

# Free Reed

The Concertina Newsletter ● No. 23 MARCH 1976



**WHEATSTONE CENTENARY**  
**special issue**

# 12th Concertina Convention

You are invited to the 12th great CONCERTINA CONVENTION, which is to be held on SATURDAY, March 20th, 1976, at the **Humberside Theatre, Hull**. All players and collectors of Concertinas, Melodeons, Accordions, in fact fans of all types of free-reed instruments are invited to this day of music and workshops which is sponsored by *Free Reed* and organised by Martin Bull and Hull Folk Scene.

The programme is as follows:-

1.00 to 2.30pm

Foregather in the theatre centre Bar (snacks available)

2.30 to 6.00pm

Talks, in the theatre hall (admission 40p), on Concertina repairs, maintenance, history, with workshops on Anglo and English playing, in classical and folk styles, for beginners and advanced players. Also, an informal Concert Spot, and demonstrations by local traditional players and bands. There will also be a large display of old and interesting Concertinas and early reed instruments.

6.00 to 7.30pm

Tea-break; snacks available, and full directions to local cafes; also time for informal sessions and workshops. The theatre bar will be open.

7.30 to Closing Time

Tune session in the hall (40p to help with expenses). An informal sing-around, with soloist spots, and concert with the assembled company. Bar and snacks available.



**HUMBERSIDE THEATRE**  
Spring Street, Hull, HU2 8RW  
Tel: (0482) 20925

For more information, eg regarding accommodation, telephone either Martin Bull (0482) 497477 or John Mitchell (0482) 20925

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## editorial

After a whole year's delay, Free Reed resumes publication with this, our Wheatstone Centenary Issue, which features the life and inventions of this great Victorian Scientist and inventor. We hope you enjoy this issue, the first for so long.

A year's delay? Well, as the many, many of you who have written or telephoned will know, a combination of factors had combined to cause suspension of publication for a year. A £680 printers bill which had to be paid off; a shortage of clerical and editorial help; and, more important, the fact that I felt I had to give more time to organising the Free Reed mail order records business on a basis that would provide both myself and the magazine with long term financial security.

Well, we have paid off the debts, and have found Chris Hicks of Manchester - a printer who is also a folksinger and Free Reed subscriber - who is going to help out with the production editing and printing. This issue is the first that Chris has designed and printed, and in future all design and advertising matters will be handled by him, leaving me free for editorial work and catching up on the many articles that have been promised

for so long! Chris will be contacting all of you who have supported us with paid advertising, to arrange continued appearance of your ads. Rates will not increase. Regarding your subscriptions, the period of all subs has been increased by one year, and you'll be receiving a receipt cum membership card with issue 24 which will confirm the expiry date of your newly extended subscription. For new subscribers, who paid since issue 22 appeared in March 1975, their sub will date from the appearance of this issue in March 1976.

### up to date addresses

To keep track of new subscribers, address changes, and subscription details, we are now using a computer based address file. So, if we have your address wrong on this issue, please send us the incorrect label or envelope, together with a correction so we can get it right.

### twelfth concertina convention

Not only the magazine was missed! Lots of players, young and old have been writing in asking for another convention. Well,

our 12th one takes place in Hull, long renowned for its concertina enthusiasts, on Saturday 20th March, and we hope as many subscribers as possible, especially new ones, will come along and join the re-union. There's a whole page of details inside the front cover, and 'phone numbers for more information. See you there!

### articles wanted

Even though there's quite a backlog of interesting articles and letters, lots must have been happening out there in the Concertina world that Free Reeders would like to hear about - so let's hear it. All letters, cartoons, and articles will be most welcome, as will your small ads and repair hints.

### free reed concertina recordings

Production work is now nearing completion on two Free Reed Records albums of special interest to Concertina players the world over. Both due for release in April or early May; TOMMY WILLIAMS, and GORDON CUTTY. Both records present an in-depth study of these great players, now both in their 80's. Tommy, last surviving workman of Lachenal & Co, plays entirely by ear on a 67 duet, and compasses much of his own music, marches, waltzes and polkas. Gordon, who led a village dance group for many years, plays Tenor Treble English Concertina and has a fine repertoire of concertina classics, polkas, Schottisches, and airs. All subscribers will be notified of release dates, and will be able to order at a special low price.

### free reed museum

Preparatory work on the inside of the old chapel has started, but delays in finally receiving improvement and restoration grants has caused a halt to present work. However, we're glad to say the building has been included in the Belper Conservation Area, and is in the process of becoming a listed building. If you're passing this way, perhaps to visit the Free Reed Record shop in Duffield, do give me a call, and I'll be glad to show you round.

### wedding congrats

To Mindy Robinson of Hull, who marries Mark on April 10th. Mindy is a founder member of Free Reed, and it was in her mum' Nancy's home in Hull that the first gathering was held, from which grew the Concertina Newsletter. No doubt it will be a musical wedding with a musical ceilidh afterwards. Good luck to them both.

Roll on issue 24!

*Neil Wayne*

Free Reed Magazine,  
Duffield, Derby, England.



# Charles Wheatstone,

## inventor extraordinary

Robin Spring

New Scientist 16 October 1975

Charles Wheatstone resembles somewhat one of the "dying amateurs of science", as W. H. G. Armytage has defined Faraday and others, and was one of the creative intellects now virtually forgotten to the world. If he is remembered at all, it is for the erroneous assumption that he invented the Wheatstone Bridge. The details of his life are of interest principally for the reason that the results of his endeavours were to be of that foresighted type often not fully appreciated until later years, when subsequent innovators have had time to forget the formative antecedents of their recent work.

Charles Wheatstone was born in Gloucester in 1802. His father was a noted musical instrument maker and performer on the flute and flageolet. The early education received by the boy was distributed between a village school in Gloucester, where he learned to quote passages from *The Bible*; a school in Kennington, from which, despite a very shy temperament he ran away; and a school in Vere St, London, where he entered into arguments with his teachers. These sketches alone show a sense of grit and developing intellectual maturity within the otherwise retiring figure.

