PAPERS of the INTERNATIONAL CONCERTINA ASSOCIATION

Volume 7, 2010

International Concertina Association

Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments (The Graduate Center, The City University of New York)

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Papers of the International Concertina Association (*PICA*) is a peer-reviewed journal, published annually by the International Concertina Association (ICA) and The Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments (CSFRI, a member of the Barry S. Brook Center for Musical Research and Documentation) of The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. Publication and distribution of hardcopy format to ICA members (as well as to non-members who wish to subscribe to it at a cost of £5 per issue) is followed by electronic publication on the websites of both the ICA and the CSFRI:

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PICA publishes articles on all aspects of the concertina: the development and history of the instrument; its sociology, iconography, repertories, and performance practices; biographies of concertinists; etc. It also includes reviews of books and CDs, as well as notes about important concertina-related events.

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Geoff Crabb on Family and Concertinas

ROGER DIGBY

Like his brother Neville, Geoff Crabb has always been happy to talk at length about the family firm and the history of the concertina. Since retiring, Geoff is often to be found at concertina gatherings and music festivals where he gives talks, offers advice, and generally shares his knowledge and experience.

When I first moved to Islington in 1973 I found myself living 100 yards from Crabb's shop in Liverpool Road and I got to know Neville and Geoff. When I returned to my native North East Essex some 20 years later I found that Geoff's work had now taken him to Colchester and that he passed within a mile of my house on a daily basis! On a few occasions Geoff dropped in, and I recorded our conversations with a view to writing something. Geoff is such an easy talker that, in the end, I've opted for simply transcribing, editing, and ordering the recordings, removing my side of the conversation and taking one or two slight liberties to maintain continuity.

The main areas of our conversations were the early days of the concertina makers, the nature of Crabb concertinas, the professional performers and the early days of the ICA.
Here then is Geoff Crabb, very much 'in his own words'.

A note on the format: regular spacing between paragraphs indicates that the general subject matter remains the same; a double space indicates that there is some movement in that respect, whereas a line of stars means that a new subject is under way.

The John Crabb who was born in 1796, my great-great-grandfather, was the one who got involved with Wheatstone. His son, also John Crabb, my great-grandfather, was born in 1826, and I know he was apprenticed until the age of 21 to John Blunt, a cabinet maker, so that would be 1847 before he started work or he took a job at the Lachenal works. I believe it was *his father*, John senior, who made the woodwork for the earliest Wheatstones. He was a cabinet maker and worked for Wheatstone on contract when they started in 1830. John junior and his brother Charles never worked for Wheatstone; they would have worked for Lachenal to start with who was contracted to Wheatstone. Lachenal came in and displaced Nickolds who was the screw maker and the engineer; Nickolds must have left Lachenal in the early 1850s and took John Crabb with him. John Crabb lived two doors away from Lachenal in Chiswick and they founded Nickolds, Crabb and Co, in Woodbridge St., Clerkenwell, round about 1856. That's when he sold the lease in Chiswick and moved. In 1860 John Crabb started his own company in Spring St., Clerkenwell, and moved to Liverpool Rd in 1891. John junior died in 1903, and his son Henry (Thomas) renamed the firm H. Crabb in 1908.

It is evident from the dates that John junior, my great-grandfather, would have been too young to be the person working with Wheatstone originally. For him to have had a cabinet-making training and come straight out from that, say at the age of 21, in 1848 and formed his own business with Nickolds. . . .I don't know where he would

have had the wherewithal from; he wouldn't have had the money or the training to go with Nickolds as has been suggested.

He must have had some training in the concertina world. I don't think he got that from his father. His father would have trained him in *cabinet making* as everybody else in the family was used to make the business work. The dates show that he wouldn't have been able or old enough to form a company until a bit later so this is why we say in 1850ish he went to Lachenal for about six years. The dates aren't clear. But it does seem funny that John Crabb started working at the same time that Lachenal began working for Wheatstone, so that Lachenal was probably looking for people to come in at that time.

Nickolds probably worked in Wheatstones *for* Wheatstone, I don't know, and when Lachenal took over the work, the workers from the Wheatstone set up—obviously—someone was making for Wheatstone before Lachenal got involved—were taken over and Wheatstone virtually closed up, that's when Nickolds left and set up his business.

I think it was touch and go whether Wheatstone would continue. Lachenal didn't need a lot of skilled workers because he was mass producing and could use cheap labour. Wheatstone went back to the old way of using contract workers and made top-of-the-range instruments while Lachenal churned out the cheaper stuff. Perhaps the older John Crabb, my great-great-grandfather, worked all the time for Wheatstone producing woodwork.

When I was a child we used to have lots of bits in the workshop hanging up on nails, and bits of string and there was a wooden stereoscope in bits hanging up and I said to Dad, 'What's that?' and he said, 'It's a stereoscope; we used to make them'. These were the patterns hanging up. Well, Wheatstone invented the stereoscope, so perhaps John Crabb was originally employed by Wheatstone to make the stereoscope. Early on, Dad said, they would do a lot of fancy cabinet work, making up apparatus for scientists when they gave their talks and demonstrations at the Royal Society—Wheatstone, Humphrey Davy, all these people, they couldn't make anything themselves. If they wanted a bit of equipment they had to get someone to make it for them, so they used cabinet makers and people like that.

Fig 1. H. Crabb Concertina Makers taken in 2006

Charles Crabb stayed with Lachenal when John Crabb left to go with Nickolds; eventually Charles moved up to the

Holloway Road. I've never seen a concertina named Charles Crabb, but they weren't far away so there may have been some cooperation. Charles Crabb advertised himself as a reed maker so perhaps he made the reeds for John Crabb. Dad used to say that the firm was started by 'two brothers', but such a lot has been found out now that that probably isn't right, though it is what was known at the time.

There are no records for Charles Crabb at all. I did have a conversation with a woman, years ago on the telephone, who phoned me up and said she was the grand-daughter of Charles Crabb. She could remember her mother polishing the brass plate on the side of the door that had 'Charles Crabb Concertina Maker' on it. As far as I know no-one's ever seen an instrument made by Charles Crabb, and I wonder, maybe John Crabb, being a cabinet maker originally, whether he just made the woodwork and Charles Crabb made the reeds.

I remember many, many years ago we asked Dad about Charles Crabb and he said 'We don't talk about that side of the family'. So I don't know whether there was a rift. Charles Crabb stayed with Lachenal some time after John left and that may have caused friction. I don't know.

[Since these conversations were recorded, Wes Williams has found documentation regarding Charles Crabb's involvement with the firm of Lachenal. It appears that Charles became one of six partners who bought the firm when Louis Lachenal's widow sold it. He was involved until January 1883, when he set up in business on his own account. See PICA *6, 2009, pp.50-51.]*

If you think of all the Anglo Concertinas made by John Crabb, you could reckon that probably as little as 15% would have the name John Crabb on them—fifteen out of a hundred. The others would either have C. Jeffries or Ball Beavon or various other dealers' names on them.

The family records have numbers of J. Crabbs for each year and there is a huge number that don't appear in the records; I would think that probably the records that I have may be the ones that bear the John Crabb name and those made for dealers were perhaps recorded elsewhere; these might be the missing numbers. They did work extremely hard and they did produce a lot of instruments. They may have used out-workers as well in the early days. John Crabb started about 1860; his son Henry, my grandfather, joined when he was about fourteen so from about 1870 on there were at least the two of them making the instruments, but whether they were doing it all themselves or whether they were employing others isn't clear. They definitely didn't employ Charles Jeffries; it's well documented that he was a brush maker, and it wasn't till concertinas became more profitable that he actually started into concertina-making full time. And how much he made himself, again, we don't know. He had his name on them.

If we look at how it progressed, originally Jeffries would come to John Crabb and say 'I want three instruments'—three Anglos—and Crabb would make them. Up

Fig 2 : Harry Crabb working in the Liverpool Road workshop ca. 1979.

to about 1895 that was a regular occurrence. After that, Jeffries would come round and say, 'Can you supply parts?' Supply them in kit form more or less so that he could take them away and assemble them, because then they would be a bit cheaper. And then he progressed to making the parts or having them made elsewhere so there could be an interim period where C. Jeffries was being stamped on either John Crabb instruments or instruments built with John Crabb parts or instruments with parts of his own manufacture, because he wouldn't necessarily change his stamp just because he was making them himself. You didn't go to the expense of having new stamps made when the old ones were perfectly good. When you start getting Praed St. Instruments, that is a different stamp and then you know they were definitely made by the Jeffries family.

The only way of identifying a Crabb is if they've got a Crabb ID number or a Crabb stamp in them. I did a repair not long ago—I don't normally do repairs, but somebody asked me specifically—it was a reed job on a Jeffries so I said 'All right'. It was only one or two reeds; I did it purely to match up the sound, and I cleaned up the reed pan; and where the wind hole was, the little chamber in the reed pan where the wind hole was, when I cleaned the dirt out from it there was a Crabb stamp right beside the wind hole. If it had been a repair it would have had the oval rubber stamp on the other side of the reed pan, so this was obviously, definitely, a Crabb. And of course the early instruments that were made, any ID number would be pencilled in and this was often erased so there was no tracing back to the original maker. I've got no records from 1870 to 1890; I've got no idea how many were made then. I think there were probably quite a few made in that period. We'll never know; it wasn't recorded, unless Jeffries had any records and I don't think he would.

John Crabb had the same sort of arrangement with Ball Beavon, but not with Jones; he didn't supply them at all. Beavon was a dealer, not a maker; he dealt in all musical instruments, everything, for quite a period of time. They probably kept one

or two concertinas in stock and ordered more in when they sold—probably not exclusively from Crabb. All they ever did was they stamped the woodwork on the side; they didn't stamp the metal parts. If you looked at a Ball Beavon, it would be exactly the same as a Jeffries, but without the C. Jeffries stamp. There's no space on the right hand side for the name to be printed.

I don't know how many they dealt with, but another was T. Bostock of Cornhill. We used to stamp that in the normal place where you'd have John Crabb but on a straight banner shape—a cartouche if you like. We stamped those ourselves, because I've still got the Bostock stamp in the stamp box.

