

# Free Reed

The Concertina Newsletter

No. 24 JULY 1976

2d. Zoological Gardens, Belle Vue,  
MANCHESTER.

## THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONCERTINA BAND CONTEST

OPEN TO ALL AMATEUR BANDS  
WILL TAKE PLACE ON

Saturday, July 14th, 1976.

PRIZES:  
First, £10; Second, £5; Third, £3; Fourth, £2.  
And a SILVER MEDAL to the Bandmaster of each of the Prize Bands.

### Extra Prizes:

Messrs. WHEATSTONE & CO., the celebrated Inventors, Patenters, and Manufacturers of Concertinas and  
Notes, of 15, West Street, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2., will present in addition to the First Prize a  
prize to the Value of £5 5s.  
Messrs. LACHENAL & CO., the old-established and original makers of Concertinas and the Edwophones, of  
4, Little James Street, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1., will present in addition to the Second Prize one of  
their "Standard Model" 48-Keyed Edwophones Trebles.  
THE UNIFORM CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT CO. LIMITED, 5, Clerkenwell Green, Farringdon Road,  
London, E.C.1., will present in addition to the Third Prize a Set of Band Books.

### GENERAL REGULATIONS.

The Contest is open to all Amateur Concertina Bands.  
The number of Players in each Band, including Conductor if a player, must not exceed 24.  
Each Band must play the Selection of Music (shown for the Contest) from Belle's Opera, "BOHEMIAN  
GIRL," selected and arranged by Charles Godfrey.  
No member of a Band will be allowed to play any solo other than is allotted to the (instrument entered  
opposite his name on the Form of Entry).  
A Professional Musician may be engaged as Conductor.  
He may also play with one Band which he conducts  
therefrom, except where a Band is disqualified for an infringement of the Rules. Where a Prize is withheld for  
a breach of the Rules, such prize will be given to the next in order of merit.  
No objection will be entertained as to a performer being a professional, or upon any other ground whatever  
except in connection with the playing of the Music on the day, unless full particulars are forwarded at least one  
week previous to the Contest.  
Mr. Josselyn's decision will be final in all cases of dispute.  
The Prizes will be awarded according to the decision of the Judges or Judge, and no appeal will be allowed  
therefrom, except where a Band is disqualified for an infringement of the Rules. Where a Prize is withheld for  
a breach of the Rules, such prize will be given to the next in order of merit.

JUDGE:



### Holey Ha'penny

Classic Recordings of Traditional Music from the North-East of England

Two 7" single releases, each featuring with 100% authentic recordings



#### HOLEY HA'PENNY

Classic Recordings of Traditional Music from the North-East of England  
12T283

\*Holey Ha'penny & Elsie Marley/The Gilstand Hornpipe/Morpeth Rant/Proudlock's Hornpipe/Billy Ballantine's Reel/Father's Polka/Schottische/Varsoviana/Highland Laddie/My Lodging Is On Cold Ground & Bonnie Dundee/Roxburgh Castle & Devil Among the Tailors/The Roman Wall/Tom Hepple's Polka/The Tow House Polka/The Kielder Schottische/\*The Keel Row/Schottische/My Lodging's On Cold Ground & Blow the Wind Southerly/Corn Rigs & The Manchester Hornpipe/The Linehope Lope/Willy Taylor's Polka/Nae Good Luck/Whittingham Green Lane & Ward's Brae/Bonny North Tyne/Mosstrooper's Polka/The Coquet Reel/Heel and Toe Polka/The Pin Reel/Cambo March/The Ferry Boat/Malorca, Herd on the Hill & Devil Among the Tailors

Tom Clough *Northumbrian pipes*, Billy Ballantine *piccolo*, Ned Pearson *fiddle*, Joe Hutton *pipes*, Jake Hutton *fiddle*, John Hepple *pipes*, George Hepple *fiddle*, Willy Taylor *melodeon/fiddle*, Jimmy Hunter *mouth organ*, Tom Hunter *fiddle*, Jim Rutherford *fiddle*, Adam Gray *fiddle*, Bob Clark  *Jew's harp*

This is a record of instrumental solos and duets in the tradition of Northumberland and Cumberland. Most of it was collected there in the summer of 1954, by Peter Kennedy on behalf of the BBC, and it makes the best documentation available of this tradition as it was a generation ago. Several performers of great stature are included, such as the piccolo virtuoso Billy Ballantine and the fiddler Ned Pearson. The album is completed by the rare recordings (marked with an asterisk) of the brilliant Northumbrian piper Tom Clough, made in 1929.

This record, with the previous TOPIC releases *Bonny North Tyne* (12TS239) and *Morpeth Rant* (12TS267), serves as a documentary of the thriving North-Eastern country music tradition over the last half-century. The records show the range of the music, from rough but exciting country fiddling developed for village dances to the highly developed and technically brilliant piping that was perhaps more at home in the parlour of farm or town dwelling.

# TOPIC

Free catalogue on request

TOPIC RECORDS LTD., 27 Nassington Road, London NW3 2TX

CONTENTS

Tutors. . . . .	4
Concertina Personalities. . . . .	6
Repairs. . . . .	9
Readers's Letters . . . . .	11
Interview - Alf Edwards . . . . .	15
The Concertina . . . . .	17
Reviews . . . . .	20
Technical Points . . . . .	22

## editorial

A brief introduction to issue 24 - what with the heatwave and a move to new headquarters (we're now at 20 Town Street, Duffield) things have been really hectic lately, but do come and visit if you're passing!

I hope you enjoy this issue - I think its the best for ages (perhaps because its the first for ages!) and a credit to our new designer and printer Chris Hicks.

### GORDON CUTTY

Many Concertina Convention regulars will be saddened to hear of Gordon's death on Good Friday. A wonderful man, a great concertina player, and one of our magazine's most enthusiastic supporters. Tributes to Gordon, and a review of his record will appear in the next issue.

### POP MUSIC ON CONCERTINA

Enthusiasts of the English Concertina will no doubt be pleased to hear that Lea Nicholson has finally found his way back into the recording studio. Lea is perhaps best known for the minor classic "Horsemusic" album he recorded on Bill Leader's Trailer label some four years ago. After making a rather obscure album with Transatlantic, Lea disappeared from the scene altogether, except for the occasional sighting at Concertina Conventions and Festivals. However, Lea recently signed with Virgin Records, and a single "Lazy Afternoon" has just been released. This should be of interest to readers as it is undoubtedly the first real pop record to be issued featuring the concertina. Before the cries of "sell out" are heard, English players will no doubt be quick to spot the technical difficulties involved in Lea's playing. Part of the tune together with some fingering hints can be found in this issue.

As well as the single, Virgin are releasing an instrumental album of Lea's playing in September - which will of course be available through Free Reed Records. As usual a diverse range of musical styles have been covered. Side 2 consists wholly of classical material and features a 16 minute rendering of Bach's 4th Brandenburg concerto. Side 1 is in a much lighter vein, and covers everything from Eastern European dance tunes to the dam busters march, and also features Martin Carthy on guitar.

We plan them in D & G and C & G - modern pitch and steel reeds of course, and hope to have some available by October. If you'd like details of these as soon as they're available, and also details of John Kirkpatrick's forthcoming Anglo and Melodeon record of Morris tunes with instruction booklet) send us an SAE marked Anglo info. We'll post it to you as soon as its ready.

All the best for now,

*Neil Wayne*

Free Reed Magazine,  
Duffield, Derby, England.

## NEW ANGLO CONCERTINAS

Many readers are familiar with the new model English 48 key concertinas available from Free Reed. Well, we've designed some prototype 39 key Anglo Chromatic concertinas of similar construction, only a little more robust in the bellows than the English.