Soon after the end of this short period of schooling Wheatstone was apprenticed to his uncle, a music seller at 436 Strand. Shortly after his appointment he evidently became disinterested in the pecuniary aspects of the trade, and in 1817 he began reading up the latest advances in science, not only in England but also on the Continent, helped by his fluency in French.

In 1819, Wheatstone organised an acoustics exhibition and provided facilities for the hearing of music at the Lower Great Room, Spring Gardens, London. Among the most famous of his own innovations present within this collection of instruments was his Acoucryptophone, or Enchanted Lyre. In this arrangement sounds from a hidden piano were transmitted vertically via wooden rods to a classical lyre through which they were made audible, to the enchantment of the unwitting audience.

Wheatstone thus had no university training; his was a mind capable of developing ideas alone. That was to be the pattern of his efforts until he was finally recognised and emerged from the obscure ranks of the in-

ventors. The work on which his fame chiefly rests falls into three periods: the study of acoustics; the study of electricity and magnetism; and the study of optics. These are, of course, the modern terms for what were, for Wheatstone, parts of an evolutionary progression of thought.

In 1823, he published his maiden paper, "New experiments on sound" including data on the transmission of sound, its polarisation, refraction and diffraction. From this time on he produced a stream of papers on topics concerning acoustics, three in 1827, one in 1828, and one in 1831, which included his first published account of the Enchanted Lyre and other exotic instruments and their capabilities. In 1833 he published a paper on acoustic figures, followed a year later by the paper which was to prove his *tour de force*: "Experiments to measure the velocity of electricity and the duration of electric light".

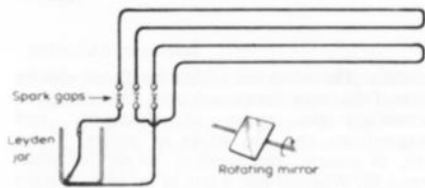
In this paper, Wheatstone noted: "The path of a luminous or illuminated point in rapid motion ... appears as a continuous line in consequence of the after-duration of the visual impression. There is nothing, however, in the appearance of such a line by which the eye can determine either the direction or the velocity of the motion which generates it. It occurred to me ... that if the motion that described the line in these cases were to be compounded with another motion, the direction and velocity of which were known, it would be easy from an inspection of the resultant straight or curved lines to determine the velocity and direction of the former". After some suitably successful oscillatory experiments of an acoustical nature, he was prompted to wonder "whether, by similar means, some information might not be gained respecting the direction and velocity of the electric spark". The method by which he proposed to effect his purpose was first announced in a lecture delivered by Dr Faraday at the Royal Institution in June 1830.

### Electric current speed

Thus Wheatstone began his researches on the determination of the velocity of electricity over distances through wires. Such experiments were not new. As early as 1747, Dr Watson had used a four-mile-long cable at Shooter's Hill. Wheatstone himself had been



impressed by the attempts of Sir Francis Ronalds at Hammersmith. However, these gentlemen had been concerned only with the transmission of the electric current. Wheatstone proposed to quantify the process, using the apparatus shown below.



Using only four miles of wire, Wheatstone required an accurate measure of the time taken for the electric discharge to pass. He thus arranged his circuit circularly, with the start and finish adjacent, and invented a special rotating mirror perpendicular to the three spark gaps to measure the time interval between the sparks.

The publication of the papers on acoustic figures, and the one just described, impressed the scientific world to the extent that Wheatstone was elected professor of experimental philosophy at King's College, London, which was to be his home for the remainder of his professional life. Further experiments followed on the thermoelectric spark in 1837. Herein lay the germ of the idea for the electric telegraph, an idea which Wheatstone might well have uncovered but not pursued along commercial lines had it not been for the advent of his future partner, William Fothergill Cooke, upon the English scene. This rather impetuous character had seen one of the Schilling electromagnetic detectors in Heidelberg and, encountering difficulties with the telegraph system he was then devising for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, he consulted the eminent C. Wheatstone, FRS. His problems did not stem from the source of electric power, for the Grove battery provided an efficient supply, but from the question of the perfection of the detector he should employ. In 1837 the acrimonious Cooke-Wheatstone partnership began; acrimonious because in later years their relative contributions were constantly called into question, especially by Cooke.

#### Messages down the line

In 1837, Cooke and Wheatstone patented the five-needle telegraph and demonstrated it to the directors of the London and Birmingham railway. Not impressed, Cooke suggested that the GWR be consulted. This proved a master stroke, and in 1838 Paddington and West Drayton were connected.

In 1848 the telegraph was extended to Slough. The reputation of the telegraph was much enhanced by the rather impressive part it played in the successful capture of a suspected murderer who, arriving at Paddington from Slough, found himself in police custody thanks to the telegraph message received in advance from Slough. By this time the telegraph receiver was in the form of a two-needle instrument.

Though Wheatstone from the first preferred recording receivers, the system of codification of messages, as suggested by the Americans Morse and Vail, was finally to prevail in both Britain and the United States. The demand for telegraphs was so great that Wheatstone and Cooke founded the Electric Telegraph Company in 1846. Eventually, by 1868, the Post-Master General, by an Act of 1865, was enabled to acquire, maintain, and work electric telegraphs in Britain.

Surprisingly, not all the early railway systems were so long-sighted as the GWR, for as late as the early 1850's time-interval working of trains persisted on some lines. This was partly owing to the cost of installation and partly to the state of literacy of the telegraph operators, or railway policemen, latterly called signalmen, since the messages were sent in code, letter by letter. In 1860, the advent of the single-needle telegraph, whereby an electric current passing through an electromagnet could hold the single deflected needle at "train on line" or "line clear" made this latter problem less acute. The blocking system used today is due to Wheatstone's genius.

The telegraph reached the peak of its usage in the mid 1850s, England and the US being connected in 1858, after two unsuccessful attempts of 1857, by the cruise of the Great Eastern. This event followed the connection of France and England in 1851 on Wheatstone's suggestion. In 1860 Wheatstone patented the recording telegraph, which, in the form of the teleprinter, remains to this day an instrument of great utility, though largely superseded by the telephone and wireless telegraphy.