And right through into the '60s and '70s we still made the odd instrument for other dealers. Scarths in the Tottenham Court Road area was another one. We supplied them about two a year. Barnes and Mullins was another. I delivered to them when I was working just off Oxford St. I'd take it over in my lunch break. J. Dallas regularly ordered cheap instruments; they sold the 'Jedcertina' as well. I've got the Dallas stamp. They never made anything, just bought in for resale. You could buy bits and pieces there, fret wire for guitars, that sort of thing if we were restoring an instrument like that.

Wheatstone wasn't really making Anglos in the early days—they might have made the odd one, but they had their market in English and Duets, and I think the Anglo was too downmarket for Wheatstone. They had customers willing to pay the amount of money for English and Duets. Why drop it down? When the Anglo became so popular with Lachenal's mass production, having more or less the same range as the English but much, much cheaper, when it became the people's instrument, they had to look at it and say, 'There's a market out there. People are buying this and not buying the English'. So they had to change; they had to follow the market. The early Wheatstone Anglos weren't particularly good, but very soon they put the full force of their staff and expertise onto it and then they were producing the Linota which is a very nice instrument.

The connexion with Jeffries lasted until about 1895, when Jeffries went into production and there was no need for us to supply him, but how you're ever going to date them...that's never going to be resolved. From then on, the number of Anglos that John Crabb and my grandfather Henry Thomas were making went down, but the Crane Duet came along (Butterworth Patent) and that was the thing that John Crabb was interested in first of all. He died in 1903, so his son, my grandfather, was the one who really concentrated on the Crane duet, but under the Crabb name. As far as I know we didn't make anything for Cranes.

Wheatstone had the patent on the Duet concertina, so I don't think Crane's were allowed to use the word 'Duet'. That's why it's called the 'Crane system English combination concertina' or just the 'Crane system'. Theirs was a much more rounded lay-out of the keys; they were wider spaced than ours were. Ours were more of a

Fig 3. A young Roger Digby Talking with Neville Crabb in the Liverpool Road Shop.

chevron, or Christmas tree shape on a Crabb. Most of these (Lachenals) and some of the Wheatstones were wider patterned …wider spaced apart. Ours were close together. That was mainly because there was a lot to get in. We used to make a lot of bigger instruments than the 55-key — a lot of 70s.

If you make a 48-key Crane Duet, it's no more expensive than a 48-key English, but that's small for a Duet. I've got a 48-key Duet and it's all right. This is where it gets confusing. The original Duets were called 'Doubles' and the idea of that was it was like having two concertinas in one, so you got the baritone on the left hand side and the treble on the right, so it was a double concertina. It gets very confusing, but the Double concertina was the original Duet. Then you got the Duett with two 't's; you could play duets on it, the baritone and the treble parts on the one instrument.

Butterworth's patent was mid-1890s, but we never had a contract. . .it was just something we started making because Crane's in Liverpool had a contract with Lachenal.

People gave Wheatstone lots of money for the kudos of being associated with Wheatstones because Wheatstone was the 'in man'.

You had a lot of people then who had an awful lot of money and they wanted to be seen as entrepreneurs in a new thing—they'd throw money at it so Wheatstone had lots of money to mess about with originally, purely because of who he was. I don't know if *he* had any money really to put into a venture but I'm sure that today if you came up with an idea, people would throw money at you in the hope they would get something back out of it or at least have their name associated with it. I know Dad always used to say there were some big boys associated with Wheatstone & Co. To become part of that '& Co.' it wasn't necessarily 'and Company of workers' it was 'and Company of people who provided the money'.

It would be interesting to look back and see who had a vested interest in Wheatstone and Co., who the patrons were who put money into the business. My Dad said that his father told him 'John Sutton Nettlefold' (a screw maker from 1826, now part of GKN), Smith (the Clerkenwell engineering supplier) and Robert White (of Lemonade fame) had money in it. . .well-known names were associated with Wheatstone.

Wheatstone didn't get involved in the Anglo until their business was affected by the Anglo makers. The Anglo was so much cheaper if you compare the prices: £6.10.0 for a 30-key Anglo which has the same range as a 48-key English, and they're charging 20 guineas for an English; what are people going to go for? They're going to go for

Fig 4. Harry and Geoff Crabb working in the Liverpool Road shop.

the 30-key Anglo at £6.10.0, a third or even a quarter of the price. . .so they're going to sell vast numbers of them, and Wheatstone said 'Here, we've got to get in on this market'—and they did. Linotas are as good as any really; they're very comfortable instruments as they've got the quarter-inch buttons on them and they're blooming good, but then they went downhill.

There was a hierarchy of instruments. If you were in the upper classes as such you wouldn't come across Anglo concertina players, because the Anglo concertina players were workers in the fields or in the Music Halls—something like that; you just wouldn't come across them in the late 1800s when the Anglo started to become popular. And then, of course, you've got people like Jeffries who went round the villages as a brush-maker who actually brought it to these villages. They all generally had to have someone who made some music—a fiddle, a fife, a drum, whatever—and the villages had these little bands, church bands, and they always had them; church bands tended

to die out when small organs and harmoniums became popular because one person could play a lot of music, a bigger sound than two or three instruments so you didn't have to employ three or four people. And then, with the Anglo, people saw this again, thought 'it makes a lot of noise—we can use that; we don't have to have a little band—we can have a concertina in the village and we'll all club together and buy it', so they put in a penny each and they buy an instrument—for the village, and then two or three people learn to play the thing. So you've got your instant music there for Mayday or for Morris Dancing and when one player stops—or gets too drunk—another player picks it up and takes over. These people would never see an English concertina, because it was out of the price range for a start, and that's why when you look in Wheatstone's ledgers you see Lady this and Lord that and Mr so and so; you don't get Joe Bloggs, farm labourer, and it's this hierarchy of people that played the English Concertina.

And then of course people like Jeffries went around and they got it popularised; it was taken to Ireland or wherever by whoever and it wouldn't have been a high-class person. And there were loads of cheap 20-key German instruments got taken all over the place—on the ships—wherever it got introduced and that became the instrument, because they were cheap. You mustn't forget that the German concertina, the forerunner of the Anglo as such, there were hundreds of thousands of them about.

I think a lot of the makers did 'terms', a penny a week sort of thing, but the price precluded the English-made ones being a truly 'popular' instrument. You could buy a 20-key Anglo made by us for £2, but you could go down the road and buy an imported one for about sixpence or a shilling. . .a German import. It might only last you a couple of months because it had paper bellows on it, but it's the same relation as in the '70s where you were paying £125 for a 30-key Anglo, but you could go into a music shop and buy a German or Italian import for £7.

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Basically, a Crabb instrument was a lot cheaper then anybody else's because they only had their own people there. . .only had the family to pay for; the instrument was usually considerably cheaper than the other makers. But I think one of the characteristics is that the instrument was made to last.

It was made to be robust and as long as it was looked after it would last. They weren't a delicate instrument; they were made like a pair of old boots, and you'll find that the Anglo—and my grandfather's Duets were the same, they were like a big Anglo—had the same strong bellows on them. And they were only made to go in and out; none of this twisting bellows about. Big, thick, heavy card on the bellows on most of the early Anglos, metal ends on an Anglo so they didn't bust the ends, didn't pull the handles off. We used metal handles originally like you find on Jeffries, but that changed and they became solid wooden handles because the construction of the metal handle wasn't strong enough and wood was much better. Hand rests we should call them; they were only half a tube soldered on to the uprights.

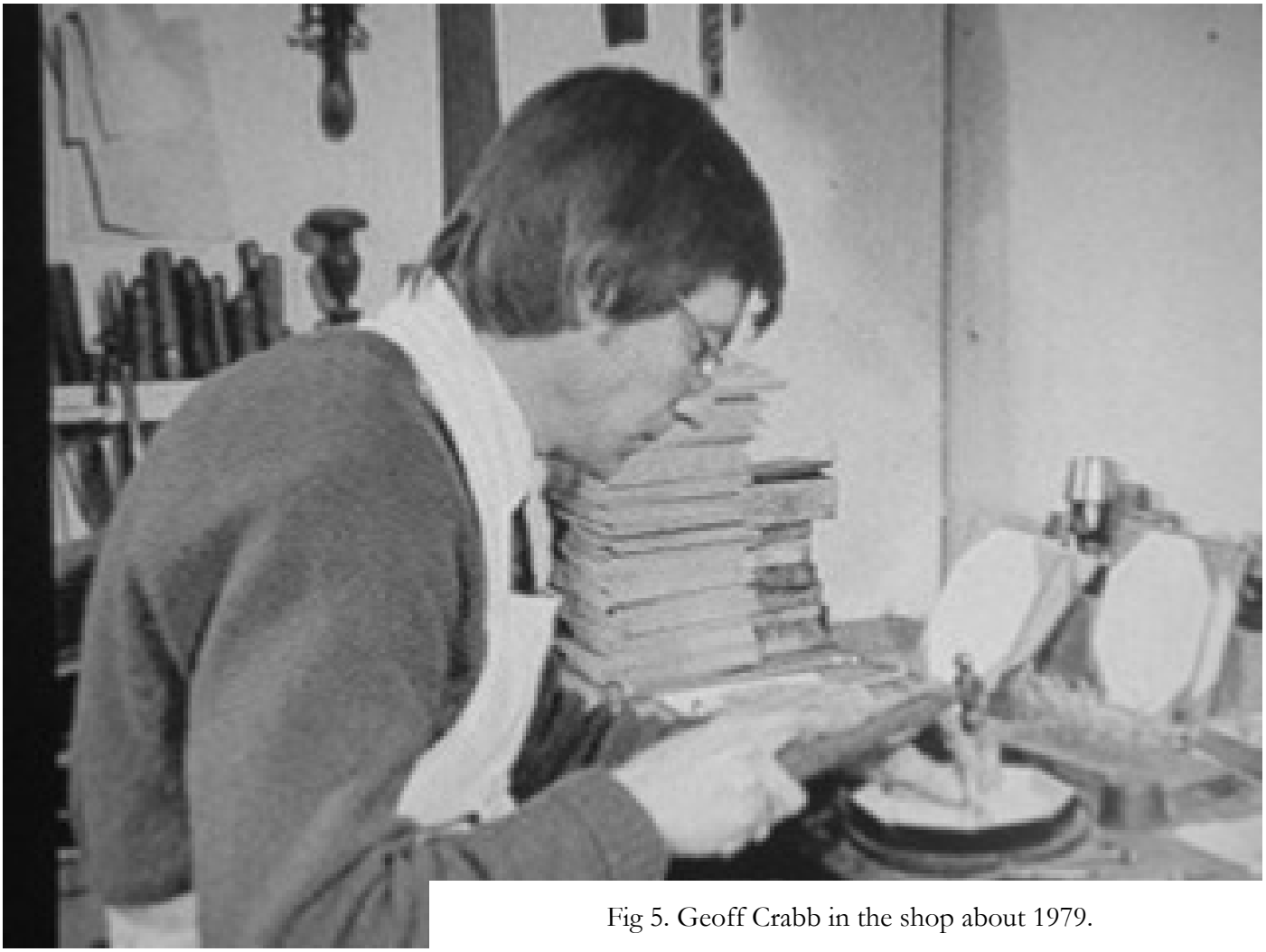

Fig 5. Geoff Crabb in the shop about 1979.