# Free Reed Record Shop

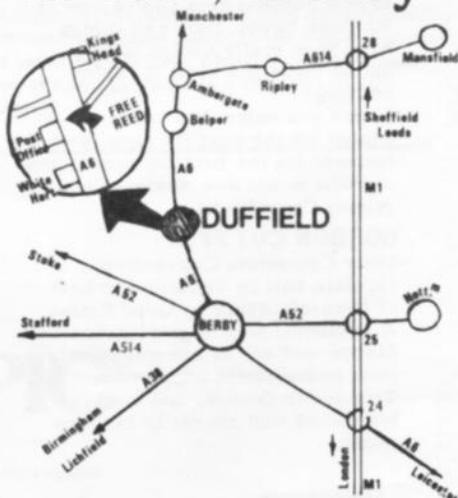
RECORDS, TAPES, CONCERTINAS, TUNEBOOKS, MELODEONS, OLD FOLK INSTRUMENTS - ALL AT DISCOUNT!

## 20 Town Street, Duffield, Derby

Come and visit!  
We've over 3,000 assorted folk records, lots of concertinas, melodeons, and tune books - and the coffee-pot's usually on. Also, many special offers that aren't included in our catalogue.

For more details ring  
DERBY (0332) 840935.

We look forward to seeing you.



# Concertina Tutors

## a brief survey by r.carlin

Folk concertinists are always surprised when I tell them that there is more to the English Concertina than Irish dance music; it seems that very few of the very talented young concertinists realize that the instrument was at one time limited to the 'classics'. During my stay in England, I was surprised to find so many active concertinists, young and old, who continue to play the instrument in the 'classical' style. For those interested in learning more about the old concertina style, there is no better place to start than with the concertina tutors, published during a flurry of interest in the instrument during the 1850's, which remained in print well into the twentieth century. Of the fifty-one titles that I have found in my research, only four remain in print (of those four, two were issued within the last five years). The tutors provide a 'living' history of the instrument, as well as an interesting insight into Victorian music theory and education.

The best tutor of all is Joseph Warren's *Complete Instructions for the Concertina*, first published in the early 1840's, and last reprinted in 1946. It has the best selection of music and the most tasteful arrangements (the Victorians loved florid and sentimental music, and their arrangements mirrored their taste for the dramatic, sometimes bordering upon the melodramatic and the slightly absurd.). Giulio Regondi, the 'boy wonder' guitarist and the finest concertinist ever to perform, wrote a very fine tutor published by Wessel & Co in or about 1857, entitled *The New Method for Concertina*. Regondi advised his students to play in a simple, unadorned manner, to avoid the mushy sound of heavy block chords; in short, to strive for a crisp, sharp tone. This tutor is one of the most difficult ever to be published, as most of Regondi's arrangements are taxing even for the finest concertinists.

Another fine concertina tutor was published in the late 1800's, not in England but in Russia. Written by A. Von Rothstein, one of the great Russian virtuosi, it was intended to be a guide for secondary school pupils. In Russia, every secondary

school student was required to learn concertina. There were many virtuosi, who performed Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart, and other strictly classical music, in a monophonic style. Their arrangements were much more conservative than the arrangements popular in England. Boris Matusewitsch of New York City is the foremost living virtuoso and teacher of this style.

Countless inexpensive tutors were published in the 1850's and later in the 1920's. George Case, the author of the ever-popular 'Concertina Miscellany' wrote at least six tutors, that were reprinted throughout the early years of this century. Charles Roylance, author of inexpensive tutors for everything from concertina to hammered dulcimer, and, along with Charles Rutterford, the foremost teacher of the concertina in the early years of this century, wrote and arranged music for the instrument during an era when published music was growing scarce. Edwin Chesney, the Chidley Brothers, Henry Lea, Carlo Minasi, and many others helped popularise the instrument by writing simple instruction books.

Here is a partial list of concertina tutors, drawn from a more complete list that will be published (hopefully soon) along with my history of the concertina. Most can be found in the British Museum Library (BL), the New York Public Library Music Division (NYPL), or the Library of Congress (LC).

1. Alsepti, Signor; *THE MODERN ENGLISH CONCERTINA METHOD*, London; Lachenal & Co. in 2 parts c. 1895 NYPL (part 1 only).
2. Bristow, Lieut. Colonel; *THE SALVATION ARMY TUTOR FOR THE CONCERTINA*, London; Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd., 1935 (revised edition).
3. Butler, Frank; *THE CONCERTINA, A HANDBOOK AND TUTOR*....., Duffield; Free Reed Press, 1974
4. Case, Geo.; *COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS..... MUCH ENLARGED*....., London, Boosey and Sons, 1857, BL
5. Chesney, Edwin; *NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONCERTINA*, London, E. Chesney 1852, 1857, BL.
6. Edwards, Alfred; *WHEATSTONE'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONCERTINA*, London. C. Wheatstone and Co., 1960, BL, LC.

7. Hoskins, James F.; TEGG'S CONCERTINA PRE-CEPTOR, London. Wm Tegg & Co. 1852. BL.
8. Matusewitch, Boris & Sergei; THE GREGORY MATUSEWITCH METHOD FOR THE ENGLISH CONCERTINA. London. Wheatstone & Co. 1857. LC.
9. Minasi, Carlo; INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONCERTINA. London. Wheatstone & Co. c. 1848 - 1855. BL.
10. Regondi, Guilio; NEW METHOD FOR THE CONCERTINA. London. Wessel & Co. 1857. BL.
11. Roylance, Charles; HOW TO LEARN THE ENGLISH CONCERTINA WITHOUT A MASTER. London. C. Roylance, 1877. BL.
12. Sedgwick, Alfred B.; COMPLETE SYSTEM... FOR THE CONCERTINA. London. Levesque, Edmeades & Co. 1849, 1854. BL.
13. Von Rothstein, A.; NEUE PRAKTIISCHE ENGLISCHE CONCERTINA SCHULE (in Russian and English). c. 1890s.  
More information on the Russian concertina school will come in a forthcoming article to be based on interviews with Boris Matusewitch.
14. Warren, Jos.; COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONCERTINA. London. Wheatstone & Co. c. 1840s, in print through 1946. NYPL. BL.



## small ads

### EXCHANGE

New (about 1973) Wheatstone 20-key Anglo; hardly used, plated ends, steel reeds, 6-fold bellows, with good case. Will exchange for Wheatstone 48 or 56 key ENGLISH concertina or Aeola with plated ends. Sue Mycock, Stoneknowe, Scaleby, Carlisle, Cumbria.

### WANTED

English concertina, Wheatstone or Crabb. Realistic price paid PLUS £10 donation to FREE REED if this ad succesful. Jim McPherson, flat 1, 2 Marshalls Court, Greenside, Edinburgh.

### SELL or EXCHANGE

Hohner Melodian B/C/C three row 12 bass, worth about £50. Consider exchange for L.Pitch English concertina, dulcimer, or Northumbrian pipes; with cash adjustment either way. M.Dutton, Top Cottage, Eaton Mascott, Shrewsbury.

### FOR SALE

48-key English concertina, as new. Cost £74.50 last August. Highest offer accepted. L.Stephenson, 'The Cedars', Ladywood Road, Leeds 8, Yorks.

### WANTED

2-row Hohner Melodeon key C/F. Or a 2½ row Club model C/F & accidentals. Any condition considered. Also, urgently required, A new spare set of bellows for a Hohner D/G (2915) melodeon.

For Sale: Superb 5 string banjo by Taylor of Liverpool. This is a very rare short scale G banjo, beautifully made, about 2" shorter than standard, with case, worth £60 ono. Would consider part exchange with melodeon mentioned above. Tel: 079 389 222  
32 Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Wilts.