#### Christie's Bridge

With the realisation of the telegraph, Wheatstone's reputation was firmly established. Very shy before an audience, though loquacious in company, Wheatstone left most of the publicising of his results to Faraday at the Royal Institution. He rarely lectured to students at King's College after 1837, devoting his time almost entirely to research. The telegraph did not occupy all his time; his other scientific activities were of great importance. In the Bakerian Lecture,





delivered in 1843 at the Royal Institution, he outlined new processes for the determination of the "Constants of the voltaic circuit". In the process he popularised the bridge circuit known by his name ever since, though at the time he gave full credit to its inventor, Mr Christie. The full implications of his work were not realised at the time. But, in this fairly lengthy paper, he put the measurement of resistance, current and voltage on a sound theoretical footing, following on the work of Ohm. In the latter pages of the paper he set out to uncover the relationship between these quantities for cell circuits, arriving at what would in essence be termed an electro-chemical series, based on the relative resistances of pairs of metals composing different cells, and thereby deriving rudimentary electrode potentials in terms of the cell resistances. By an analogous method, he was able to place aluminium in the correct place in the then voltaic series in 1855.

As early as 1838 Wheatstone had been interested in the physiology of vision and was the first accurately to describe binocular vision, in 1838. In Part I of this paper he corrected many of the erroneous statements theretofore accepted by doctors; and in Part II, which followed in 1852, he described the stereoscope, an instrument for representing solid figures, and also described accurately the conjoint operation of the eyes' optic axes. In this difficult field of optics, he was again to the fore, perhaps prompted into action by his own poor sight. Again, in the sanctuary of King's, Wheatstone pursued other optical topics further, notably the dipolarisation of light. In an early paper of 1848, he had touched on the subject, and his last published paper, "Experiments on the successive polarisation of light, with a description of a new polarising apparatus", dealt with the details of this process especially as applied to the study of solid substances. He thus carried on the work begun by Fresnel in France in 1817. The later application of his technique to the asymmetry of organic isomers in solution was to prove of great value.

These, strictly, were the chief important papers to come from Wheatstone's pen. Added to them are a whole host of minor inventions, each one enough to render him important to the public of today. The typewriter, the polar clock, the telegraph barometer, synchronised clocks, the rudimentary magnetoelectric machine are all of Wheatstone's inventing. In the chemical sphere, the method whereby he was able to discriminate between metals on the basis of their spark coloration was to become yet another important method of physico-chemical analysis.

Having thus briefly dealt with Wheatstone's scientific achievements, what of Wheatstone the man? He was apparently singularly insular; his letters reveal little, except as a man fairly contented in married circumstances until the loss of his wife, and the need to bring up five young children.

Despite this insularity, he was a great diner-out, and numbered among his friends J. F. Daniell, professor of chemistry at King's College, London, and Faraday—again a chemist by origin. He was one of the noted scientists visited by Liebig in 1844, and played a part in the successful appointment of A. W. Hofmann to the chair of chemistry in the Royal College of Chemistry, Oxford St, London, in 1845. His other most important friend was perhaps Lyon Playfair, a fellow man interested in the unravelling of ciphers. In this connection, there is the famous anecdote whereby Wheatstone forestalled an elopement which had arisen in cipher in the personal column of the *Times* on the suggestion of a young Oxford graduate to a young lady, the progress of which he had followed surreptitiously. Wheatstone died in Paris in 1875, still at work on the telegraph. ●



*Wheatstone photographed when he was professor of experimental philosophy at King's College, London (Kindly supplied by H. A. Harvey of King's College library)*



## Lyell and Wheatstone

By Professor W C Price, FRS

Physics Bulletin October 1975



Left to right: Michael Faraday, Professor T H Huxley, Sir Charles Wheatstone, Sir David Brewster, Professor John Tyndal

The centenaries of two eminent Victorian scientists, Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875) and Sir Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875) were recently honoured at an exhibition held at King's College, London. The former established the main principles of geology and showed that the age of the earth was about four billion years. This time scale which is so much greater than anyone had previously imagined was necessary to accommodate the Darwinian theory of evolution, and also to give cosmological theories a realistic time perspective. Lord Kelvin at a later date estimated that a period of 100 million years would be required for the cooling of the earth from a uniform temperature of 4000 K to the present geothermal gradient. The much shorter time estimated this way compared with that based on geological evidence was shown to be due to the neglect of radioactivity which continuously generates heat within the earth and retards its cooling.

Wheatstone, the other scientist commemorated at the exhibition, was a pioneer in the development of electricity particularly in connection with its use for telegraphic signalling. Prior to his appointment as first Professor of Physics at King's College, where he subsequently spent most of his working life, he was a maker of musical instruments and had gained fame as the inventor of the concertina. His interest in the transmission of sound vibrations led him to experiment with the transmission of electrical impulses and to measure the velocity with which these were propagated along wires. His success in sending information by this means justifies his claim to be regarded as the father of telecommunication. The development of railways which was taking place at the time owes a great deal to his signalling systems.

The close contact of scientists working in central London during this period no doubt resulted in much mutual stimula-







tion. Lyell was a great friend of Darwin and Huxley. Faraday often came over from the Royal Institution to lunch with Wheatstone and Daniell at King's College in the Strand. Their influence on each other's ideas cannot be over estimated. There is an interesting story that on one occasion a few minutes before Wheatstone was due to give a public discourse at the Royal Institution his courage failed him and he managed to decamp unnoticed. Faraday, who was then Director of the Royal Institution, was forced to fill in by giving an extempore lecture on a topic on which he was then working. Since that time it has been the custom at the Royal

Institution to lock lecturers in a special room for the period immediately preceding their lectures to remove from them the temptation of following Wheatstone's example. The lecture which Faraday gave on this occasion was about his ideas of electric and magnetic fields in terms of stresses and strains in 'tubes of force'. It was subsequently published and rumour has it that Maxwell who was then in London in the Chair of Natural Philosophy at King's College (1860-1865) read this article. After putting it into mathematical form and adding to it the concept of displacement current he evolved from it his famous theory of the electromagnetic nature of light. ●