You couldn't fix the straps to them very well because you had to screw into that little bit of handle; the metal screws stuck through. Probably the idea was that they would transmit the sound from the back of the instrument, because you obviously are obstructing the sound a bit from coming out. It's got to go forward and out of the grill, but I think it would do that anyway. I don't think it makes a lot of difference.

In the majority of cases a Crabb has good reeds in. They were all hand filed, they weren't machine ground. The frames were all stamped out and finished by hand. And the other thing is, in a Crabb, with Duets you generally get a smaller instrument, physical size, than a Wheatstone would be for the same number of notes and the same range of the instrument. My grandfather was a past master at making undersized reeds. I know, since I've been doing it a little since I retired, I have a hell of a job trying to get some of the bigger reeds down, tuning them down low enough in the size he used.

Jeffries and Crabb used the same number of sizes, eight or nine; Lachenal used up to twenty-two sizes, which is good, which is ideal; and Wheatstone used many more sizes because they followed on from what Lachenal used. Lachenal made them for Wheatstone's during the period they were under contract to Wheatstone's, to produce Wheatstone concertinas at the Chiswick factory, so obviously they used the same sized reeds. They had the money to be able to have the press tools made. When you think that with a press tool you need a top and a bottom tool, a punch, and a die to press

anything out. And when you think of a reed frame, you've got the outside—the reed frame shape—and the slot to be punched. You can't punch that in one go. You've got to punch out the outside shape of it so you've got the reed frame, then you punch out the slot, so that means for each of those operations you need a top and a bottom tool, a punch and a die, one to punch out the blank; so four tools have to be made. If you're going to use 20 sizes of reed you, need 80 tools, and that's what Lachenal had and they had 20 presses set up to punch them out. So they had one operator and 20 presses. Once they were set up all they needed to employ was a tool setter and a bloke off the street to pull a handle so you didn't have all this time spent setting up. We couldn't afford to have so many tools made so we used eight sizes and made each size cover a bigger range.

And the tools weren't made 'out'. Great-granddad was very clever; he made them and we still made them right up until the '60s if one broke or wore out. Usually Dad was the one; he'd sit down and make a new one—by hand. And he'd case-harden it up at home in the hearth in our living room when we had coal fires. If not he'd have to do it on a combustion stove up at the shop. Wrap them in leather, put them in a tin can, put them in the combustion stove, get them red hot in the leather and case-harden them. That's what they used to do.

Wheatstone's was slightly different in that they had their press tools jigged up in a set of units with top and bottom tools pre-set up and one big press. To change sizes they just put a unit into the press and then took it out and put another in. But ours had to be set up and lined up perfectly each time you wanted to do it.

Poor old Neville. . .when he joined the firm in 1953, he spent six to nine months just pressing out reed frames; that was his first job, pressing out reed frames for 100 instruments. The old man, Dad, would say 'That's enough of that one', and he'd change the tool over while you made a cup of tea or did something else, and he'd say, 'There you go. I've done it for you. Sit down. Get going.' Another month. . .every day. I don't know how he stuck it.

The steel for the reeds was bought in. It was easier to get quality steel in the 1800s because we had good steel makers in this country. Sheffield steel was plentiful and you could get what you wanted or even have it made to what you wanted. When they got the opportunity, they bought as much as they could and that would last them 25 years or longer. They spent a lot of money on materials and you used it till it ran out. The last lot they bought was in '53 and there's enough of that left to last another 50 years.

It was a huge coil! It's all chopped up now into convenient little bits. It was so old and having it so big I was frightened that the band that held it all together might fracture at some time through age and just go. Then it would whip out like a giant clock spring and behead me or something. So I chopped it all up. Parts of it were going rusty because it was such a big coil, and damp was creeping between the coils although I oiled them and kept them in an oily sack. Some sort of capillary action, I suppose.

So I decided it was time to chop it up and I keep it in a sealed plastic box, covered in oil, and any bits that have a bit of rust I don't use or I make sure it's on the upper side where I'll file it off. We used to use thicker steel for the lowest, longer reeds and thinner for the higher, shorter reeds because obviously you don't want to do so much filing.

You have to select a suitable thickness, otherwise you have to load the ends. If you can start thick and not have to put solder on the ends and take down the lower end towards the clamp block, it's better. If you're trying to do them a bit undersized, trying to get the maximum amount in while still keeping the instrument small, then you don't want to load the upper reeds, the reeds that play on the draw, because that can cause problems, because you want the chambers as shallow as possible for response, loading the ends might get them touching the undersides of the end-box when they vibrate full swing.

There was demand for smaller duets as the 81-, say 80-key Crane—you count the wind key on duets—you needed extremely long hands to play them. The range varies. Remember it's two instruments in one. So the range of the left hand could be quite low and the right hand go quite high or the left hand could be high to give a bigger overlap. I've counted 55 Crabb variations within the Crane system.

In button layouts you've got 35 to 80. You might have 35 on the left, 33 on the right, or 50 on the left, 20 on the right. The size of the instrument depends on the range, and the left side can cause the problem because you've got to get a certain number of reeds in there. So, for example, you can have an 80-key Crane Duet—I've got the plans for them—12 inches across the flats, 8-sided, and you can get exactly the same thing with the same range in 10 inches. So to get them all in, for the same range, you've got to make all your reeds undersized from what the ideal is. So you've either got to load them up or be very, very skilful in how you profile the reeds to get them down there. If you get them too thin at the root, they start blowing out of tune. They're not stable. The more pressure you put on them, the air flowing through them will affect the pitch of the note; therefore if you've got an instrument which, when you put pressure on, plays flat, it's because the reeds have been worked too thin.

Usually that's when they've been retuned by people who've taken on the job and haven't considered the thickness of the reeds: 'O yeah, I'll change the pitch of that', especially from higher pitch to lower pitch, taking it down, they file away and the reeds get too thin at the root. And the bellows, the vacuum or the pressure, overcomes what the reed will stand.

Customers wanted the smaller duets because they were lighter, more manageable. If you're going to stand on the stage and you want a 67-key duet to play. . .they're very big. How Tommy Williams ever played his 72 was a miracle, such a little man; just to stand and hold it! And he always stood when he played solo!

Keeping them relatively small was the main thing. If you open up a big duet, you'll see that the bigger baritone-range reeds, say lower than G below middle C, are ideally put further into the pan, away from the edge. The longer chamber from the tip

of the reed to the wind hole ensures proper response. You'll see, on a six-and-a-quarter-inch G/D Jeffries or Crabb Anglo with parallel chambers, they're a bit slow on the low G because the instrument's not big enough to allow you to put the reeds further into the pan. If you look at a Lachenal G/D radial Anglo, you'll see that the low G is mounted further into the chamber towards the centre, so there's quite a gap between the end of the reed and the edge of the reed pan. And that's to make it respond. If you can do that, it's ideal. Bass instruments have great long chambers, to make those big bass notes start quickly. So with the big duets, if you use the bigger size you can set the reeds in. So for smaller ones you need someone who's a very good reed worker and 'Crabb' was. Dad was a very good reed maker, but you can't guarantee a reed. It could last five minutes or fifty years.

We'd replace a reed on an English if it broke within ten years, but you can't really guarantee a reed in a miniature because of the way they're used. In fact the way they do stand up, the 12-key miniature, is amazing. And Anglos can get a lot of abuse.

A 48-key English should last for ever. For all the expense of the metal you use you can't guarantee that there won't be a flaw in it. Nowadays you X-ray metal to check for flaws. Crabb instruments were very robust.

In the early instruments John Crabb and my grandfather went more for robustness than looks. Wheatstone's were very pretty looking; they were the bees' knees; Lachenals were precision, not so much in the cheaper instruments. You wouldn't wear out an early Crabb or Jeffries, not in one lifetime.

* * * * * * *

The firm kept going because Dad was a Crabb and it was the family business. The one thing he wanted to do was keep that business going. I wouldn't have considered it; not at the age of nineteen. You think. . .your dad's died, you've got a mother and two sisters; he thought, 'I've got to do it', and he did it; and he kept it going.

Also he was small; he didn't have anybody that he had to answer to; he didn't have any wages to pay apart from the odd person he employed. He employed one of Lachenal's workers later on. Lachenal's was too big when there was no market; if you were small, made one or two instruments, you could meet the demand. If you had loads of workers, loads of machinery, and a factory and you're only making one or two instruments, you can't keep it going.

Lachenal's, as we understand it, was really a workers' combine; there was no one owner and they all wanted their money out of it. They weren't getting it so they sold.

Wheatstone's moved to Islington later on. . .Duncan Terrace, only when they found they couldn't make a go of it anywhere else. Islington was convenient. We were getting a lot of work. We always asked, 'Why did they move to Islington?' when they could have moved anywhere. They were offered part of a building that was being used by someone else. It makes you wonder why they moved so close to us at that time. It

may have just been coincidence—that they moved there because that was what was available. You can read anything into it.

After my Grandfather died in 1930 there wasn't much going on; the economy was diving around then; the firm was probably broke. Grandfather didn't have a lot of money, didn't own the shop; it was rented till after the war.