### FOR SALE

Hohner Erica 2 row Melodeon C/C, 8 bass buttons, with case, good condition. Also, Italian Chromatic Melodeon, 48 key Piano Bass. No case, but in good condition. Offers to Bob Robson, Tel: Rugby 814444

# Concertina Personalities

## Harry Ashmore

*Reproduced below is a digest of an article which appeared in "The Birmingham Evening Despatch" some years ago. Harry Ashmore was well-known to most players of the ENGLISH Concertina and he was a personal friend of Mr. Stanley, who writes, "It was customary at weekends for players to meet in his parlour at the back of the shop and very happy meetings they were, since he always had plenty of instruments and music for our scrutiny and occasionally a professional player touring the Music Halls. All the professionals had a great respect for Old Harry."*

December, 1975 saw the passing of one of the most remarkable men that ever stepped the streets of the city of Birmingham—Harry Ashmore, Artiste of the Concertina. He died at the age of 74.

Ashmore's was a curiously romantic career. He never went to school and up to the time of his death could neither read nor write. He started work as a caster but when he was about nine years of age his predilection for music found vent by his playing the tin whistle with more than the common or garden technique.

He eventually became chief foreman at his work and, having saved a little money, bought, in 1875, a small shop at 130 Newton Row and commenced business for himself. During this time he had been taking up one musical instrument after another. When he was thirty he exchanged a violin for a Concertina—developed a passion for this instrument and from that day until his death never again changed his choice.

During the years that followed he played practically everywhere, never having a set programme but always at the service of charity, benefit concerts or any other good cause.

He soon became recognised as an expert and most professional Concertinists were proud to be numbered amongst his countless friends. He was inseparable from his Concertina and even played while he was having his meals!

### The Parrot

He once possessed a parrot which insisted on screaming whenever he played and, even when its cage was covered, continued to voice its dislike for the Concertina. One day, when the bird's screeching were particularly raucous, Ashmore wrung its neck! He was really fond of birds and animals, but never fonder still music!!!

His venture into the retail tobacco business proved very successful and Old Harry soon owned some half a dozen shops in the city.

In 1894 he became connected with the Museum Concert Hall in Digbeth, but this proved a failure and he lost a lot of money. Undaunted, he carried on with his tobacconists' business and playing the Concertina.

He was the first man in Aston to have his house lighted by electricity—he bought a dynamo and installed it in his cellar. This was so successful that he had one of his shops (In Corporation Street) lit in the same fashion . . . the first in the city.

### His Little Jig

Ashmore always wore a little midshipman's cap, was known far and wide among Birmingham tradesmen and never parted from a friend without performing his special little jig.

Concertinas were sent to him from all parts of the country to be tuned; and he possibly knew more about his particular instrument than any man living at the time. His imitation on the Concertina of the bells and the bagpipes were declared incomparable. And since he never had a lesson on anything in his life, this was definitely a remarkable feat.

In fact, Old Harry Ashmore was remarkable man. ●

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### Note:

We'll be featuring many more 'Concertina Personalities' in future issues. If you know of any, why not send us a few details. — We'd like to hear about them.

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# Edouard Silas

*EDOUARD SILAS (1827–1909). Born in Amsterdam, Holland, of Jewish parentage but baptised as a Catholic. A composer of all forms, also had happy facility of extemporising on the organ on given themes.*

SILAS arrived in England in 1850, and resided here until his death. His interest in the Concertina was influenced by hearing what was being done on this instrument when he came to this country and he immediately resolved to write for it.

## Blagrove Interested

His work was brought to public notice by that great man of the Concertina Richard Blagrove who, in addition to being a fine exponent of the Concertina was also principal viola player in the London Philharmonic Orchestra for many years.

Unfortunately, much of Silas' music for the Concertina was never published and even today there must be a great deal of it still in manuscript form in somebody's possession. The British Museum also has none of this music.

## Silas' "Trio in G"

On January 27th, 1870, at St. George's Hall, London, was given Silas' *Trio in G Major Opus 58 for Concertina, viola and piano*, with Richard Blagrove playing Concertina.

The 'Musical World' said, "Silas is one of the best composers of chamber music among us. The Trio betrays the hand of a master throughout, and is full of passages calculated to bring out the resources of the instruments employed."

## Other Works

Amongst Silas' main works for Concertina are *Adagio in E*, (for eight Concertinas), *Quintet in D*, *Quartet in B*, *Andante Religioso* (for Baritone Concertina), *Trio in C Minor*, and various other Trios and Sonatas.

One last word on Silas' amazing extemporisation: In an extemporising contest on the organ with Saint-Saens, the famous composer, Silas was the Victor!

# Guilio Regondi

*GUILIO REGONDI (1822–1872). Born in Geneva, Switzerland, of Italian and German parents. Buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, London, where also his colleague Richard Blagrove and Sir Charles Wheatstone.*

IN MUSICAL STYLE, taste and expression, Regondi was exceeded by few, if any, among his contemporaries on other instruments. The concerts in which he played also included the most celebrated singers and instrumentalists of the day and, at one time, his name was to be seen in almost every concert programme as both Concertinist and Guitarist.

## Magnificent Player

His work can perhaps best be summed up by the following excerpt from a Manchester newspaper around the 1850's:

"Guilio Regondi quite took the audience by surprise. That an instrument hitherto regarded as a mere toy — the invention, however, of a philosophical mind — should be capable of giving full expression to a brilliant violin concerto of De Beriot's was more than even musicians who had not heard this talented youth would admit. The close of every movement was greeted with a round of applause in which many members of the orchestra joined.

## Frills and Shakes

"The performer has much of the *fanitico per la musica* in his appearance and manifestly enthusiastic love for his art; he hangs over and hugs his little box of harmony as if it were a casket of jewels, or an only and dearly loved child.

His frills and shakes seem to vibrate through his frame and occasionally he rises on tiptoe or flings up his instrument as he coaxes out its highest notes, looking the while like one rapt and unconscious of all outward objects, in the absorbing enjoyment of the sweet sounds that flow from his musical instrument."

Regondi usually performed on Treble and Baritone Concertinas, and when playing with orchestra he used an enharmonically-tuned instrument of fourteen notes to the octave, that is, two different keys for C# and Db, and for G# and Ab, and when playing with piano he used an ordinary-tuned instrument of equal temperament.



# WANTED

ALL OLD, UNUSUAL, STRANGELY SHAPED  
OR LABELLED CONCERTINAS, SYMPHONIUMS,  
ACCORDEONS, FLUTINAS, MELODEONS,  
IN FACT ANY INTERESTING FREE REED  
INSTRUMENTS.

Neil Wayne would be glad to hear from anyone with such old or unusual instruments, and would like to add them to the Free Reed Museum Study Collection. Even if you do not at present wish to part with your old instruments, photographs or a chance to examine them would be appreciated. Should you wish to part with the instruments, Neil Wayne will either:

- Buy them outright
- Swap or part exchange for new model English Concertinas
- Swap or part exchange for good quality old Wheatstone, Lachenal, or Jeffries Anglos or Englishes. For exceptionally rare or unusual instruments, Aeolas and Edeophones may be offered as swaps.
- Part exchange them for other instruments: Banjos, Hohner melodeons, autoharps, concert flutes, etc, etc.

Please, if you have any old free reed instruments for sale or swap, write to Neil Wayne, Duffield, Derby, England.  
or phone: (0332) 840935

# Repairs

## TOOLS FOR CONCERTINA REPAIRS (1)

Obviously, the number and variety of tools which anyone acquires depends on the scale of the repairs that they are likely to undertake. I do not suggest that everyone, or even anyone, will need *all* the tools I describe. — you have to use your own judgement. A minimum would be screwdriver, fine-nose pliers, knife and glue.

When choosing tools there is two basic problems. Firstly, where to get them. The scale of the tools most suited to Concertinas is usually at the very small end of the conventional engineering range whilst many watchmakers and modellers tools are too small.

Secondly, there is the problem of quality. There are a lot of cheap, imported tools available and, whilst some are adequate, others are just a waste of money. As a general guide, do not buy cheap cutting tools (ex-W.D. excepted). Although good tools are obviously no substitute for skill, they can minimise the more disastrous effects of its absence.

At this point I ought to mention the 'Xacto' range of modelling tools which include many useful items of good quality.