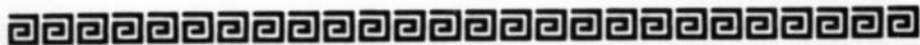
## Charles Wheatstone

by John Hall

It comes hard to be told that Sir Charles Wheatstone actually didn't invent the bridge of the same name, but such was the range of that scientist's inventiveness and imagination that one feels he must, on balance, be forgiven what amounts to a fairly minor omission. Bridges apart, he made fundamental contributions to the study of electrical measurement in the 1830s and 1840s, and in the process he happened across principles of transmitting electrical impulses which formed the basis of modern telecommunications systems. As if that were not enough, he spent his twenties experimenting with musical instruments, and managed as the *piece de resistance* of this period an invention which was to become the fisherman's friend. Letters patent granted by George IV in 1829 described his creation as 'a certain improvement or improvements in the construction of wind

instruments'; it was the concertina, successor to earlier brainchildren like the 32-key Wheatstone symphonium (pocket-sized and powered by breath), and precursor of mighty wheezers like the 81-key Wheatstone duet with the range of a piano. The inventors nail fiddle, a poor relative of the African thumb piano, made of nails to be scraped with a violin bow, was less of a raging success. But Wheatstone of Wheatstone's Music Shop, Charing Cross, clearly had a novel turn of mind, as the scientific community discovered when he was appointed Professor of Physics at King's College, London. His interest in the transmission of sound vibrations led him to experiment with the transmission of electrical impulses, and to measure their speeds along the wires. His success in sending information by this means led to the needle





telegraph on which the developing railway came to depend for its signalling the ABC telegraph, an automatic Morse transmitter, a punched-tape Morse transmitter, and Wheatstone's printing telegraph which in operation was akin to a telex printer. For the record, Wheatstone's contribution to the measurement of voltage, current and resistance was that he produced an accurate calibrated variable resistance to replace the unreliable galvanometric instruments available at the time. Later prophets will also be sad to learn that the linear motor was invented by Wheatstone in 1842; given a larger current it might have proved his brightest wheeze.

He was also responsible for the introduction of the Royal Institution's practice of locking lecturers in a room immediately before they are due to lecture; apparently, on one occasion when he was about to give a public discourse, Wheatstone's nerve went at the last minute, and he disappeared from the scene leaving Faraday to *ad lib* the evening away.

Wheatstone is one of two eminent Victorian members of King's College to be honoured by an exhibition there this summer. The other is Sir Charles Lyell, an equally prominent and worthy man in his field of geology, but affording rather less tangible tokens of his life's work than does Wheatstone. Lyell established the main principles of geology, and amazed the learned of his day by showing that the earth was about 4,000 million years old when you would have sworn

it wasn't half that age. This scale managed to accommodate the Darwinian theory of evolution, and also gave cosmological theories a realistic time perspective, but doesn't sit conveniently in an exhibition display cabinet. By way of compensation there are some nice photographs of the Lyell family seat, a moderately accomplished watercolour by the man himself, and a body of evidence which testifies to the meticulous nature which the documentation of his theories must have demanded. Even as a child he collected shells and bones for his private museum, and when he wrote home to Papa it was in Latin. But he was not such a scholar that he closed his eyes to the exigencies of the world outside his books; after a page and a half of Latin, written from Midhurst Grammar School in 1814, he blurts out in the mother tongue: "If I write any more in Latin I shall miss the post" ●

*Reprinted by kind permission from Nature, Vol. 256 August 14 1975*



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An early reference to Professor McCann, inventor and patentee of the first duet concertina system. From a pamphlet reviewing 'Music and Musicians at the Edinburgh International Exhibition, 1886' Printed in 1887.

## Concertina Recitals.

THESE Recitals were given on the 14th, 15th, and 16th July by Professor Maccann, who played on Lachenal & Co.'s new Patent Duet Concertinas. These instruments are made in varying sizes with corresponding pitch; and their peculiarity is that they have the treble part of their scale on the right-hand side, while the bass is on the left; this enables the performer to play the melody with one hand and the accompaniment with the other. The pianoforte accompaniment was played by James Fleming.

### MUSIC PLAYED.

- |                     |       |   |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| <i>Asher,</i>       | . . . | Valse (Duet), 'Fan.'                        |
| <i>Auber,</i>       | . . . | Overture, 'Masaniello.'                     |
| <i>Barthmann,</i>   | . .   | Galop, 'Cupid's Arrows.'                    |
| <i>Clarke,</i>      | . . . | March, 'Aux Flambeaux.'                     |
| <i>Eilenberg,</i>   | . .   | Mazurka Caprice, 'Blau Veilchen.'           |
|                     |       | Mazurka Caprice, 'Die Heinzelmäunchen.'     |
| <i>Eaton,</i>       | . . . | Air de Ballet, 'Les Etoiles.'               |
| <i>Gatti,</i>       | . . . | Song, 'True till Death.'                    |
| <i>Hérold,</i>      | . . . | Overture, 'Zampa.'                          |
| <i>Jenghmanns,</i>  |       | Battle March, 'Tel-el-Kebir.'               |
|                     |       | Fantasia, 'Lyrics of Scotland.'             |
|                     |       | Opera Reminiscences, selected from 'Falka,' |
|                     |       | 'Princess Ida,' 'Carmen,' 'La Mascotte,'    |
|                     |       | 'Rip Van Winkle.'                           |
| <i>Lévy,</i>        | . . . | Polka de Concert, 'Leviathan.'              |
| <i>Mendelssohn,</i> |       | March, 'Cornelius.'                         |
| <i>Maccann,</i>     | . . . | Descriptive Piece, 'Tel-el-Kebir.'          |
|                     |       | Valse (Duet), 'Anatie.'                     |
| <i>Sullivan,</i>    | . . . | Selection 'Iolanthe.'                       |
|                     |       | Song, 'The Lost Chord.'                     |
|                     |       | Valse (Duet), 'Mikado.'                     |
| <i>Tosti,</i>       | . . . | Song, 'For Ever and for Ever.'              |
| <i>Weist,</i>       | . . . | Song, 'The Village Blacksmith.'             |

# Concertina Consciousness

Verse

Dave Goulder

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in common time (C). It consists of seven lines of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "There was a man, a vio-lent man, and his name was Ar - thur Jones, He beat his wife from morn till night to lis-ten to her groans. So a - way she went to Stoke - on - Trent, to the mar - ket for to find, A sub-sti-tute for the fist and boot to help him pass the time." The word "time" is written above the final note of the sixth line. The seventh line is labeled "Chorus" and contains the lyrics: "Oh lis-ten to the call, look out be - fore you fall, Con-cer-ti - na con-sci-ous-ness is a per-il to us all." The word "fall" is written above the final note of the seventh line.