There was no money, not much work about, and consequently when Dad took over the business in 1930, at the age of 19, he had to do other things in the shop. He'd repair or supply any instruments, repair electrical items; he sold and charged accumulators for radio sets, sold gramophone records, cinema tickets, etc.

The professional players later on were mainly duet players. Professional players who played Wheatstone and Lachenal were often tied to them; they got their instruments cheaper if they were professional; they promoted them. The advertisements would say 'instrument provided by Lachenal' or 'this band plays Lachenal instruments'. A lot of the professionals were well serviced by the makers and got repairs done free.

We got more of the others, more of the lower-class entertainers. The names you think of, Regondi, Blagrove, they were all Wheatstone, so they would never have come to us; we wouldn't have got a look in.

By the 1880s you had the Music Hall entertainers playing Anglo and they were supplied by us, because Lachenal were making loads of mass-produced Anglos, they weren't making top quality by then; they were cheap and a lot of people got them.

Buval, 'The Happy Dutchman', played a John Crabb. We had a picture of him in the shop superimposed over the end of a John Crabb Anglo, so he was one who played a Crabb on the stage.

And then we would always get buskers. Itinerant players would come to us for repairs and that went on right up into the 1960s. Mainly accordions, mind you, not concertinas, because there were a lot of accordion buskers up the West End; they always came into the shop. My dad had a lot of accordion work especially in the '50s, because after the war you had a lot of people out of work. . .they'd come back from the war and they didn't have jobs, and they'd earn a penny as they could so they used to go busking, and in Pettycoat Lane or Club Row, the markets, you'd get bands walking along, a bloke with a bass drum, bloke with an accordion, 'ex-serviceman' with a box round his neck; but they needed to have their instruments repaired. Accordions were terrible, because they'd play them out in the rain and what else, and they'd come in: 'My accordion's fell to pieces. What can you do?' 'We can't do a lot with that; I'll have a look at it.' If it was beyond repair they'd say 'Can you find me another? Have you got any?' because Dad used to carry lots of accordions in stock, second-hand ones he'd take in from people; a lot of the old ones, real rubbishy ones, for repairs, bits and pieces, reed-plates and that. I can remember a great box that was full of accordion reeds, old instruments he'd scrapped, but he saved all the blocks and when I was a kid I used to think they were mouth organs. 'Don't blow them. . .covered in dirt. . .the

reeds'll go rusty'; I got a slap round the ear! You did get concertina buskers come in, and he'd do their repairs.

He was always so much cheaper; he'd undercut everybody, Wheatstone's particularly, for repairs, so he got a lot of repair work. And of course that repair work kept him going during the '50s anyway, because it was a really very slack time. So, as I've said before, if you bought an instrument in the '50s it was virtually given to you, because it was just something he'd make in between repairs and what ever you could afford, he'd charge you for it. There wasn't a fixed price for an instrument really; it was something he enjoyed doing, my dad, making a new instrument.

* * * * * * *

Dad always played Duet, from 8 years of age. He was taught music by Sidney Bains, the composer of the 'Destiny Waltz'.

The duet was what Dad preferred. It was the music that he wanted to play. At that age, 16, until he got married, Dad and his old friend Fred, between about 1927-1930, they used to do semi-professional work to earn a bit of money on the side by appearing, as 'amateurs', between some of the acts at music halls and cinemas and that is where my dad, Harry, became acquainted with Tommy Elliott who would go to my dad to have his instruments repaired; he probably offered him a better deal than Wheatstone's were doing to have repairs done.

Dad had seen and heard everyone play; that was one of his ways to amuse himself. Popular music of the day was what he said he played, but he did like to play the overtures from the Operas and the Marches. He'd learn them from the music, because Sidney Bains was a music arranger as well, and Dad was very clever; he could arrange music, and later on when he had the North London Concertina Band, he used to buy the sheet music and then rearrange it for the concertina and the ability of the players in the band.

He was a real enthusiast, but when he took over the business that's when really his playing stopped because he didn't have time to practise. He had his mother and his two young sisters to support. Grandfather was considerably older than his wife; when they got married she was 25, he was 56. When he died in 1930, he was 74 years old, but my Grandmother went on to 1961,and Dad had to look after her financially; the two sisters never married. They stayed and looked after their Mum, and I know, many years after, the surviving aunt said that Dad gave them money every week. How he ever used to support them as well, I don't know. He never had two halfpennies to rub together in the late '50s. It was touch and go whether he'd survive an illness that he had in '57 and whether the business would be able to run.

* * * * * * *

The Corket Brothers: 'Concertina and musical bells'. The concertina was connected up to a set of electric bells that played with the concertina. The levers all had contacts on them and they were connected by wires to this set of bells; two octaves of electric bells that were tuned and rang as they played. We had another set in the shop. Grandfather made them about 1925; he had all the bells cast and all the frames cast and the magnets wound and he put it all together. We had one in the shop for years, and all that remains of it now is that I've got the bells; I haven't got the magnets, but I saved all the bells. It was a big box, a heavy weight, with a door on the front that clipped in and a door on the back, and the bells were arranged—theirs was slightly different from ours—there was a bell in the middle and two circular rows of bells round it and each bell had a coloured lamp associated with it, wired in across it, so as you played, not only did the bells sound but the lamps lit up as well. And the whole inside bit. . .it was white in the middle and sprayed gold toward the outside and full of wax flowers and sequins, anything that would reflect the light, and it had a little bust of King George and the old queen and the eyes had been taken out and bulbs put inside and the eyes lit up, and when you played all the coloured lights came on as well as you pressed the buttons. And the bells. . .you had to run on big car batteries because if you played six notes at once—it was a duet concertina it was connected to—if you played a chord you had about 48 amps running through this thing so you had to run it on an accumulator, so Dad had a transformer built for it which was like a welding transformer, so when you played it, sparks used to come out, because you had all this current flowing. And there were no dampers on the bells, so it just rang and rang; but it only played. . .I think it was the treble side. I don't know how you could hear the accompaniment on the left-hand side. And it was all connected to the instrument in that old-fashioned lighting wire, the mauve twisted stuff, so you had a bunch of cables like that and they went in through holes all around the instrument and they came down and went into this thing and on the side it had two coffin handles so you could carry it; you had to pick it up, two of you. Dad and Fred used to take it up to Hampstead Heath in a pram to earn money on a Sunday afternoon.

It was illegal to play music on Hampstead Heath. I think it still is, so they used to keep an eye out for the park keeper and they used to cover it in this pram and run, with the accumulators underneath and this bell set and a tina! Some of the things they used to get up to!

And the Corket Brothers used to do this on the stage and take theirs along to functions. But this was another one; their bells were in a heart shape. My grandfather made both of them.

Theirs wasn't so ornate. I think he only made it with the bells, and whoever bought it added the lights. It was the sort of thing you'd see in a fairground and the effect of having the lamps across the bells was. . .as the interrupters worked on the bells the lamps would flash on and off as the bells rung. They had big wooden hammers on them.

The bell mechanism was strange: it wasn't like a doorbell. The mechanisms were on the back and the hammer came through a hole and it had a big wooden ball on the end and it rang on the inside of each of the bells, varying in size, nickel-plated, two octaves, all solid cast brass! I've got them now at home in a box.

* * * * * * *

We made an instrument for Bob Dylan. He broke his leg and while he was recovering they made a concertina for him so he could learn to play it while he was recovering from the broken leg. That's all I know about it; I've got nothing in the records about what number it was. But one was made for him.

We made one for Ove Arup, the guy who finished off the Sydney Opera House. He came up the shop and had one made for his daughter. We never knew who these people were when they came in the shop! You'd take the order and sometime later you'd come across this name! You didn't treat them any different, unless they wasted your time when you told them to 'go away', no matter who they were!

We made one for Alun Armstrong, the actor. He was much younger then.

We made one for the Pogues. We made an instrument for Pik Botha in South Africa. A few of the Bothas had instruments.

* * * * * * *

I remember a Mr Robins. . .he was blind, and his daughter used to bring him to ICA meetings; I was too young to know what his instrument was, I'd guess a 64-key baritone/treble; he was very good and he'd always play standing up with his overcoat buttoned up and his white stick hanging through the buttons. His daughter used to bring him up onto the stage and he never moved from the spot; he used to play popular music of the time, semi-classical stuff; it was unbelievable what he could play. This was 1953,1954, not long after the ICA started.

At those very early meetings you'd hear a real mixture of music but when the festivals and the competitions started it got more serious and it was nearly all classical stuff. I think there were some people who frowned upon anything less than classical pieces; until the introduction of folk music into the ICA there was no light music. People would play and comments would be made about people's style and performance.

Every year, apart from the ICA Festival, there'd be a social event and more people would turn up for that and people would play popular music and groups would play together and it was very entertaining and you'd get a vast number of people from all over the country coming to them, but the monthly meetings in London were attended by all the same people each month so there wasn't much room for change in the repertoire and at the Festival competitions everybody played the same piece. You heard the same piece over and over at various levels. It was very boring unless you were taking part.

Then folk music and the Anglo came in and that's when Father Loveless got involved; he was brought in to adjudicate the Anglo playing; that's how he got involved. The Anglo started to be recognised by the elite of the ICA as a musical instrument; I think that was because they needed the numbers, the income. There were many people who wouldn't accept the Anglo as a musical instrument.

Fig 6: Geoff Crabb—1979 and again (below) in 2005—in the latter giving a talk on the concertina to a local society in Bishops Stortford…demonstrating a fairly atypical reed!

I remember at one ICA meeting there was real prejudice against the Anglo. After the business part of the meeting they'd have a playing session and go round the room and people were asked if they'd like to play a piece; beginners would show how far they'd got and people would chip in an say, 'You shouldn't be doing it like that'. On one occasion someone had come a long way to London, from Sussex I think, and said he'd like to play. He was sitting at the back of the room and started to play. People turned round and one person was heard to say, 'What's that thing he's playing?' and someone said, 'It's an Anglo', and they replied, 'I don't think we want that sort of thing here'. The guy did get a clap at the end of it, but no comment was made and he wasn't made to feel welcome and when he turned up next time, nobody greeted him and he stopped coming after that. They were very, very anti-Anglo. I think that's still about today.