**Screwdrivers.** QUALITY HERE IS VITAL. Cheap screwdrivers are so easy to buy but can cause so much damage. A properly-ground blade will bite and hold in the slot and a bad one tends to slip and chew up the screw head. Many of the screws used in concertinas are very hard to replace so treat them carefully and insist on a first-class driver. It should be as wide as the screw slots to spread the loading evenly but if it is too big it can damage the surrounding woodwork.

"Stanley" do a good range which includes ground blades if you go for the better ones. I have a "Moore and Wright" with three blades, — one thin edge, one thicker and one which I have magnetised. I also have a narrow driver for tiny screws.

I have thought about putting a tube round the blade so that it cannot slide off the screw head and using a ratchet or a pump-type driver. — Has anyone tried this? I should also like to hear from anyone who has tried an impact driver on seized end-bolts.

**Pliers, etc.** If you only have one pair they should be fine-nosed and preferably with a rod-grip and cutting blades. You can add other types from a wide variety which includes ones with parallel closing jaws and a mini 'Mole' wrench which exerts fantastic pressure and can be locked onto the work.

Surgical forceps also lock and are very useful for getting into awkward places. They are made in many shapes and sizes and are sometimes available from Army Surplus shops. Angler's suppliers also sell a cheap, simple version for getting hooks out of fishermen's ears. Tweezers are very handy and are obtainable from philatelist's or watchmakers suppliers.

A wide variety of holding/lifting/tweezing tools can be home-made from rod, strip or wire.

**Knives, etc.** You will need something to cut with. You can get along with an old penknife and a razor-blade but there are a variety of special-purpose knives available. For general use I have a small Stanley knife with a retractable, replaceable blade. 'Xacto' do three sizes of handle and a wide choice of blade shapes. I have the smallest and the largest. For the large one you can also get fine 'razor saws' and a range of tiny chisels and gouges.

**Saws.** Seldom needed except for cleaning and reforming screw slots. For this I have a selection of bits of hack-saw blades with a piece of sticky tape wound round the middle to act as a grip. This gives me one end as a 'push' saw and the other as a 'draw' saw. You can buy special handles to hold hack-saw blades.

Extremely fine fret-saw blades can be obtained if you need them. (e.g. for sawing through a totally seized end-bolt). Those made for cutting wood can be got from model shops but I have found those for metal only at Watchmakers Suppliers.

For major woodwork repairs you may need other types but if you're that good you will probably have them already.

**Files.** A few small files are useful and, of course, essential for tuning. The very small ones are called 'Needle' or 'Warding' files. They are available singly or in sets.

**Cutters.** Although many pliers have a built-in cutter, it is useful to have separate ones. Side-cutters and end-cutters are both handy. Small ones are available — get ones which cut as flush as possible. End cutters, if carefully used, are ideal for extracting small pins. A light pair of snips is handy for cutting jobs which are heavy work for scissors — which are also important, of course.

**Hole Punches** for leather etc. are useful. If you only have one kind, the sort that you use with a hammer are probably more versatile than the sort

you squeeze: — you will need something to hammer onto — a block of hardwood, dense plastic or lead. Adequate punches can be made from 'Bundi' or other mild-steel, thin-walled tube. I made mine by mounting the tube in an electric drill and working the taper and cutting-edge with a file and then fine emery. You have then to case-harden the cutting-edge. (This is a simple process which I will explain at some other time if Neil allows me the space.) These home-made punches are more versatile for concertina work than the bought variety as you can mount them in a drill and cut by spinning rather than hammering. You can also make them oval, half-round etc. for special shaping jobs.

**Hammer.** Some sort of light hammer is useful. Mine is a little tack hammer with a chisel pein which is good for loosening tight reed-frames. 'Xacto' catalogue one with interchangeable faces in different shapes and materials. It looks good on paper but I haven't found one yet.

#### **Drills, Taps and Dies. (Always buy Quality)**

Not many drills are needed for concertina work — you acquire what you need. If you are tapping metal it is most important to have the right size of drill for the initial hole. Small taps are very brittle and if the hole is too small the tap can bind and break. If the hole is too large you thread will be a sloppy fit.

Apart from the usual inch-fractions, small drills are made in a range of sizes with each designated by a number. These are known as 'Number drills' (surprise). Metric drills are now becoming available.

All the information required can be found in various cheap booklets of 'Engineers' Tables' such as 'Zeus'.

Taps come in threes; — 'starter', 'middle' and 'plug'. For concertina work a 'middle' or 'No.2' tap is usually enough.

Any light drill can be used. Modellers use an 'Archimedean' drill for small work and you can get a small, battery-driven one for which you can also get a selection of tiny cutters, grinders and polishers. They usually have a collet-type chuck which strictly limits the size of drill which they will hold.

You will find a countersinker useful, though you can make one out of an old drill by altering the angle of the point. Drills and countersinks for wood can also be home-made from strip or wood.

**Vice.** It is often useful to hold small parts whilst having both hands free. Ordinary vices are usually too big. There exists a variety of 'hand vices' which can be held in a larger vice or fixed down with some sort of clamp. The mini 'Mole' wrench mentioned previously can be used in this way. Fairly small vices can be obtained with a clamp-fitting to attach them to the edge of a table. For those with no workshop facilities 'Xacto' market a small vice with a sucker base. It is mainly plastic but I have had no complaints using one.

**Abrasives.** Sandpaper and emery cloth in most grades are easily available. Roughness is graded by 'Grits' — the higher the number, the finer the 'cut'.

Very fine emery is available as 'rubbing-down', or 'wet and dry' paper. It is used by spray painters among others.

The cut of emery can be reduced by adding oil, and increased by adding paraffin. Various cutting pastes are used by spray painters etc. For very fine cutting/polishing of metal use 'Jeweller' Rouge' (very messy) or Brasso or Silvo which both contain a cutting agent. Fine emery used with oil is a substitute for a stone for sharpening tools.

**Adhesives.** I use 'Britfix Clear' because it comes in small tubes with a fine nozzle. I find 'contact' types a nuisance.

Adhesives are increasingly becoming a complex subject about which I know nothing. If any Free-Reader is glued-up about glue (glued-up?) how about an article giving names, properties, uses and availability?

**Clamps.** These are often needed to hold work while glue is setting. Apart from various engineers' and modellers' clamps there are other possibilities, useful because of their small size. These include sprung wooden clothes pegs and also the plastic sort with a large wire loop, 'Bulldog' type paper clips of all sizes and 'Crocodile' and similar clips used by electricians. There is also a very handy little screw clamp used in laboratories for nipping rubber tubing.

**Miscellaneous.** A magnifier is very handy. Watchmakers' Suppliers offer a range which leave both hands free. Spectacle wearers can get them to clip onto the frame; — they are sold for left or right eye. Mine is a 'Micros Ary'. It flips up when not needed and is so light that I can forget it is there. It cost £2.83 and gives about 3x. — ideal for most jobs. For an extra £1.35 I got an additional push-in lens which bumps up the power to a fantastic 12x!

Always have a supply of small containers to keep the bits and pieces together and apart — if you see what I mean.

Experience will show you the need for a variety of prodders, tweakers and diddies; — these tend to be personal and hard to describe, but if you devise the all-purpose Super-Diddler, write and tell us so that everyone can benefit from your genius.

The above is a description of general-purpose tools based on my own experience. Special tools for specific problems will make more sense if printed in conjunction with Neil's article describing the particular area to which they are relevant.

Lastly, may I appeal to EVERYONE who can add anything to what I have written. Have you devised a special tool or technique to overcome some problem? Do you have some special knowledge which is applicable to concertinas, their parts or repair? Do you know of a supplier of some hard-to-find bits or materials? Do you think that all this is a load of tripe? — If so — WRITE AND TELL US.

Here are a few ideas for starters: —

- An infallible method for unsticking long bolts/screws that are corroded into the woodwork.
- The best way to make springs and how to achieve the right tension.