There was a man, a vio-lent man, and his name was Ar - thur  
Jones, He beat his wife from morn till night to  
lis-ten to her groans. So a - way she went to  
Stoke - on - Trent, to the mar - ket for to find, A  
sub-sti-tute for the fist and boot to help him pass the time.  
Chorus  
Oh lis-ten to the call, look out be - fore you fall,  
Con-cer-ti - na con-sci-ous-ness is a per-il to us all.

- 1 There was a man, a violent man, and his name was Arthur Jones  
He beat his wife, from morn till night, to listen to her groans.  
So away she went, to Stoke-on-Trent, to the market for to find  
A substitute for the fist and boot, to help him pass the time.

Chorus:

Oh listen to the call, Look out before you fall  
Concertina consciousness is a peril to us all.

- 2 And at the stand of a lusty man she quickly spoke her mind  
She parted then with four pounds ten, and something else in kind  
Then home in fear to her husband dear, to show the thing she'd bought  
A concertina in her hand, of the Anglo-German sort.
- 3 When Arthur saw her at the door, he scrambled out of bed  
Her screams arose, between the blows that rained upon her head.  
In his pants and socks, he grabbed the box, and he perched upon the gate  
By the afternoon, he'd played a tune, and thus he sealed his fate.
- 4 At dawn he rose, put on his clothes to start the daily grind  
His wife did plead, but he would not leave, his instrument behind.  
In a plastic bag with his lunch and fags, his Anglo he did squeeze  
But he cursed his luck when his reeds were stuck with butter, jam and cheese.
- 5 And on the train he went insane when they would not let him play  
He grabbed their caps and bowler hats, and he threw them all away.  
And in the street he was indiscreet when they did not like his tune  
So he nipped into a public loo, and he played all afternoon.
- 6 His lady cursed the day she first thought up her stupid plan  
For second string to a honking thing was more than she could stand.  
One night in vain, she did complain, he threw her out of bed  
And in her place, in a tight embrace, his Anglo lay instead.
- 7 He joined the grand Salvation band, in a uniform of blue  
And after dusk, he'd often busk, along the bingo queue.  
He deserted then, to the morris men, to wear the cap and bells  
And he earned his grub in every pub, from Penge to Tunbridge Wells.

*slowly....*

- 8 In the fading light, by a building site, was Arthur Jones' last stand  
And the fatal blow that laid him low, was a falling bag of sand.  
They did not wait to separate, his feet from off his face  
But they broke the lock, took out his box, and buried him in the case.

DAVE GOULDER





HELMUT PETERS  
POPULAR ARTIST OF THE BANDONEON  
CONCERTINA

Helmut Peters  
of Belleville, Ill., USA, writes.....

"I am a Bandoneon virtuoso playing the 144 key Einheits Bandoneon. I have played for many years in vaudeville theatres and concert halls, and also, with my two brothers (also Bandoneon players) in many States in the U.S. . We have also made records in Nashville, Tenn. I also make tape recordings to order, and intend to make new records of my own compositions. I can play the Anglo Linot 40 key as well. Now, regarding the Anglo instrument, any time a Concertina like the Anglo 40 key produces a different note on draw and press, I think the bellows should have no less than 12 to 15 folds - like the Bandoneon!  
My next Anglo must have no less than 15 fold bellows. I use the concertina on floor shows, swinging, and people go crazy about the sound. So, please concertina manufacturers, lets have some longer

bellows for the Anglo instrument. I am a member of the German Volksmusiker and would be pleased to hear from anyone else."

Albert G. Nechanicky  
of Oklahoma City, USA, writes.....

Bernie Evans at Banff, Alberta, Canada, showed me a copy of your Free Reed magazine, and I would like to subscribe to learn more about English Concertinas and the players.  
I play a 130 key Concertina (Chemnitzer keyboard). I learned to play a 76 key Pearl Queen (Chemnitzer) in 1918 and quit playing in 1935. In 1921 I bought a 102 key Pearl Queen and wore it out. Then in 1933 I bought a 124 key Pearl Queen. In 1970 I learned that playing music was the best way to cure tension headaches, so I had Star Concertina Mfg make me a new concertina but with 130 keys. I played piano accordion and other musical instruments but somehow preferred the sound of the concertina.  
In the past five years I have played at so many places for so many people that I have again learned how to play. Maybe I will learn to play English Concertina."



Peter Kerridge,  
of Burnley, Lancashire, writes.....

"Here are the results of a small experiment in bellows repair, the information may be useful to someone else repairing old or damaged instruments. I was faced with several splits in the outside corner folds of the bellows, and these are not only unsightly but are in about the worst place possible to repair. However, I found that Woolworth's sell a flexible repair paste under the rather lurid brand name of 'Magic Rubber', and this when carefully painted on with a very fine brush, forms a strong, airtight and damaged nearly invisible repair. The product is made by Magic American Chemical Corp., Cleveland, Ohio 44218, USA."

## small ads

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# TOMMY HAS MUSIC IN HIS HANDS

In a small room on the top floor of an old house down a Battersea back street behind Clapham Common one of Britain's few surviving craftsmen works.

Repairing, tuning and selling concertinas has been Tommy Williams' life since he started playing before the first world war when he was a mere nipper.

Now, despite his 81 years, his hands and brain are still nimble enough for him to make half a dozen concertinas a year in his house.