Later on, you got this elitism within the ICA, and that lasted quite a few years and there

were lots of people wanting to play and wanting to go to meetings, but they were frightened of going to the ICA because of comments that were made. In 1956 a guy called Harold Cowlin came on the scene, a very good McCann player, good pianist, he was the road manager for Alexander Prince; he was also a street pianist. He formed an evening class at Hornsey Road School for any level of player on the concertina—or anything else, because he needed enough numbers to run the class. A lot of concertina players came along who only went to the social meetings of the ICA, people like Tommy Williams, Eric Russell; they'd play whatever people wanted to hear, and many other players who'd stopped going to ICA meeting arrived at the evening class; a lot of these players were in some of the very early photos of the ICA. At the first evening class about 30 players turned up, and Harold had some musical arrangements and they had a go at those, and he kept it going, conducting. They had drums, mouth organ, two banjos. Harold became ill, and Dad took the class over and anyone who bought an instrument from the shop was invited along and they took beginners aside and gave them tuition, Dad on the duet and Eric Russell on his huge tenor/treble. We had a bass in the shop, and Eric would play that as well if we went out playing. We went to Old People's Clubs and it was all done for nothing and people got the opportunity to go out and perform. They did solo spots; even the banjo player used to do a sort of minstrel bit. Tommy Williams would always get up and do a turn. Nobby Clarke was originally an ICA member, an ear player, he'd come along and sit in; he wasn't very good but he enjoyed himself. Harry Hazledean came up from Dagenham, he was originally an ICA member. Bill Link came up from Clacton every Friday night. It wasn't a rival to the ICA, but it was for people who didn't feel comfortable at the ICA.

It ran from 1956 to 1983 when Dad died; that's a long time for an evening class. Dad would take a bit of popular music in the '60s and '70s, buy the music, and arrange it for the concertina or for the particular level of the players.

I took the class on when Dad died, just to keep it running, but I lived outside London and was commuting; it got too much so I had to wind it up. The school was devastated because it all went so well. By that time there were two other classes being run. One was all classical stuff and if you played a wrong note you got rapped over the knuckles. It's been said, wrongly, that our Friday night class were all ear players. They weren't. They just enjoyed playing.

APPENDIX

What follows is a list of some significant dates in the history of the Crabb family and business.

1830 John Crabb (senior, Geoff's great-great-grandfather), a cabinet maker, becomes a contract worker for Wheatstone.

1848 His sons, John (junior, Geoff's great-grandfather) and Charles, employed by Lachenal.

1856 John (junior) leaves Lachenal to found Nickolds, Crabb, and Co., Woodford St., Clerkenwell (all further references to 'John' are to John junior).
1860 John starts his own company in Spring St., Clerkenwell.
1870 John trades as J. Crabb and Son.
1891 John moves to Liverpool Road, Islington.
1903 Death of John Crabb.
1908 John's son, Henry Thomas (Geoff's grandfather), renames the firm 'H. Crabb'.
1925 Henry Thomas's son, Henry Joseph ('Harry', Geoff's father) joins the firm, now called 'H. Crabb & Son', though their instruments are still marked 'H. Crabb'.
1930 Death of Henry Thomas Crabb.
1953 Henry Joseph's (Harry's) son, Henry (Neville, Geoff's brother) joins his father in the business.
1968 Neville becomes a partner in 'Crabb Concertinas', but the firm continues to label their instruments 'H. Crabb & Son'.
1974 Geoffrey Crabb joins the business.
1976 Henry Joseph ('Harry') retires.
1978 Anglia TV produces a programme about Crabb Concertinas as part of their 'Bygones' series. (The programme includes footage of Roger Digby playing and talking.)
1987 Geoffrey Crabb leaves the firm.
1988 Death of Neville.
2003 Geoffrey Crabb retires from British Telecom and returns to the concertina community.

Notes on the Lachenal Sisters, Richard Blagrove, Ellen Attwater, Linda Scates, and 'Dickens'[1]

RANDALL C. MERRIS

What follows might best be thought of as a series of loosely linked notes about the English concertina in Victorian England. More specifically, it sheds new light on the earliest public performances of the Lachenal Sisters, adds new data to the biographies of Richard Blagrove, Ellen Attwater, and Linda Scates, and reconsiders the identity of the 'Dickens' who purchased a Wheatstone concertina on 18 February 1861.

The Lachenal Sisters in London and Dublin: In an article entitled 'Marie Lachenal: Concertinist', Faye Debenham and I wrote that the Lachenal Sisters—Marie, Eugenie, and Josephine—made their London debut on 14 June 1865 at Myddelton Hall, Islington.[2] We can now say, however, that their first public performance in London took place almost three years earlier, at the International Exhibition of 1862, South Kensington, London. The notice in *The Times* for 10 October 1862 (p. 1) reads:

> INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION—Performance on LOUIS LACHENAL CONCERTINAS, by Richard Blagrove and his pupils, the Misses Marie, Eugenie, and Josephine Lachenal, and Miss Ellen Attwater (niece of Mr. R. Blagrove), in the South Court, near the Roman Court, from 2 to 3 p.m., Tomorrow, the 11th inst.

Thus we can date their debut to the afternoon of 11 October 1862. Further, what seems to be their first London performance specifically as the Lachenal Sisters also predates the Islington concert and took place on 23 January 1865 at the Beaumont Institution, Beaumont Square, Mile End, London. The review in *The Era* for 29 January (p. 1) states: 'The Mesdames [*sic*] Lachenal gave their pleasing performances on the concertina [. . .]'.

In our article about Marie Lachenal (cited in note 2), Faye Debenham and I further reported that the next sighting of the Lachenal Sisters after their Islington concert in June 1865 occurred in Edinburgh, where the girls gave a series of performances at the George Street Music Hall during the 1865-1866 season. Yet between Islington and Edinburgh, we now know that the sisters appeared at the Music Hall at the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865, where they were joined both by Joseph Scates, the English-born concertina maker, musical instrument seller, and performer on the concertina (among other instruments), who was then residing in Dublin, and by his daughter, Linda Scates.[3] A notice in the *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*

for 22 September 1865 (p. 1) reveals that father and daughter Scates both performed on piano and concertina:

DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION
CONCERTINA RECITAL
At Four o'Clock THIS DAY, by
The Mademoiselles LACHENAL,
Miss LINDA SCATES
and
Mr. JOSEPH SCATES

Operatic Selection for Five Concertinas—G[eorge] Case
Piano—Mr. Scates Secondo—Miss Scates
Tenor—Mademoiselle Lachenal
Baritone—Eugenia Lachenal
Bass—Josephine Lachenal
Trio on Scots Airs—The Mademoiselles Lachenal
Duo Brilliante—Concertina Mr. Scates
Pianoforte—Miss Linda Scates—Osborne and de Beriot
Quartette on English Airs—The Mademoiselles Lachenal and Miss Scates

As a coda to this section: the Lachenal Sisters became a two-sister act upon Marie Lachenal's departure shortly before her marriage to photographer Edwin Alfred Debenham in April 1868. Eugenia (real name Jane Elizabeth, 1849-1883)[4] and Josephine (1851-1915) continued to perform together almost up to the time that Josephine married Joseph Dixon McLaren, a Scottish-born music agent, in March 1872. Jane Elizabeth married Alfred Gould, a photographer from Bournemouth, in June 1881. Three other Lachenal sisters, Constance (1855-1939), Marie Louise (1857-1945), and Alice (b. 1860), were not musicians.[5]

Richard Blagrove's Date of Birth: Although Richard Manning Blagrove's year of birth has been variously given as 1824, 1826, and 1827,[6] we can now say that he was born on 1 November 1826, which is the date that appears on his baptismal record of 1 November 1833, as recorded in *Pallot's Baptism Index for England: 1780-1837*.[7] (He died in 1895.)

Given the prominent role that Blagrove's father and older brothers will play in the life of Ellen Ann Attwater, it might be well to introduce the members of that musical family: (1) the father, Richard Manning Blagrove [8]—thus father and son share three names—was himself a musician of note in the musical life of Nottingham; (2) Henry Gamble Blagrove (1811-1872) built a reputation as a child prodigy violinist and as a

major figure in London chamber music circles (both as a performer and entrepreneur); he was probably the most influential musician of the family; (3) William Manning Blagrove (1813-1858), a violinist and violist, ran the family music publishing business, eventually from 71 Mortimer Street, which was also called Blagrove's Rooms; (4) Charles Frederick Blagrove (1818-1857) was a pianist, professor of piano, and composer of 'light' music for that instrument; and (5) John Edward Blagrove (1824-1881) managed ' Mr. John Perry's Entertainment' before becoming a concert agent.[9]

Ellen Ann Attwater's Biography: Born in Middlesex, London, on 12 October 1844, Ellen Ann Attwater has been incorrectly identified on two occasions in the concertina literature: first, Faye Debenham and I referred to her as Richard Blagrove's (the concertinist's) sister, and then Allan Atlas cited her as Blagrove's daughter.[10] She is neither: rather, she is Blagrove's niece (his sister's daughter), as is stated very clearly both in *The Times* notice of 10 October 1862 and on the title page of his *Duo Concertante, from "Les Huguenots" of Meyerbeer*:[11]

Duo Concertante,
From Les Huguenots,
Arranged for a [*sic*]
Treble and Baritone Concertinas,
and Dedicated
to *his Niece* [my emphasis] & Pupil
Miss Ellen Attwater,
by
Richard Blagrove.

Perhaps the confusion arose from Ellen Ann's mother Eleanor having chosen to use 'Ellen' as her first name. Though baptized as Eleanor Moss Blagrove (1814-1901), she used 'Ellen' for most public records concerning both herself and her children. Only on her death certificate do we find 'Eleanor'. And to confuse the issue even more, Ellen Ann's grandmother, Eleanor Blagrove (1788-1853), also used the name 'Ellen' on occasion.[12]

In 1843, 'Ellen' Moss Blagrove married William Frederick Attwater (1811-1850)—violinist, band leader, concert organizer, and professor of music. A pupil of Henry Gamble Blagrove, Attwater also became a publisher, in partnership with William Manning Blagrove.

By the time of the International Exhibition of 1862, Ellen Ann Attwater, together with her three brothers and her mother, had been living in the household of Richard

Manning Blagrove for more than a decade.[13] Following the death of Ellen Ann's father in 1850, Richard and the Attwaters dwelt together in the house of Ellen Ann's grandmother, Eleanor Blagrove. Upon her death, Richard Blagrove became the head of the household.