# reedwrite

Your Letters

(write to: FREE REED MAGAZINE, Duffield, Derby, England)

A. R. D. Robson  
of "Meadowlands", Crookham Village,  
Aldershot, Hants, GU13 0SS, writes . . .

I was most interested in the two letters from *Helmut Peters* & *Albert G. Neckanicky* in the March issue of FREE REED. I should very much like to get in touch with these two writers as I would like to know more about their instruments, the layout of the keyboards of the 144 key Einheits Bandoneon and the 130 key Chemnitzer keyboard concertina, which if it is the white instrument in the lower R.H. Photo, looks like a Bandoneon to me.

I play a 64 key Chromatic Bandoneon made by Alfred Arnold in 1942, and have been looking around for a full size model (73 or 77 key). But neither the Italians nor the Germans are making them at present, so I am considering making one myself if I can get someone to make up the reeds and reed plates, and can find a source of supply for things like metal bellows corners & plastic rod for key buttons. Accordion reeds are no good for this job, being tapered they have the wrong tone colour. This might account for the difference in tone of the Italian built concertina compared with the Crabbe.

This brings me to a question I have pondered on for a long time. Why don't we make squeeze boxes in this country? Why should it be exclusive to the Germans & Italians? There seem to be dozens of Italian makers all cutting each others throats. We should be able to make a first class instrument in this country tonally better if not so competitive in price. I am rather surprised that the Japanese have not muscled in on the act, as they have done over German cameras & Swiss watches for instance.

Nearly everyone tells me that my Bandoneon has a really beautiful tone, organ like, and quite unlike an accordion. Now I know that Bandoneons came in a variety of sizes and types of keyboard layout, some similar to an Anglo, and I would dearly like to find out details of their keyboard layouts. The Bandoneon format has the advantage of a large air valve & 12 or 15 fold bellows plus plenty of room inside if the number of keys is restricted. One could make one up with a

ten key melodeon type keyboard each end and get away with using standard harmonium reeds without much difficulty. Though it wouldn't be chromatic, one could get the two contrasting tone colours of the bandoneon plus the bass on the L.H. side. One could make one up with two octaves a side, single acting keys arranged exactly like piano keys but buttons & with the top octave above the lower one - four rows of buttons, but it might be difficult to finger.

I am interested enough to have a go at making something up if I can get hold of the hardware, that is why I am interested in getting hold of all the various keyboard layouts of concertinas. I have that for the English, the 20, 30, 32, 39 & 40 key Anglos, but nothing on the duet varieties. I should be interested in your views on the market.

I have recently found and restored, and am looking for a home for, an old Victorian 10 key melodeon. Unusual layout as it starts the scale on the 4th key insted of the 3rd & seems to be pitched in Ab (possibly old high pitch G). Two voices & stops, octave apart. Reeds are brass on lead plates set flatways concertina fashion. One bass & 1 chord button like the 4 stop one row job. Bellows not bad considering no metal corners. Tone is weak but pleasant as one would expect from brass reeds, needs a fair amount of energy as bellows are 14" x 7½" section. It all works & the decoration looks a bit like a Christmas card. Had to use my imagination & make up a fretwork grille over the pallets as it was missing, has a row of ¾" holes on the front as well.

In another field I have been making up a Zither Harp. I had one called "Piano Chord" with 2 octaves of melody strings (single) plus 6 ready made chords & basses, fairly satisfactory if you could keep it in tune but two octaves c to c rather restricted. The woodworm got it & it collapsed. So I have made another using marine mahogany ply for front & back & thick ply let in for the Wrest pins, this one has 3 octaves G to G. ➤

Only got to find some wrapped strings for the basses & lower notes of the chords & it's done, measures about 24" wide x 30" long. French polished the front & it looks good and sounds better than the old one did. Any market for this sort of thing? If you can sell them, or squeeze boxes bandoneon shape, I think I can make them.

Didn't think a lot of *Astor Piazzolla's* "Liber-tango" record, (CHRYSLIS CHR 1096) does little for the Bandoneon & even less for the Tango. If you are interested in a real Bandoneon virtuoso there is an Argentine issue Number PAUTA SLPP-1004. *Alejandro Barletta* (who lives in Paris) on one side plays pieces by Frescobaldi, Scarlatti & Bach, and some very avante garde modern music (sounds like electronic) on the other. It really shows what can be done with the instrument in two completely opposite directions, the classical side sounds like a small chamber organ. One rather wishes he had done some of the popular classical guitar pieces, Granados spanish dances & the like, but it's an eye opener all the same and shows that it would be possible to do for the Bandoneon what Segovia did for the Guitar. As the sleeve note says (in Spanish) with about 3 octaves a side it is possible to play almost any keyboard music exactly as written. There are two books of words on the Bandoneon (both in Spanish, but this is no hindrance in practice) "Metodo para Bandoneon" by Pedro Maffia, published by Ricordi in Buenos Aires, shows a 71 key model and gives all the various chord patterns for the L.H. Also "El Bandoneonista Virtuoso" by Cavallo & Rey Mundo, also available from Ricordi B.A. This is in 5 slim volumes to cover a 5 year course at Buenos Aires Tech. I have vol. 1, which shows a 73 key model with a marginally different arrangement (better) for the lowest bass notes. Both are stuffed with exercises, scales in 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, etc., and they expect you to memorise the keys and read direct from the music either pulling or squeezing. As most keys are double acting you finger a different way when squeezing to that when pulling, making it a bit involved, but the fingering comes dead easy in the main, it's just a case of remembering where the right key is

(usually it's under your finger all the time). I believe that Ron Shuttleworth may be able to advise me where I can get hold of bellows corners etc., where do I get in touch with him? I wish you'd have a convention in this part of the world sometime. I'd like to meet some concertina players in this area. Are there any? ●

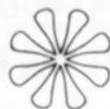
Jan Dean writes.....

"Am I the only concertina enthusiast in North Wales?"

I have recently taken up the Anglo and although I am battling with tutors and written exercises I need to meet another human being who knows what I'm talking about!

If you live within a fifty mile radius (this side of the Celtic fringes, not Ireland; I get seasick) of Anglesey, and do not object to helping a novice (a novice, novice), please contact me.

Jan Dean  
22 Ffordd Llundain, Bode Dorn,  
Holyhead, Gwynedd. ●



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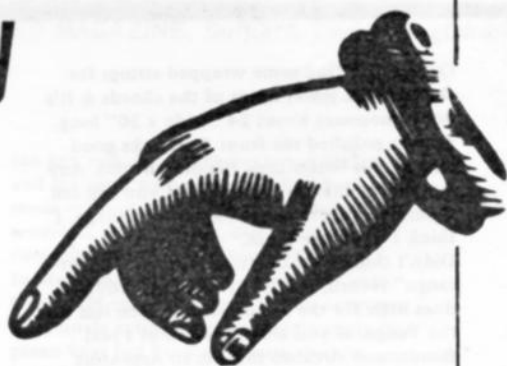
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## ORCHESTRAL CONCERTINAS

Historical Survey by C. Hilding Berquist

It is interesting to note the recorded soliloquising of one of the most eminent English composers and a pupil of Mozart, Thomas Attwood, when he went to hear a miscellaneous concert at the old Haymarket Opera House, London, in 1837 and at which the youth, Guilio Regondi, was to play a solo — a movement, possibly from some violin concerto, several of which he was wont to play at that early time.

Although Regondi had then already fully developed the Concertina's possibilities, this occasion was the first time Attwood had heard it.

After Regondi had played a few bars, Attwood remarked to his friend John Hullah, "This is exquisite!"

After a few more bars, "What can you want with two clarinets when you can have this?"

And still later, and evidently in astonishment, "This will revolutionise the orchestra!"

Remember, the Concertina was still a new instrument then, having been invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone shortly before in the late 1820's!

As captivated as Attwood was with the Concertina he surely would have scored for it had he not died shortly after in 1838. He had been one of the founders of the Philharmonic Society in 1813.