FILING a reed to get the right note. Tommy Williams (81)

Tommy still remembers vividly the first world war. Drafted into the Royal West Kent regiment, he went off to war with a rifle in one hand and concertina in the other. When he went to France his concertina, which he bought second hand for £5, went with him. Today he still plays the same concertina he played for the troops at the rest camps. Tommy was well-known along the trenches in the first world war and while he was in France he met Sidney Baynes, who

composed a tune called "Destiny".

Years later when Sid died, an evening newspaper gave him an obituary saying he 'composed a waltz called "Destiny" which was made famous by a soldier playing it all round France on a concertina". Tommy was that soldier. In 1917 Tommy was wounded at Cambrai, so the troops had to find another source of amusement.

After the war, in the 1920's, he did a lot of busking for theatre crowds in the West End of London. At this time his life more or less revolved around the concertina; playing it by night and making it by day for Lachenals, one of the first makers of the instrument.

He looked faintly surprised when I admitted I didn't know who invented the concertina, as though it was difficult to understand how anyone could relieve an education lacking in such basic general knowledge. He soon filled the gap by telling me it was Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1829.

Normally it required six different workmen to make each concertina, as they all made different parts. In the early days Tommy could only make his particular part, but he soon learned to make all the others. He says he is one of the few people still around who can make a concertina single handed.



THE most difficult job, wiring up the keys.



Tommy thinks he is the only survivor of those days when he used to make concertinas for Lachenals. Sometime around the end of the second world war he began making concertinas at home and selling them to friends. By this time he had moved into the house where he is now, though he had always lived in Battersea. He promoted himself from street busking to playing in pubs and clubs around London. "I didn't do much playing during the second world war because I was a fire watcher, and that took up a lot of time".

About this time he wrote to the South London Press asking for other concertina players to contact him, "because I didn't know many others".

From those who got in touch he formed a club, meeting in the "Queen" pub nearby. From this sprung up the international Concertina Association.

This club triggered off a mini revival in concertina playing, but very few people could, or would, teach it. "In those days nobody would teach it because those who could play didn't want to impart their knowledge". The club which started in the little room above the "Queen" now meets every last Saturday in each month, at the Conway Hall.

Every year they have a competition, with cups and medals for winners. "I can't enter that though because I can't read music, though I know more about it than some of those who can", he explained. Tommy's proficiency was proved recently when he took first prize in the Battersea old people's talent contest for the second time in three years.

While he was playing the clubs Tommy wrote about 20 tunes. Though he can't read music he managed to compose them and a friend wrote two of them down. ●

..... from a South London Paper.

From an old Exchange & Mart  
around 1890

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# The Bonny Pit Laddie

## A Miner's Life in Music and Song by the High Level Ranters & friends

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Cut and Dry Dolly  
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My Lad Is O'er Bonny for the Coal Trade  
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I'll Make Her Fain to Follow Me  
The Joyful Days Are Coming  
Get Her Bo  
The Stoneman's Song  
The Hartley Calamity  
Bonnie Woodha'  
The Banks of the Dee  
The Bonnie Pit Laddie (inst'l)  
The Bonnie Pit Laddie (vocal)

*The Bonnie Pit Laddie* is a double album of mining songs and tunes — the Ranters' most ambitious project yet, and their most successful achievement. In thirty songs and dance-tunes they paint a vivid picture of the lives and times of the miners. This musical picture is further enhanced by the accompanying booklet, containing the words of all the songs, with a historical account of the mining industry and many photographs. The record also features guest appearances, on two songs each, by **Dick Gaughan** and **Harry Boardman**.

As well as being some 80 minutes' worth of stirring music, *The Bonny Pit Laddie* offers a sharp, detailed view of British industrial and social history. Few musicians could have realised so many aims at once, but the Ranters have succeeded brilliantly.

**TOPIC**



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# reviews

## Ears across the sea

ROY HARRIS looks at some unusual records on the Free Reed list.

The record collector faced with the ever expanding Free Reed list must feel somewhat like the small boy in the sweetshop - he wants it all, but he has to choose. Choice becomes bewildering when many of the label names are unfamiliar, featuring artists unheard in this country. If you feel that way perhaps I can help by examining 2 of those labels - **PHILO** and **ROUNDER**. Each one showcases folk or non-commercial music that the larger, more business oriented companies ignore completely. Further, they attempt to keep prices down by cutting out as many middlemen as possible. Free Reed tries to do the same, hence their acceptance of Philo & Rounder USA labels deserving of a chance to be heard in the UK.

Philo are based in NORTH FERRISBURG, VERMONT; and offer a catalogue featuring USA and Canadian artists, traditionalists, revival songwriters, bluesmen and string bands. Philo's policy is to allow the artist full control over his own album, with no pressure; the artist and his music come first - a refreshing attitude. It has its defects of course - not every performer is a good judge of what makes a finished album, but at least Philo's customers get entirely what the artist wanted him to get. In the case of Bruce 'Utah' Phillips it means a whole album devoted to the theme of railroading and hoboeing, complete with sound effects. Train noises before every song might sound a bit much, but in fact it works beautifully. This album **GOOD THROUGH**, Philo 1004 is among my very favourites. Phillips' songs are good ones, sentimental in a down-homey way, and his rap with the audience on the live tracks is rib-crackingly funny. I was interested to hear him tell the tale of 'Moose Turd Pie'. I used to know a version of that in my army days, known as the 'Inefficient Cook'.

A bonus on this record is an extract from a 1930's Library of Congress tape, of a negro train caller; a delivery full of blues, gospel jazz & soul, all of black music is in there as the man does his daily work of calling train departures. Worth buying for that alone.