Finally, Ellen Ann married Charles Mackey Taylor, a wine and spirits merchant, in December 1866 (shortly after Richard Blagrove's marriage to the pianist Eliza Anne Freeth in August of that year).[14] Whether or not she continued to play concertina is not known, but perhaps she participated in one or more of the concertina ensembles that Richard Blagrove assembled for his well-known concerts.[15] Ellen Ann Taylor died on 10 October 1932.

Linda Scates's Biography: Linda Scates (1851-1915),[16] daughter of the concertina manufacturer Joseph Scates, studied piano with Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894)[17] in her native Dublin prior to obtaining a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1866.[18] There her main piano instructor was Walter Cecil Macfarren (1826-1905), pianist, composer, and brother of the better-known Sir George Alexander Macfarren (1813-1887), who served as Director of the Academy and enriched the concertina's chamber music repertory with some of its most beautiful music.[19] Already in her second year at the Academy, Linda was appearing on stage with Walter Macfarren, and on 1 June 1868, *The Musical Times* (vol. XIII, p. 411) contained a brief review of their performance at the Hanover Square Rooms:

> [. . .] Mr. Macfarren was joined by his pupil Miss Linda Scates, a young pianist whose truly refined and classical playing does equal honour to her master and to the Royal Academy of Music in which she holds a scholarship. Both players were recalled after their performance and received the congratulations of the audience, to which they were justly entitled.

She continued to perform with Walter Macfarren even after her election as an Associate (that is, a professor) at the Academy and did so until she left the faculty shortly before her marriage to Edward Dutton Cook (1829-1883) in 1874.[20] Her senior by twenty-two years, Cook was a well-known drama critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other periodicals, a playwright and novelist, author of books on art and the theatre, and a contributor to the *Dictionary of National Biography.* The couple had one child, Sylvia Linda Dutton Cook (1876-1910). After her husband's death, Linda Scates Cook resumed teaching piano, at the then recently established Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

In January 1885, the widowed Linda Scates Cook married Charles Dickens Theodore Yates (1855-1937), journalist and son of Edmund Hodgson Yates (1831-

1894), the Scottish-born writer and actor.[21] He was named after the famous writer, who was his godfather. And that Dickens embraced the honor is evidenced by his letter of acceptance (2 January 1856), a note to the engravers of a gift for his godson (5 February 1856), and a letter to Mrs. Yates about the gift and his plan to attend a reception in little Charles's honor (8 February 1856).[22]

The Identity of 'Dickens': The reference to two people who shared the names 'Charles' and 'Dickens' leads nicely to our final note, which concerns the identity of one 'Dickens' who paid £3.12.0 for Wheatstone concertina No. 11562 on 18 February 1861 (see Figure 1).[23]

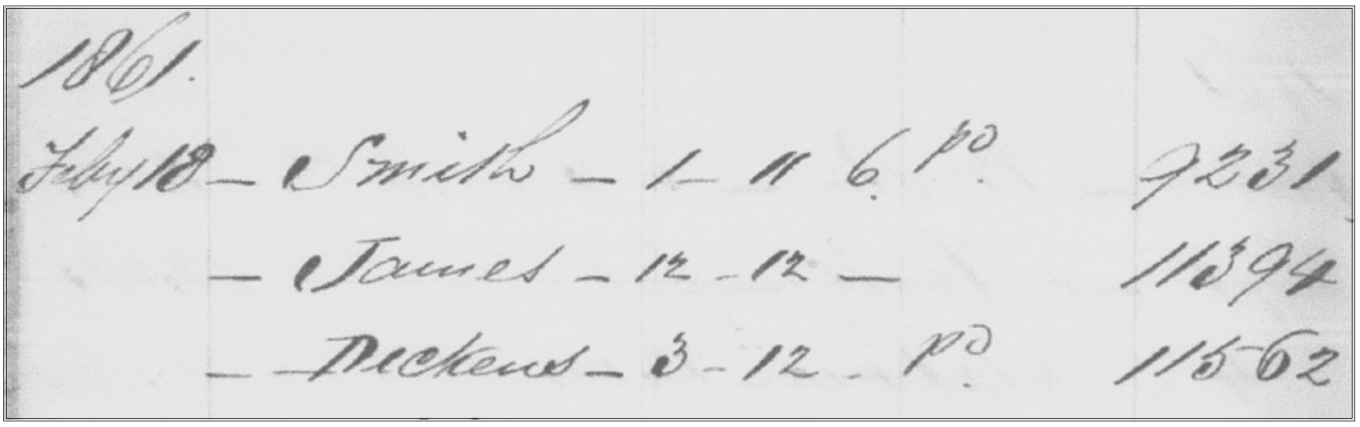

Fig. 1. The entry for the sale of Wheatstone concertina No. 11562 to 'Dickens' on 18 February 1861. Wheatstone sales ledger C1052, p. 42. Horniman Museum, London; online at *www.horniman.info*.

In his book on the English concertina, Allan Atlas suggests—he calls it 'wild speculation'—that the buyer might just be the famous writer.[24] He then, however, offers another possible identification:

> There is another candidate, perhaps even a better one, for identification as Dickens. On 6 Jan. 1885, the widow Linda Scates [. . .] married one Charles Dickens (neither the writer, who had died in 1870 nor his son, also Charles, nor any other known relative), and it is possible that it was he who bought the instrument.[25]

Unfortunately, the biographical source upon which Atlas drew for his information about Linda Scates omitted both the surname Yates and the second of the two 'middle' names, Theodore, in referring to her second husband. Clearly, the 'Dickens' of ledger C1052 cannot be Charles Dickens Theodore Yates (who, by the way, would have been all of five years old in 1861).

We might, then, reconsider Atlas's 'wild speculation' that the 'Dickens' of the ledger is in fact the famous writer. The evidence, circumstantial from beginning to end, may be summarized as follows:

1. Dickens's whereabouts in February 1861: Though Dickens travelled widely and often, he was (as Atlas notes) at home in London on 18 February 1861, on which day the sale of the concertina was recorded.[26] Moreover, Atlas notes that Dickens's friend, John Elliotson, lived on Conduit Street, just down the block, as it were, from Wheatstone's.

2. Dickens's affinity for free-reed instruments: As Atlas points out in connection with Dickens: '[. . .] he is known to have been an avid accordionist, and he may, therefore, have taken a liking to the smaller concertina'.

3. A buyer named 'Collins' and the writer Wilkie Collins: Finally, Atlas noted that ledger C1052 also includes an entry for one 'Collins', who purchased concertina No. 9301 for £1.16.0 just a few months earlier, on 18 May 1860 (see Fig. 2), and speculated that perhaps this was the well-known writer Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), especially given Collins's predilection for concertina-playing characters in his novels.

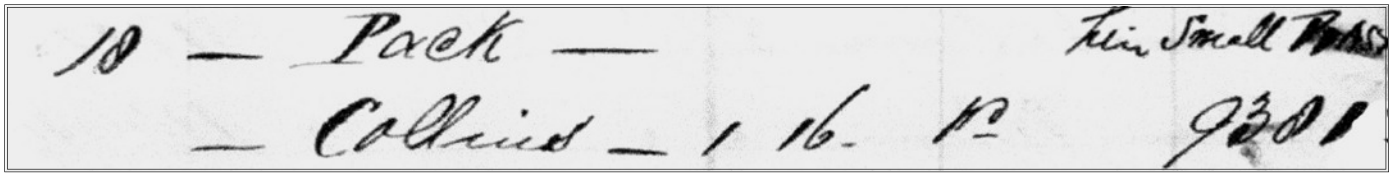

Fig. 2. The entry for the sale of Wheatstone concertina No. 9301 to 'Collins' on 18 May 1860. Wheatstone sales ledger C1052, p. 42. Horniman Museum, London; online at *www.horniman.info*.

Finally, he noted that 'Collins and Dickens enjoyed a close professional and social relationship for more than twenty years, so that perhaps a purchase by one member of the pair led the other to follow suit'.[16]

In all, though the surname 'Dickens' appears in the 1861 British census a number of times, I would like to think that the Dickens of ledger C1052 might well be the famous writer, though perhaps we will never know. At the very least, however, we can now safely eliminate his partial namesake, Charles Dickens Theodore Yates, the second husband of Linda Scates, from consideration.

NOTES

1. My thanks to Chris Flint for having commented on an earlier version of this paper.

2. PICA, 2 (2002), 1.

3. Designated as the Music Hall in the Official Catalogue for the Exhibition and also called the Great Hall, the venue was converted into the central building of University College, Dublin, in 1908; in 1981, it was converted yet again, into the now National Concert Hall. The International Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures was the second of three major International Exhibitions

held in Dublin in the Nineteenth Century: 1853, 1865, and 1874. On Joseph Scates, see Dan Worrall, *The Anglo-German Concertina: A Social History,* I (Fulshear, TX: Concertina Press, 2010), 184-89, and Chris Flint's website devoted to Scates: *https://sites.google.com/site/josephscatesconcertinas.*

4. Most of the genealogy for the Lachenal family, as well as for the Blagrove, Attwater, and Scates families, was obtained from Ancestry.com (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations) *Pallot's Baptism Index for England, 1780-1837*; *England & Wales, Christening Records, 1530-1906*; *London, England, Birth and Baptism, 1813-1906; London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921* (London Metropolitan Archive, Holy Trinity, Clapham); *London, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813-1915* (London Metropolitan Archive, Saint Martins in the Field, Westminster); *England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth, Marriage, and Death Indexes, 1837-1915; London, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813-1980* (London Metropolitan Archive, *Register of Burials*, Saint George the Martyr, Queen Square); and *England & Wales, Deaths and Burials, 1813-2005*. Places of residence, marital statuses, and occupations were obtained from the England censuses of 1841 through 1911.