Another very early instance of the Concertina's introduction into orchestras in London was when Bochs, the famous composer and harpist, engaged George Case, a contemporary and colleague of Regondi, for the ballet music at Her Majesty's Theatre, George Case also played in the Promenade Concerts at that time and with the orchestras of the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, and the Theatre Royal.

Later on the Concertina was played for years in the orchestras of the Court and Criterion Theatres by Roe, who also went to Philadelphia to play in Godfrey's military band on the occasion of its visit there.

Richard Blagrove, another colleague of Regondi, on an occasion at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, London, played with his eminent brother Henry, first violinist of the Philharmonic, a duo for Concertina and violin with orchestra, composed by Henry and conducted by Molique.

Richard Blagrove is also stated to have played at the Saturday Concerts at the Crystal Palace with orchestra, August Manns conducting.

The Concertina was favourably employed as *obligato* at the Leslie Choir Concerts, both at the Trocadero at the Paris Exhibition in 1878, and at St. James' Hall in London.

Coming nearer our day, the English composer, Josef Holbrooke, remains the foremost to score for the Concertina, probably his first work being the dramatic *The Bells*, premiered in 1906 under

Hans Richter. The Concertina part was played, I believe, by the prominent lady *virtuoso*, Christine Hawkes, who also gave concerts at Steinway Hall and such hallowed places.

Holbrooke originally wished to employ twenty Concertinas for this work!

In the prelude to his opera *Dylan*, premiered in 1909 at Queen's Hall under Sir Thomas Beecham, two Concertinas were used and also in 1909 he used three Concertinas (two *treble* and one *Bari-tone*) in his *Pierrot and Pierrette* under his direction.

Another English composer, Percy Grainger, in one version of a folk-music setting of his *Shepherd's Hey* for some twelve instruments, includes a Concertina.

## TYNESIDE CONCERTINA BAND

"Although the band is down to seven members we still carry out a full programme of charity concerts and rehearsal sessions. The current line-up is as follows and all instruments are English concertinas.

Leader	Les Watt
First Trebles	Jean Rogerson and Harry Carr
Second Treble	Joe Johnson
Baritones	Ernie Barnes and John Ballatine
Bass	Tony Davis

Les Watt arranges the music and programmes and his three sons, Bill, David and John often swell the numbers in the Band when their University studies permit.

The music, which is all hand written, ranges from popular tunes of the dance band era to light classical pieces and hymns — for example a typical programme might include a "Medley of the 20's" starting with *Charmaine* and also an overture such as *Lustspiel* by Kela Bela, with quite a range of music between.

While most concerts are for Old Folks Homes and the like we have one coming up soon where we will be "guest artists" during a concert by the Stanley Civic Orchestra in the Civic Hall at Stanley Co. Durham.

On the subject of local readers, anyone interested in the Band and who can play English Concertina should get in touch with me at 16 Brixham Ave., Gateshead, so they could come to a rehearsal to see what goes on. A *high* standard is not essential but naturally the ability to play reasonably from music without fear of sharps and flats is necessary. Anyway, everyone in the band plays primarily for pleasure and not profit and a good deal of enjoyment and improving practice is there for anybody who cares to make even a small effort; and we could always do with more members!

After the commercial for bandsmen and women let me thank you for, and hope for the continuance of Free Reed!

Tony Davis



INTERVIEW

# ALF EDWARDS

## ALF EDWARDS

*Interviewed by D. A. HART*

The first time I met Alf Edwards I was immediately impressed with his cheerful attitude towards life — he has a ready smile and you can see that he really enjoys being alive! And then we started talking "music" and at once he was serious, knowledgeable and interesting. The conversation we had, of course, centred around the Concertina but it was apparent throughout that Mr. Edwards is a *musician* with a background of which anyone could be justifiably proud.

### Bagpipes, too!

He surprised me by telling me that, besides being a Concertinist, he plays various other instruments although (after the Concertina) he is best known for his work with many broadcasting bands as a trombonist. Furthermore, he is in great demand around New Year and Burns' Night as a bagpiper.

This will also astonish those who have heard his many broadcasts on the Concertina, but since he is the third generation of a family which has been connected with the theatrical and circus profession for close on a hundred years, it is obvious that Mr. Edwards must have inherited *some* family traits!

His grandfather played the Concertina, in addition to many other instruments, and was an *Auguste* (a rather high-class clown) and one of the famous Daniels Brothers. This was over eighty years ago.

Mr Edwards himself started learning the violin, but when he was about eleven his mother bought him a Concertina and he soon was teaching himself with the aid of marked keys.

Blushingly, he admitted to also having taken lessons in ballet-dancing!

### Double Act

In April, 1918, young Mr. Edwards entered the profession as a saxophonist doubling on violin, drums, pipes and a host of other instruments including the Concertina. He and his father had formed a double act which was warmly received by audiences wherever they appeared. Soon, however, his father retired and Mr. Edwards Junior was left on his own to start a solo act although

for some time he had had a hankering to join a band. But his act was so good that he found himself solidly booked with variety work. Then, in 1932, he broadcast from the Birmingham studios as a guest artiste.

This started him off on a new tangent and two years later he achieved his ambition to become a member of a band when he joined Jack Payne in November, 1934. He stayed with this orchestra until 1947 when it was disbanded and Mr. Payne became an impresario.

But Jack Payne had not been slow in realising Alf Edwards' capabilities on the Concertina and often featured him with the strings. But, in Mr. Edwards' own words, "It was horrible stuff to play!"

After leaving Payne, Mr. Edwards joined several other orchestras, besides playing solo and soon contracts started coming through regularly from the BBC.

He is the only Concertinist to have broadcast over the Third Programme and found it very difficult to find suitable music for the particular programme. Finally he decided on a composition by Molique.

### The Bandoneon

Then, one day, Mr. Edwards decided to try his hand at the Bandoneon and had one specially made for him by Alfred Arnold. For a time he played with this new toy but eventually put it aside. Now, he tells me, he is seriously thinking of bringing it down from the attic, dusting it off and starting all over again.

But his *English* 48-key Concertina is Mr. Edwards' first (and only) love. With this instrument he has recorded for HMV before the War with both Jack Payne and Ronnie Monroe. But he is certain that there is still a market for Concertina records and is very anxious to wax some of the solos which have been so popular over the air.

Looking back, Mr. Edwards reminisced of his tour with Jack Payne and his broadcast from South Africa in 1935 where he was known as "Oom Alf". ●

LAZY AFTERNOON – accompaniment to verse.



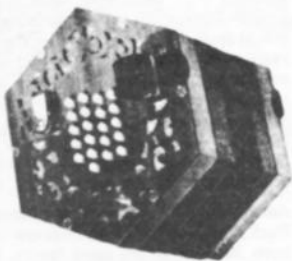
A lot of people have asked me about this song, so I have transcribed a fingered the accompaniment to one of the verses as this is the most interesting part concertina wise.

The song was written by Stan Ellison and my concertina accompaniment is based very much on the way he played the song on guitar.

Played on the guitar the accompaniment is in what is referred to as a claw-hammer style. The basis of this is a syncopated melody played against a steady bass beat. Bear this in mind when trying it on the concertina.

Lea Nicholson.

## NEW ENGLISH CONCERTINAS



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(Readers in other countries order from Neil Wayne, England.)

Write to the address below for price, which includes a de luxe carrying case and a copy of Heatwole's "The English Concertina and an Introduction to Music" (64 pages).

Price of book alone is \$1.50 (U.S. and Canada).

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# the concertina

## The English

The Concertina was invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1829 and patented in the June of that year. The first model possessed twenty-four keys and is still in the possession of the Wheatstone company.

But Sir Charles, seeing possibilities in this new invention, got in touch with a Swiss tool-maker, Louis Lachenal, who joined him and soon after a Concertina with forty-eight keys was made. This instrument was double-action — giving the same note for both press and draw. The early model had a very poor tone owing to the fact that it only had four-fold bellows and was fitted with brass reeds.