Melodeon freaks will enjoy *Philo 2003* by Philippe Bruneau, French-Canadian box player. I have reviewed it at length elsewhere, but I will repeat here that it is outstanding listening. You like blues? Catch Jim Brewer, *Philo 1003*, a fluent and inventive guitar picker and a born Showman to boot. Listen to the way he holds on to a bent note until his audience applauds. *Lazy Bill Lucas* displays his sparse, attacking piano blues on *Philo 1007* again a highly interesting album for fans and general listeners alike. Both Lucas and Brewer are little known, but big talents all praise to Philo for giving them a chance to record. *Jean Carignan*, one of the most respected folk fiddle players in the world, has recorded often, but its 10 years since the last time. Philo have taken care of that - 2 volumes of this legendary French-Canadian. More of the same from *Louis Beadoin*, fiddle accompanied by his family on piano, guitar and bones. Mostly reels, rousingly played on *Philo 2000*. All Philo records of French-Canadian artists have sleeve notes in French and English.

I could go on listing names such as songwriters *Mary McCaslin*, *Philo 1011*, highly praised in *Rolling Stone*, or *Jim Ringer* with his country flavoured original songs - both records I have enjoyed, but I will end this brief look at the Philo catalogue by listing some of their forthcoming issues. Get this for a roll call: *Boys of the Lough*, *Sara Cleveland*, *Philippe Bruneau vol 2*, *Bill Vanaver & Livia Drapkin* (remember they toured England last year - great!), and the superb singer *Joe Heaney*. Philo are working hard at - and succeeding in - producing a worthwhile catalogue. Check 'em out!

ROUNDER RECORDS is one arm of the activities of the Rounder Collective, a non-profit organisation based in Massachusetts. Apart from distributing small labels in the USA they also produce their own records, and its these that come out via Free Reed. Its a most interesting mix of the old and the new to be found on Rounder. Re-issues from the American LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, and albums made from 78's of the 1920-30s come out alongside new recordings by city folk, country blues, and contemporary material with socio-political content. All their albums have good sleeve notes, informative booklets where possible, and attractive cover art. I must mention too the actual label on their records, which bears a sepia picture of a bunch of 1920's "rounders" drinking in a bar. A small thing, but a pleasingly distinctive touch. However, the music is the thing and there is plenty of that to be found in a Rounder groove.

Lets take a few samples:

*Rounder 0017* caters for lovers of ballad singing with a rare and wonderful selection, rarely and wonderfully sung by *Almeda Riddle*. Just as rare and wonderful in a different way are the songs of mining life and protest fiercely sung by *Aunt Molly Jackson*, *Rounder 1002*. She's a brave talker too and has some really good crack on the subjects of witches, Christmas Eve in the East Side, and Holiness Church. Marvellous stuff. Don't expect Hi-Fi though this was recorded in 1939 and the Fi is distinctly Lo! Not to be missed nevertheless. Coming more up to date we have *Mud Acres* on *Rounder 3001* featuring US revival stalwarts *Happy & Artie Traum* and hit maker *Maria Muldaur* plus others in a 'warm feeling' album. No one grand-stands, but all join together in relaxed, enjoyable music making. An object-lesson to the ego-trippers amongst us. I loaned my mother my copy

of *Bother Oswald*, dobro playing deluxe by *Pete Kirby*, a long time member of the *Roy Acuff* band. It proved to be a mistake. She won't give it back! What can I do? How can I threaten my mother? If anyone wants to buy me another copy its *Rounder 0013*. *Del McCoury*, a fine high tenor bluegrass singer somewhat underrated, shows his stuff on *Rounder 0019 - High on a Mountain*. He should really be better known; he's a stylish, smooth as silk, singer worthy of acclaim. Perhaps he could gain recognition over here. Which brings me to the point I have to make about *Rounder 4003 - At the Present Moment*. This is an album of new songs by *Ewan MacColl & Peggy Seeger* full of their customary pertinent writing on present day topics. My question is why do they have to make this in America? Are there no English Companies brave enough? Is the British folk scene merely a musical museum? All credit to Rounder for recognizing that Tradition has an open end. Now, what else can I recommend from the Rounder list? Just about everything I have heard! So, a few random choices:- Old time, good time string bandsmen *Martin, Bogan & Armstrong - Glorious!* *Rounder 2003*. Really good womens songs, not pretty-pretty; *Hazel & Aliceon Rounder 0027*, and one of my all time favourites *Estil E. Ball with Orna Ball* and the friendly *Gospel Singers* on *Rounder 0026*.

*E.C. Ball* is a master guitarist, unflashy, perfectly at home with his music, an artist of the highest class. Before I close this article, let me stress that I'm not on Neil's payola list, nor percentage or retainer, but it did strike me that the philosophers of *Philo, Rounder* and *Free Reed* are markedly similar; and its a train of thought that I go along with. So here's my bif to help them along their

journey. When companies record uncommercial artists, and distributors avoid heavy business channels, then the benefit goes where it belongs, to the musician and the listener - not the fat cat. Likewise, because a lot of good music is being spread and emulated then the cause of home music making is being advanced. And that's good!

ROY HARRIS

1975

FROM THE NORTH TOPIC 12TS255

Gary & Vera Aspey

14 tracks from a duo who are 'breaking' all over the folk scene just now. Deservedly so, for such forthright, fresh and enjoyable singing hasn't been heard in our clubs for some long time. Vera (Mrs Aspey) plays English Concertina and Guitar, other instrumentation is added by Bernard Wrigley's English and Bass Concertinas, plus mandolin played by Wilf Darlington. The Aspeys are Lancashire people and their songs reflect the fact; either coming from Lancashire collections or from the pens of Lancs people active in the revival - Paul Graney, Mike Harding, Ian Woods (an 'adopted' exile from Suffolk) and from G & V themselves who do tunes for existing words or write whole songs; the excellent 'Auntie Ketyl' for instance. The Aspeys have good voices, musical skill, and an obvious enthusiasm for their material that can take them a long way along the often rocky road of a professional career. If they can avoid the pitfalls of restrictively regional repertoire, and the "professional Lancastrian" trap, there is no limit to how far they can go. That's not to decry the Lancastrian bias of this LP, which

is perfectly valid and works well - a correct choice for their first album. For future work though I would like to see them include some more general material along with the home based stuff. However, this is a record review, not a summation of career prospects, so let me bring it to a close by stating that *From the North* is an album that I enjoy and recommend without reservation.