5. On the Lachenal Sisters, see Debenham and Merris, 'Marie Lachenal: Concertinist', 1-17. To round out the information on the Lachenal girls: the husbands of Jane Elizabeth and Marie were business partners, owning the photography studio of Debenham & Gould in Bournemouth, where clients included Oscar Wilde and other notables. In 1872, Constance married John Latey, a writer and journalist for *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *The Illustrated London News.* Marie Louise married David Henderson Waddell in 1882, and Alice married Alexander Wood MacNaughton in 1883, both men being architects. As for the sons of Louis Lachenal: two of them, Louis Jules (b. 1853) and Alexander (1861-1923), followed in their father's footsteps and became engineers, though not in the field of musical instruments. Alexander worked on Crown Agency projects in Africa, Canada, the United States, and South and Central America. His eldest son, Dennis Thomas Alexander Lachenal (1897-1971), became a tool maker (grandfather Louis Lachenal's first trade); after serving in the British Army in World War I, he immigrated to the United States in 1919, settled in New Hampshire, and was employed as a tool and die maker. Louis Lachenal had still another son: François Edouard (b. 1856 and listed as Edward Lachenal in the 1871 census). In all, Louis Lachenal and his wife Elizabeth had nine children, six girls and three boys. (Some of the information about Dennis T. A. Lachenal was obtained from Lachenal descendants now living in New Hampshire and from Ancestry. Com: *British Army WWI Pension Records, 1914-1920*; *1920 United States Federal Census* (Census Place, Garfield Ward 3, Bergen, NJ); and Social Security Administration, *Social Security Death Index*.)

6. James Brown and Stephen S. Stratton, *British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors and Composers Born in Britain and Its Colonies* (London: William Reeves, 1897; rpt. New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 50-51; Allan W. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 54; and Christina Bashford, 'Blagrove. English Family of Musicians', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, online at *www.oxfordmusiconline.com.*

7. *Pallot's* can be searched online: *http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=5968;* it is also available as CD 2489 of the series entitled *Ancestry.com* issued by TWR Computing.

8. His birth and death records have not been located.

9. See the fine summary in Bashford, 'Blagrove. English Family of Musicians'. On the publishing business in particular, see John A. Parkinson, *Victorian Music Publishers: An Annotated List.* Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography, 64 (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1990), 29. The British Library possesses a copy of the auction catalogue of William Manning's musical estate: Catalogue of the Valuable Stock in Trade and Private Collection of the late William M. Blagrove, Comprising Upwards of 1000 Music Plates [and] Printed Music, Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, Harps, Pianofortes, Harmonium by Wheatstone, Concertinas, Guitars, Quantity of Bows, Folding Mutes, Harp and Violin Strings, Tools [sic] Stands, and the Usual Assortment of a Music Dealer and Publisher, Which will be Sold by Auction by Messrs. Norman and Son [. . .] June 17th 1859 [. . .] (London: J. & I. Tirebuck, 1859).

10. Debenham and Merris, 'Marie Lachenal: Concertinist', 2; Atlas, 'Ladies in the Wheatstone Ledgers: The Gendered Concertina in Victorian England, 1835-1870', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle,* 39 (2006), 45, though there is a correction in the 'Prelude' to the online version at *www.concertina.com/atlas/ladies.htm.*

11. I give the title page as it is reproduced in Allan W. Atlas, *Victorian Music for the English Concertina* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2009), 174, which volume provides an edition of and notes about the piece on pages 134-44 and xvi, respectively.

12. She married Richard Manning Blagrove, the father of the concertinist, in Nottingham on 30 December 1810, as recorded in the *Register of Marriages, 1763-1813;* available online at *http://search.ancestry.com/ search/db.aspx?dbid=5917.*

13. The brothers are: William Frederick Attwater (1846-1925), a salesman and insurance agent who settled in Canada (Ontario); Henry Blagrove Attwater (1847-1928), who also worked in fields unrelated to music, and Alexander Henley Attwater (1848-1936), who was apprenticed to a music publisher before becoming an architect. (Sources for William F. Attwater include Ancestry.com: *1911 Census of Canada* (Census Place, Blain, Nipissing, Ontario) and Archive of Canada, *Registration of Deaths, 1869-1934*.)

14. Richard and Eliza had three children—Arthur Richard (1867-1946), Alice Viola (1868-1906), and Stanley Freeth (1871-1943)—each of whom had a career in music. In the 1891 British Census, 'Professor of Music' is shown for Richard, Eliza, Arthur (age 23), 'Viola' (age 21), and Stanley (age 20).

15. On these, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 55.

16. Although Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography,* 364, give her date of birth as 1855 (as does the genealogy website *www.familysearch.org*), Chris Flint has established that she was born in 1851.

17. On Stewart (who was later knighted), see Thomas Humphry, ed., *Men of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries, Containing Biographical Notices of Eminent Characters of Both Sexes,* 12th ed. (London: George Rutledge & Sons, 1887), 961.

18. Playing concertina as a youngster, Linda perhaps received some instruction from either Giulio Regondi during his visits to Dublin in 1859 and 1861 or George Case, who was also in

Dublin in 1861. Both Regondi and Case enjoyed close associations with Joseph Scates, and Regondi dedicated his *Leisure Moments,* a set of twelve miniatures, to Linda.

19. On Walter Macfarren, see his *Memories: An Autobiography* (London: Walter Scott, 1905); on George Alexander Macfarren's music for the concertina, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 62-67, and Pauline de Snoo's notice in *Concertina World: Newsletter of the International Concertina Association,* 410 (April 1998), 16-17.

20. They had met at Gad's Hill Place, Higham, Kent, the country retreat of Charles Dickens, with whom Cook had both professional and social relationships; on Cook, see the *Dictionary of National Biography,* 4 (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 989-990.

21. For his autobiography, see *Edmund Yates, His Recollections and Experiences,* 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1884).

22. The letters appear in *The Letters of Charles Dickens.* The Pilgrim Edition, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 5, 43, 50, respectively.

23. Note that ledger C1052 does not ordinarily list the buyer's gender.

24. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 4.

25. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina,* 5, n. 15; also 'Collins, Count Fosco, and the Concertina', *Wilkie Collins Society Journal,* new series, 2 (1999), 58, n. 8 (online at *www.concertina.com/Atlas/index*).

26. His presence in London is evidenced by his written correspondence in February 1861. Dickens wrote letters at his London home at 3 Hanover Terrace, Regent Park, on 15 and 24 February, three days before and six days after the entry in the ledger. The letter of the 15th is an invitation to Benjamin Webster to come for dinner at Dickens's home on 'next Sunday week' (25 February), while that of the 24th was addressed, coincidentally, to Edmund Yates (Charles Dickens Theodore Yates's father), and dealt with a misunderstanding between the two; the letters appear in *The Letters of Charles Dickens,* 9, 386-87.

27. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 4. On Dickens and the accordion, see Lillian M. Ruff, 'How Musical was Charles Dickens?', *The Dickensian,* 68 (1972), 32-33; James T. Lightwood, *Charles Dickens and Music* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1912; New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970), 1-2; and Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990; New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 361.

28. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 4-5; 'Collins, Count Fosco, and the Concertina', 56-61.

29. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England,* 4.

PICTURE GALLERY

The Concertina in Victorian Global Pop Culture

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY DAN WORRALL

There is much of interest in old photographs of concertina players, especially regarding the ways in which the instruments were used. Of particular interest are photographs of German concertinas, as their circumstances were typically quite modest, and the instruments have been much less written about than the more highbrow English-system instrument. The two photographs included here were retrieved from the archives of the National Folklore Collection, University College, Dublin (UCD), and from the Alexander Turnbull Library of the National Library of New Zealand, respectively. Neither archive had much if anything in the way of documentation. The photographs were eventually used as cover illustrations on the two volumes of my recent *The Anglo-German Concertina, A Social History*.[1]

Staff at the National Folklore Archive at UCD knew only that the first photo (Figure 1) was from Limerick, in the early twentieth century. Following publication of my book, I was contacted by Dublin concertina player Sean O'Dwyer (son of the late Ellen O'Dwyer, who was recorded in the 1970s by Neil Wayne), who offered to show the photo to his godmother, Mrs. Nora Hurley of Athea, County Limerick, to see if she might know more about it. As luck would have it, she knew quite a bit more, and Sean has kindly shared that information. The photo was taken in the village of Athea in 1911 by schoolmaster William Danaher, who was also the local primary school principal. His son, the late Irish folklorist Kevin Danaher (1913-2002), brought the photo to UCD. The original photograph is in the possession of Mrs. Nan Hurley (née Stack). Mrs Hurley, now in her nineties, was born after the photo was taken but she knew all of the persons in the photograph, including her father, John Stack, who stands at the right of the picture.

These were all local village people—farmers and farm workers, for the most part—who lived in a row of thatched cottages in upper Athea known as 'The Lane'. They were celebrating the potato harvest, and were dressed in their finery for the photograph, which was carefully choreographed by schoolmaster Danaher. Two of them, on the right, are shown grating spuds for *boxty* (a traditional Irish dish consisting of pan-fried grated potatoes) for the celebration.

Of most interest to us is the concertina player at the left; there are very few photographs yet unearthed of Irish concertina players before World War I, and this is the earliest yet found. Her name was May Nan Stevens (May Nan is probably a diminutive for Mary Ann), and she holds a German concertina. A close inspection of the position of the air button shows that she is holding the instrument upside down,

Fig. 1. Celebrating the potato harvest of 1911 in Athea, County Limerick. On the left, May Nan Stevens holds a German concertina. Reproduced courtesy of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

leaving us to wonder whether she was the musician of the day or whether the instrument was merely a prop. Danaher is regardless telling us that a concertina was an essential part of the harvest festivities, which would have included a dance.

This was the era of ballroom dance, which was wildly popular with all levels of Irish and English society. A surviving dance book begun in 1867 and belonging to Kate Hughes of Dundalk, County Louth, contains instructions for eight sets of quadrilles and eight set dances 'of quadrille type', including Caledonians, Lancers, mazurka quadrilles, and waltz cotillions. There are also fifty-four country dances. On the other hand, the dance book contains instructions for only two reels (there are no jigs, hornpipes, or other types of older step dances).[2] Accounts of Irish cross-roads dances of the time also prominently mention quadrilles, polkas, and waltzes; Irish quadrilles are today typically called 'set dances.' This same mix of dances would have been familiar to those at the time who lived in other such concertina strongholds as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and North America.

