that would justify its title.

Silberhorn's tutor is also full of incongruities. He tells how he has taught the "Concertina" for over 20 years, preaches four hours of practice a day (Including a great deal of finger exercises), and tells us that the Concertina is the "ideal Home instrument." Generally, the approach towards the Anglo-system Concertinas was quite different in the United States. No one pretended that they were "Classical" instruments, but rather tried to sell them on their low price and simplicity. Even Silberhorn's own catalogue of music does not seem to support his "Classical" approach to the instrument.

I do not mean to belittle Silberhorn's instrument or any of the other Anglo Concertinas. I thought that Silberhorn's tutor raised some interesting questions which I am afraid I am totally unable to answer. What was this instrument of his, "The Concertina?" Did he play classical music on it in the same way others played the English Concertina? How many people played this instrument in this style?

One last comment on Mr. Silberhorn's tutor. As you can see from the enclosed photostat of page 2 of the tutor, when Silberhorn said that an instrument had 76 or 102 keys, he actually meant reeds. As you know, Anglo Concertinas

work on a Push-Pull system. Each button controls 2 reeds. Thus the 76 "keyed" Concertina had 38 buttons; the 102 keyed instrument had 51 buttons.

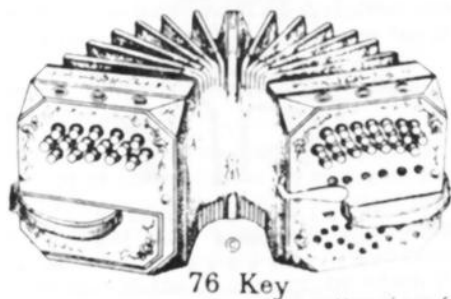
At the close of his tutor, Mr. Silberhorn inserted a chart showing how to convert "Concertina" music to the Bandonion. Perhaps this instrument has some relationship with the Bandonion. I am afraid I do not know enough about either instrument to make any judgement on the issue.

Anyone with information on Mr. Silberhorn and his instruments should get in touch with the Newsletter. It would be of great interest to retrieve some information about this man.

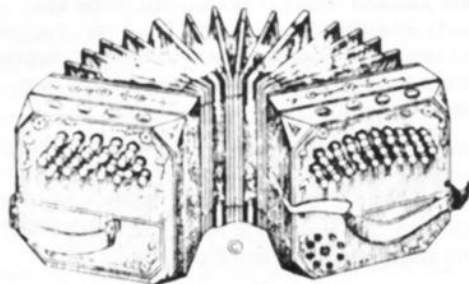
I saw a mention of this type of instrument in an article on the BANDONEON, Concertina Newsletter No.5, p.9. Bruce Bollerud reports on Silberhorn, who found "a ready market for the 76 and 102 key concertinas among learners who could easily master the instrument in ear-playing of simple folk tunes." Although Silberhorn's catalogue and tutor indicate that he was more interested in rigorously training his students in music, this is a fair assessment of his activities. I'm sorry I didn't see this article before. It is interesting that this type of German Concertina was shunned by the "legitimate" world of English music. I'm glad that the English Concertina has not suffered a similar fate, as Silberhorn's German-system seems to have totally disappeared. Hopefully, a reader of the Newsletter lives somewhere in the world who still plays one of them!

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Drawings from Silberhorn's Tutor

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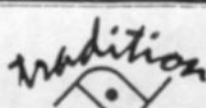
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3				9p	:
4				9p	:
5				7p	:
6				7p	:
7				4p	:
8				4p	:
9				Free	:
10				Free	:
11				Free	:
12				Free	:

Over 15 Records - All post free!

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Please send me the full catalogues of : Claddagh Records ☐

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Outlet Records ☐ Thule Records ☐ Other ☐

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