For some years Lachenal made Concertinas for Wheatstone's but afterwards started a business of his own which became the famous firm of Lachenal & Co. of London which was incorporated with Wheatstone's in 1934.

Wheatstone had premises at 20 Conduit Street, London, from 1829 until 1905, where the English Concertina was manufactured. There is still at least one Wheatstone model *over eighty years old* which we know of and is in the possession of Mr. Travers — and still in perfect condition. The firm of Wheatstone moved to 15 West Street, Charing Cross Road, London, where they carry on business to-day with their associate company Messrs. Besson. The factory is situated at Frederic Close, Stanhope Place, W.2.

Another famous maker of the last century was Rock Chidley who had a business in High Holborn. Another of the same family, Edward Chidley, produced the *Aeola* in its present form in 1902.

## Bands

There were many famous players of the *English Concertina*, notably Professor Roylance of London. Another fine performer was Signor Regondi who is said to have been the first man to make the *English Concertina* popular. Two outstanding composers for the Concertina were Molique and Sir George MacFarren. These men also wrote classical music for the instrument in combination with other instruments.

During the latter end of the last century, Concertina bands were formed and most of the principal towns possessed one of their own. Some of these bands became famous and capable of putting up first-class performances. Many of these ensembles consisted of eighteen to twenty Concertinists with instruments specially made to imitate the piccolo, bass, clarinet, cornet, etc. These bands

were well-known on the "Sunday League Concerts" and yearly competitions were held at the Crystal Palace, the last of which was won by the Ashton Concertina Band. A member of the Oldham Concertina Band, Arthur Astley, won first prize in the solo section at the same contest, Messrs. Lachenal presenting him with one of their latest *Ediphone* Concertinas which he still possesses.

In 1908 Christine Hawkes caused a sensation with her superb performance on an *English Treble* at the Steinway Hall, London. Columns were devoted to her playing in the following day's papers and musical journals.

Later, the Fayre Four Sisters made a name for themselves in variety by their clever handling of the *English Concertina*.

Perhaps the finest English player to-day is Fred Read of Birmingham. He is well known professionally in the Midlands and often heard on the Midland Regional programme. Two other professionals who are still playing to-day are Con Courtney and Alf Edwards, the latter often broadcasting on the Light Programme. Others still keeping the Concertina popular are Diane Owens, Tom Elliot and Betty Auckland.

## The Anglo-Chromatic

According to records, this type of Concertina was first made in Germany (hence its original name of *Anglo-German*) and was copied from the early German Melodeon. It was hexagonal in shape with twenty keys—ten each side—and produced a different note, press and draw. These were simply toys and of no use as musical instruments.

Nearly one hundred years ago, a Londoner named Thomas Jeffries experimented and improved the instrument by adding more keys, etc., and so it evolved into more or less the instrument as we know it to-day.

Jeffries three sons, Charles, William and Thomas carried on the business after his death but later split up and made Concertinas individually. Of these three, Charles turned out the best instruments — his name on a Concertina is a hallmark of quality.

Strange as it may seem, it is a fact that his *Anglo-Chromatic* Concertinas were the most popular instruments for thirty years and made to last a lifetime. There are even today models in existence at least fifty years old, still as good as new.

## Clubs

Charles also perfected a double-action *Duet* of his own arrangement with fifty and fifty-eight keys.

These instruments were very popular and many are still to be found in excellent condition. Dutch Daly, a famous comedian-Concertinist, played the *Anglo* before audiences all over the world.

It was common some years ago to hear Concertinas being played at night through the streets of London and other large cities, the players followed by people singing to the music. Also players would meet on commons and in parks to play selections and popular songs while the audience would sit around joining in the choruses.

Thomas Jeffries turned out instruments with as many as seventy-seven keys but, unlike his brother Charles, his instruments were inferior and none are to be found to-day. Incidentally, Charles Jeffries is still alive and lives in Kilburn, London.

No other instrument ever had such a fascination for the public as the Concertina — all over Britain there were Clubs and meeting places where players and their pupils could talk about their instrument, and where learners could pick up useful information from experienced players... but this usually cost them dear since most of the old-timers could drink like fishes!

#### The Duet

We will now turn to the third and last arrangement and most popular of all used by the majority of professionals both past and present. This is the *Duet* and, perhaps, the only type of Concertina on which comprehensive music can be played solo. Some players will probably not agree with this opinion yet they must admit that this particular arrangement is the most perfect ever devised. The fingering was invented and patented by Wheatstone in 1844. The original *Duet* was of limited compass but Professor McCann added more keys and secured a further patent in the same year.

#### Ediophone and Aeola

For the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the modern Concertina, we will conclude this introduction to the instrument by mentioning the two best: (1) The *Ediophone* — no longer in production, a twelve-sided Concertina of artistic workmanship and made by Lachenal & Co. and (2) the *Aeola* (the name given to the professional type octagonal model. As the *Ediophone*, this was the name given to the twelve-sided instrument. Both have the same fingering). An instrument made on scientific principles with from forty-six to eighty-one keys or more with a five-octave range. Any music can be played on this instrument as written.

If Concertinists will only get together, Mr. Travers tells us, and form Clubs again, it will help to put this instrument back on the map. It seems a pity, he continues, to let such a beautiful instrument slide into the background through lack of co-operation. ●

#### GEORGE BERNARD SHAW REVIEWS THE CONCERTINA

Tom Ryan of Ontario recently came upon this piece of late-Victorian concertina lore in George Bernard Shaw's *London Music in 1888-89*. The book is a 1837 collection of pieces of music criticism that Shaw wrote, under the nom-de-plume of Corno de Bassetto, for the *Star*, a newspaper under the editorship of T.P. O'Connor and H.W. Massingham. The piece can be found on page 80 of the 1961 edition published in New York.

*"But I must not leave my inquiring amateurs without a word for those who most deserve my sympathy. They are people who desire to enjoy music socially: to play together, to explore the riches of concerted chamber music for mere love of it, and without any desire to expand their lungs or display their individual virtuosity. Yet they are too old to learn to fiddle, or, having learnt, cannot do it well enough to produce tolerable concord. Their difficulty is, fortunately, quite easy to solve. The instrument for them is the concertina: not the teutonic instrument of the midnight Mohock, but the English concertina of Wheatstone. I presume Wheatstone and Co. are still flourishing in Conduit Street, although Mr. Richard Blagrove and his quartet party have not been much in evidence lately. You can play any instrument's part on a concertina of suitable compass, the B flat clarinet being most exactly matched by it in point of tone. The intonation does not depend on you any more than that of a pianoforte. A good concertina is everlasting: it can be repaired as often as a violin. It costs from 16 guineas for a treble to 24 for a contrabass."*

TOM RYAN

*"What's a midnight Mohock? Ed."*

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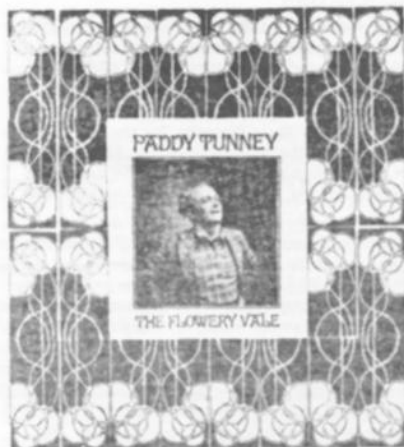
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John Burgess  
12TS291

6/8 Marches: Bundle and Go, Over the Water to Charlie, Campbeltown Loch, Joy Go with My Love, Traigh Gruinard & Morag / Slow Air: Bonnie Argy / 2/4 March: The Strlingshire Militia / March, Strathspey & Reel: The Taking of Beaumont Hamel, Pipe Mjr John MacDonald's Welcome to South Uist, Delvinside & John Morrison of Assynt House / Pibroch: Salute on the Birth of Rory Mor MacLeod / 6/8 Marches: Colonel Robertson, The 72nd Highlanders / Farewell to Edinburgh & Major John MacLennan / Slow Air & Jig: Leaving Ardtornish & The Geese in the Bog / Hornpipes: The Swallowtailed Coat, The Mallow Men, Pipe Mjr George S Allan, Jockey on the Braes of Abernethy, Wee Alec—Fort William, Paddy Kelly's Stump, The Boys of Bluehill & The Ballachulish Walkabout / March, Strathspey & Reel: Lord Alexander Kennedy, Tulloch Gorum & Mrs MacPherson of Inveran / Hornpipe & Retreat March: Duncan Johnstone & Farewell to Nigg

John Burgess is a phenomenon in the world of piping. He has won all the major piping awards, many of them several times. The swing of his march playing, his deft touch in strathspeys and reels, and the breathtaking expertness of his jigs and hornpipes combine to make him one of the best all-round pipers of his time. He is in addition a master of *piobaireachd*, the great music of the pipes. This is his second TOPIC record, and superb.