ROY HARRIS

1975

BRIGHT SHINING MORNING

Lou & Sally Killen Front Hall FHR-06

Louis Killen was the first person I ever saw play a concertina and for me he still remains the finest exponent of the song accompaniment style of playing the English Concertina. His accompaniments are tasteful and economical and his style is far removed from the Irish/Border fiddler/piper school of instrumental playing. The only other player who comes anywhere near is Tony Rose.

Having said all that, there is very little concertina playing on this very welcome and long overdue release. You do however, get plenty of Lou's fine singing, both solo and in harmony with his wife Sally. Sally emerges as a perfect foil for Lou's rich voice possessing, as she does, a mellow voice with a slight edge to it; Sally takes the lead most of the time, whilst Lou weaves his way superbly round it.

The repertoire is not startlingly original, but allowances have to be made when you take into account the fact that it is intended for the American market. Mind you, even some of the well worn titles come across refreshingly new - perhaps there's a moral in their somewhere.

All in all, a first class album; well recorded and presented, and a worthy addition to Front Hall's small but expanding catalogue.



The Hunter and the Hunted - Brian  
Brian Dewhurst & Tom Tiddler's Ground  
Folk Heritage FHR 075

Folk Heritage Records have been fairly quiet for some time now. Alan Green has been rebuilding his studio in Wales and undertaking alot of recording for other companies. Here, though, is their newest release and a chance to hear Brian Dewhurst in the company of Tom Tiddler's Ground - a union which has now become a permanent feature. Brian Dewhurst recorded extensively with the Wayfarers and Horden Raikes, but this for me is his best record to date. The most important must have been 'King Cotton', but it was a rather sombre affair whereas this has a life and zest which is often difficult to capture on record.

Brian Dewhurst is never going to be a great stylist, even if he wanted to be which I doubt, but he is one of our consistently good singers with a powerful voice. If you couple this with two extremely competent musicians playing a variety of plucking and squeezing instruments you end up with a high level of performance and an entertaining record. The good thing about this combination is that no-one outshines anyone else so that you get an evenness which is often lacking in groups with at least one virtuoso.

All the material, as the title suggests, is concerned with hunting; those doing the hunting or being hunted. Thus songs about Otters, Foxes, Hares, and poaching, abound. "The Horn of the Hunter", which appears to be undergoing a burst of popularity at the moment, crops up here, though, somewhat smoothed out; in Cumbria it is usually sung to a more rhythmic 3/4 time. I certainly could find no fault with the material or its presentation; the accompaniments are extremely tasteful. There is even one variant of Dido Bendigo which makes a change from the one immortalised by Mike Waterson. There was only one track which I am not happy about and that is "The Hills of Greenmore". I just do not think that it suits Brian's style.

Generally, it is well recorded although I always criticise Alan Green for not getting a good guitar 'sound', and here, particularly

on the instrumentals it is so far back as to be almost lost. Also, the fiddle is allowed to dominate Chris Parkinson's fine melodeon playing. I don't like the cover much, but that doesn't bother me unduly. ●

PAUL ADAMS

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#### SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE PROVINCES <sup>★</sup>

Fennig's All Star String Band      Front Hall  
FHR 05

This is F.A.S.B.'s second L.P. and they have shrunk somewhat. This is of little consequence because even as a trio they are a really tight functional little group. I suppose the main interest in the group lies with Bill Spence and his hammered dulcimer. Suffice it to say that he is no mean player, but if he is a virtuoso then so are the others, because the thing which strikes you about this band is the cohesion - no-one is outshining anyone else.

There are twelve tracks, 45 playing minutes of American, English, Irish and Scottish material (plus a couple of originals). I thought for a long time that it was the hammered dulcimer which gave the music its bounce, with its happy, jangly sound, but the whole group sounds so relaxed and enthusiastic and it really comes over - something very difficult to capture on disc. I would say that this ought to be compulsory listening for all aspiring instrumentalists, because the tempos are just right with none of those tear-away jigs and reels we keep getting bombarded with. There are two vocals (one a really nice rendering of an old-time song "Remember Me", and on two tracks the trio of dulcimer, fiddle and piano are joined by one Alistair Anderson playing a concertina (I know that name from somewhere). It was recorded at the Eldron Fennig Folk Museum of American Ephemera (where else?) and is well balanced. This is music making at its best, joyous, happy and beautifully played. Do yourself a favour and get a copy. ●

PAUL ADAMS

\*This record is shortly to be released in England on the Free Reed label.

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## GENTLEMEN OF HIGH RENOWN

Traditional Sound TSR 018

*The Ripley Wayfarers*

The Ripley Wayfarers are one of those stalwart groups who have consistently good standards of musicianship and vocal ability. They are never going to be outstanding, but what they do they do well. This is their third album and is a little more far reaching than their previous efforts in that it does not lean heavily on Derbyshire material. Strangely enough, for me, this was their appeal; I am sure that the faithful following will enjoy 'The Calico Printer's Clerk', 'Farewell She', 'Roisin Dubh', 'Madame Bonaparte' and 'John Blunt', but is it enough to catch the eye of the general buying public? There are enough interesting versions of these songs available already and so, to me, it seems like a step backwards to a group doing an album of their favourite songs - a hang-up they should have got rid of with their first recording. Still, if you have not got other versions then here they all are on one record. As a casual onlooker the

tracks holding the most interest for me are 'The Sluggard Tapper', 'Hounds of Meynall' and a different from the run-of-the-mill version of 'Just as the Tide was Flowing'. They have managed to get in early with 'Bread & Fishes' and 'Take Your Time' before the folk scene hammers those two songs to death as I am sure it will.

If I say that they play their instrumentals like a ceilidh band, does that sound like adverse criticism? It isn't supposed to be. The R.W. do a fair amount of work for dances and there is always a difference in approach between an instrumental group and a dance group. The overall sound does not have quite the "fullness" of their previous album *Five Wells*, but like that album, there are points where the instrumental backing intrudes on the vocal. It is a pleasant enough record with one or two high spots, but not enough to make you sit up and take notice.

PAUL ADAMS ●

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