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# reviews

## RECORD REVIEW

*Hard Times in Old England — The Taverners*  
Folk Heritage FHR 062

To coincide with Free Reed Records handling Folk Heritage here is one of their latest releases. I have to be really honest and say that the Taverners have never really been my scene, but, and it's a big but, their last LP for Trailer wasn't too bad and they are very popular. For me the interest lies in Alan Bell's songs because I consider him a talented writer — I'm also as jealous as hell because he has the ability to write good tunes. Most of Alan's songs are written for radio and TV work but they stand up surprisingly well out of context.

Without trying to sound like the chairman of the Alan Bell Appreciation Society I think that he saves the album in more ways than one and almost certainly vocally. The vocals in general are rather bland, but Alan's voice has that little bit extra 'bite' which gives his vocal tracks more attack. The material is a fair old mixture which includes, despite the title, some Scottish songs. The musicianship is of a high standard without being particularly adventurous (guess who is squeezing an Eng. Conc. throughout?) On the whole it would be fair to describe the album as pleasant — it doesn't demand a great deal of the listener and some of the songs are interesting. The overall production is good, the sleeve is simple yet effective and the 'blurb' will tell you all you want to know. Oh yes, please can this be the last time anyone records 'Farewell She' for a little while.

PAUL ADAMS

RECORD REVIEW by Roy Harris  
*Philippe Bruneau*  
Philo Stereo 2003

Just how much music can you get out of a single row diatonic accordion? 'Not a great deal' some people might say. The people at Philo Records in Vermont know better. They got the French-Canadian maestro Philippe Bruneau to do an album of accordion music, one side played on a single row instrument pitched in D, the other on a 3 row G.C.F. box. Bruneau played the kind of music he does when performing with Le Danseurs du St. Laurent for whom he has been M.D. since 1968. The programme he performs on this album is that used as an accompaniment for a folk dance show by the troupe, who have spread the word of their native traditions throughout North America. It abounds in good tunes, reels of course, some lancers, a step-dance set (clog-jig-reel) and the unusual and delightful waltz-clog, all played with

nimble fingered skill, and conveying an exuberantly joyful atmosphere. He must be wonderful to dance to. CRAWDADDY magazine, reviewing this album said Bruneau played with "overwhelming spirit and energy". I second that. This is a record for the practising musician and the listener alike. Full marks to Philo for making his music available to us. I will review other items from their catalogue in future Free Reeds. In the meantime — buy this album!

## BOYS OF THE LOUGH III

A short review this one, because it's a good record, — the Boys best by a long way.

It was recorded live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, last Autumn and the music consequently has the terrific lift which is always there on their live performances and which was missing from their last two records. The audience is obviously American and laughs in strange places sometimes, but I don't find this unduly sickening except for the drawled "Yeah" after the *Hound & Hare* at the end of side one, which (to add insult to injury) was, I am told, dubbed on afterwards from another place in the tape.

Otherwise it is nearly impossible to find fault with anything. The recording quality of the concertina is slightly strange in places and it comes out sounding a bit like a fairground organ. The set dance *The Hunt* is on the fast side, but in the context of the *Hound & Hare* that doesn't really matter. I really can't complain about anything else.

I was a bit disappointed, though, that there wasn't a straight song from Robin Morton, just the mildly funny *General Guinness* and his brilliantly told cante-fable *The Darling Baby*. However I was very grateful for the two from Cathal McConnell (*The Flower of Magherally* and *The Shores of Lough Bran*) and you can't have it all ways. Cathal is singing as well, if not better than I have ever heard him. He uses everything he's got, but very subtly. He takes liberties and gets away with them — just. If anything stands out from the uniformly high standard of this record it is these two songs.

It's definitely one of my eight for the desert island, and if their next one comes anywhere near it, then it will be a good record.

But why was the cover orange and green I wonder?

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# Technical Points

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS AT CONCERTINA CONVENTIONS

*One of the less noteworthy innovations at this year's Kendal and Poynton Conventions was that Neil handed over the usual repair session to someone else and his crisp style was conspicuously absent.*

*The stand-in was obviously fascinated by the technical aspects of concertinas, but bumbled his way among its complexities with the assumption that his own fervour was sufficient in itself to inspire the interest of his audience, and some details were repetitively 'overstressed' to the exclusion of others, equally important.*

*Although several people said kind things afterwards, it is suspected that they were either motivated by pity or trying to conceal the fact that they had fallen asleep.*

*The poor sap has acknowledged his shortcomings, realised that enthusiasm is no substitute for preparation and will try to do better next time — if there is a next time. He also sent the following report.*

Part of the time was devoted to a discussion where it was recognised that there are areas of Concertina technology about which little is generally known. My contention is that amongst the n-thousand Free-Readers we probably have experts and specialists of all kinds who could apply their knowledge to concertina matters to the benefit of us all. They should be encouraged, begged and bullied to do so.

As this was (so far as I know) the first session of this sort, the approach was necessarily tentative and inconclusive. We sought not so much to find answers as to formulate some questions and define areas where there is scope for research.

As an illustration we talked about pads. In the Concertina the pad consists of three parts. The Stiff bit (cardboard), the Squashy bit (wool) and the Seal (leather). If two or all of these functions could be combined in one material we should have a useful simplification. A gentleman whose name should have been on the tape suggested using the soft rubber sold for making moulds for chessmen etc. If it is formed on glass a very smooth sealing surface is obtained and the rubber would have 'squash'. This is an idea worth exploring.

As a starter, I will define the possibilities as I see them. They fall into three broad categories.

A. The Concertina as traditionally manufactured. The know-how needed to make acceptable spares. Examples are:—

1. **Springs.** What to make them of and how best to do it. How best to achieve the correct tension. Comparative merits of different makes, types, and sizes of safety-pin.
2. **Leather.** What to use. Some leather is more durable than others so we need the technical descriptions to use when buying.
3. **Reeds.** Analysis of different reed-styles, their technical specifications and say different effects upon volume and tone. Can one use, Say, clock springs, etc. How to make a sounding reed.
4. The different qualities of woods used for sounding boards.
5. The acoustics of Concertina construction, and the effects of modifications. Do metal ends effect the tone? etc., etc.
6. End-bolt threads. What are they? Are dies available?

B. The application of modern materials and techniques to Concertina spares and ultimately, to their construction.

e.g. Pads. Modern adhesives. The possible use of plastics for action boards, reed-pan divisions, seals, valves, etc., rubber bellows?

C. Sources of supply for spares and materials also tools for repairs or manufacture. Examples are:—

**Leather.**

**Pads.** Materials, making, cutting.

**Springs.** Materials and construction.

**Reeds.** Reed-steel. Press-tools for reed frames etc.

**End-bolts.** Long 8 B.A. bolts. — cheese and csk. head, — brass & steel.

**Anchor screws.** Long number 1 and No. 2 screws, head, brass or steel.

Well there's a few ideas to be getting on with. If you can contribute anything from an idea to a series of articles on any of these or any other related facet — then — LETTSBY AVENUE.!!!

RON SHUTTLEWORTH

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