In each of these countries, the music for rural versions of ballroom dances in houses, barns, and woolsheds was often provided by a solo concertina player, as in this photograph. An accompanying drawing (Figure 2, page 32) depicting a policeman's ball in the west of Ireland—probably County Galway—in 1887 shows that the music was provided by a solo policeman playing the concertina.[3]

German and Anglo-German concertinas (and by the end of the nineteenth century, button accordions) were considered the modern and trendy choice for this globally popular music, just as the electric guitar was to be a century later. Group band playing in Ireland came with the céilí band and dance hall era of the twentieth century.

Another type of Victorian global pop culture is on display in the second photo (Figure 3, see page 34), the original caption of which is 'Winter Amusements, Opunake C.M. Troupe'. The photograph was taken by the New Zealand firm Sharp and Sons in 1875. Opunake is a small seaside town in Taranaki, North Island. It began with a small garrison of soldiers during the New Zealand Land Wars, a two decade-long conflict with the indigenous Maori that ended in 1872. After peace came (and much expropriation of land from the Maori), the garrison continued to be staffed until about 1881, at which time it was abandoned and the modern town begun. During its post-war existence, there could have been little enough for many of these soldiers to do, and music and dance were favorite pastimes.

There are seven musicians in the photograph, seated against a wall adorned with signal flags. At the center—a place of prominence—is a musician with a German concertina. Those surrounding him are playing banjo, fiddle, flute, tambourine, bones, and triangle. The title 'C.M. Troupe' offers a clue as to what type of music they were playing, as those initials stand for 'Christy Minstrels', an early American minstrel group that toured throughout Britain and Europe extensively in the 1850s. Their popularity was such that their name became a generic term for 'minstrel music' in most of the

Fig. 2. Off-duty policemen in the west of Ireland, 1887, engaged in ballroom dancing, with music provided by an officer playing a concertina. From *The Graphic*, February 19, 1887, London. I thank Nicholas Carolan of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Dublin, for a copy of this print.

English-speaking world, and such was the term's use here. Confirmation of this interpretation is provided by the dress and instruments of the two men seated at either end of the gathering. Their garish dress relative to the others (who are wearing normal soldiers' garb), their tambourine and bones, and their positions at each end of the group indicate that they are playing the roles of the classic minstrel show 'end-men', Mister Tambo and Mr. Bones. These men would provide the wisecracks and jokes that peppered any and every minstrel show.

Minstrel music, we should remember, was endemic throughout the English-speaking world during the Victorian era. In fact, we might even claim that the minstrel shows marked the first time that European melody and harmony merged with African rhythms to form a globally popular musical genre (later versions of this are ragtime, jazz, rock 'n roll, and hip-hop). Minstrel troupes, most of them locally generated, were to be found in great numbers in English cities and seaside resorts, as well as in other countries where concertinas were abundant: Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and of course North America. Their musical legacy is to be found within the traditional music repertoires of these countries, where many dance tunes are today not typically recognized as having been originally composed for the minstrel shows.[4]

In England and its colonies, the typical minstrel troupe's instrumentation included German or Anglo-German concertina (or sometimes a flutina), banjo, and of course tambourine and bones. Some American troupes used concertinas, but there stringed instruments were more the rule. Perhaps of special interest in the photograph is the absence of a guitar. Guitars were quite rare amongst street musicians and dance groups during the Victorian period, and constant chording was not considered necessary accompaniment for dance melodies. The guitar came to prominence only in the twentieth century, with the introduction of jazz and 'Tin-pan Alley' songs in the music halls. Its use in 'traditional music'—now including tunes left over from the global ballroom dance craze and the minstrel shows of the last century—for the most part dates back only to the folk revival of the 1950s and later.

NOTES

1. Dan M. Worrall, *The Anglo-German Concertina: A Social History*, 2 vols. (Fulshear, TX: Concertina Press, 2009); see *www.angloconcertina.org*; the book is available from Amazon Books, online at *www.amazon.com*.

2. Frank Magninnis, Joan Flett, and Chris Brady, *Kate Hughes' Dancing Book, Dundalk, 1867*; available online at *www.chrisbrady.itgo.com/dance/dundalk* (2002)

3. 'Disturbed Ireland--A Trip to the West': in *The Graphic*, February 19, 1887, London.

4. *See Worrall, The Anglo-German Concertina, passim.*

Fig. 3. 'Winter Amusements, Opunake C. M. Troupe', ca. 1875; photograph by Sharp and Sons.
Reproduced courtesy the Alexander Turnbull Library of the National Library of New Zealand.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

Ralph Vaughan Williams and the Concertina

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY ALLAN ATLAS

I have long wondered why Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) never wrote for the concertina.[1] At least I am unaware of any work by him that calls for the instrument. Yet that he was familiar with the concertina can hardly be doubted: he was after all, a major figure in the so-called 'First Folk Revival', and, through his friendship with Cecil Sharp, would likely have heard the Anglo-concertinist William Kimber.[2]

As it turns out, though, Vaughan Williams may simply have neglected the concertina for a reason that will disappoint us: perhaps he just didn't like the way it sounded. Surely, this is the impression he gives in a letter of 21 March 1949 (the year deduced from the stamped receipt), addressed to one Leonard Smith, an employee of the Columbia Gramophone Company, and concerned with a Radiogram—a combination radio and gramophone built into a single piece of furniture—that the Columbia firm had sent to him on a trial basis.

I reproduce the letter (without its fourth and final paragraph) after *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams,* No. 515 (see note 1); the reference to Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967) is to the well-known conductor who served as the director of London's Promenade Concerts from 1948 to 1967:

From R. Vaughan Williams
The White Gates,
Westcott Road,
Dorking

March 21 [1949]
Dear Mr Smith,

I have now had the Radiogram you kindly sent me on trial, for a week and I think you will like to have a report on it. The Gramophone part seems to be very satisfactory and gives my wife and myself great pleasure.

I do not feel so happy about the radio part — The chief part of my desire to try your machine which had been so highly recommended to me by Sir Malcolm Sargent was that I hoped that a more selective machine

would eliminate the interference from foreign stations on wave length 514 (3rd programme) but I am sorry to say that the interference is just as bad as on my present much smaller set.

I have also tried 3rd programme on wave length 202, but here though there is no foreign interference there is a most unpleasant < > effect like a concertina. I ought to add that the switch 'radio selective' does not seem to help at all.

What a shame, especially since Vaughan Williams composed and arranged so many pieces that virtually drip with the ambience of the English countryside. How ironic, then, that Dave Townsend's recent addition to the repertory of the English concertina is a *Fantasy on a Theme of Ralph Vaughan Williams,* recorded on the CD recently issued by the Hawkwood Concertina Band (see Rachel Hall's review in this issue, pp. 42-44).

NOTES

1. The literature on Vaughan Williams is immense. There are two standard biographies: Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London, 1964). There is a catalogue of works by Kennedy, *A Catalogue of the Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). For a selection of the composer's correspondence, see Hugh Cobbe, *The Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1895-1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). There is also an informative website maintained by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society: *www.rvwsociety.com.*

2. That he was aware of Kimber is certain: there is an undated photograph that shows them within just a few feet of one another at Cecil Sharp House; Vaughan Williams is apparently delivering a lecture, as Kimber sits just to his right. The photo is reproduced in Derek Schofield, 'RVW', *English Song & Dance,* 70/3 (2008), 13. Hugh Cobbe informs me that there are no references to Kimber in the data base that he maintains of Vaughan Williams's correspondence (see note 1).

REVIEWS

Dan M. Worrall. *The Anglo-German Concertina: A Social History.* 2 vols. Fulshear, TX: Concertina Press, 2009. xviii + 322 pp., viii + 272 pp., with 440 illustrations, 28 transcriptions. ISBN 978-0-9825996-0-0. $38.00.

Reviewed by Graeme Smith

As this detailed and broad ranging history demonstrates, the Anglo-German concertina was one of the most popular free-reed instruments of the second half of the nineteenth century. Dan Worrall's book tells its social history, and spans four continents and many styles of playing and genres of music. It places the instrument within the rapidly changing and emergent popular cultures which swept over all the sites he documents, while at the same time presenting the distinctiveness of local histories.

Worrall has drawn heavily on the resources recently made available by the digitisation of nineteenth-century out-of-print books and the ever expanding online availability of nineteenth-century newspapers and contemporary public records. Other researchers—Lewis Jones comes to mind—have demonstrated the power of this for folk song research.[1] Worrall tracks the instrument with meticulous and exhaustive use of manufacturers' records, advertisements, published tutors, and what he refers to as 'sightings', references to the instrument in journals, newspapers, court records, travellers' tales, and the like, and through these he plots the rise and decline of the instrument over seven different locations.

The instrument, usually six-sided with two or three rows (each of five buttons) on each end derives from the 'German concertina, ' which was first made by Carl Uhlig of Chemnitz',Saxony, in 1834. His instrument adopted the single-action diatonic-pitch layout of the accordion, with a major scale disposed in the familiar single-action push-pull alternation, and usually with the two rows playing a C and a G scale. These earliest 'German concertinas' were cheaply produced in great numbers. From 1851 some English manufacturers started producing higher-quality instruments, dubbed 'Anglo-German concertinas', using design and techniques derived from the Wheatstone English concertina, and almost always with a third row of accidental pitches allowing a certain level of chromaticism.

Wheatstone's English concertina, a double-action instrument with a fully chromatic array of buttons, was designed for the concert stage and middle-class parlours, and for a composed music repertoire. The German model, unerringly found its market amongst the relatively poor, while the better quality Anglo-German models reached a middle level. One writer in a musical journal of 1898 notes that the 'genuine'

concertina is the English model 'associated with the names of musicians prominent in the higher ranks of the musical profession'. By contrast the German and Anglo-German concertina had 'usurped the name' and was 'a spurious order of instrument proper to the music hall and n----r minstrelsy, (p. 37). Worrall presents a number of similar elite dismissals of this consistently low-brow instrument, which was enthusiastically taken up by working-class musicians wherever it was available. Its socio-musical position was set by its price, by its societal associations, and by its musical limitation to a few keys, which guaranteed its suitability for lower-class vernacular musical styles and un-tutored ear players.

In successive chapters Worrall documents the instrument's use in England, Ireland, at sea, in Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. England saw the first flush of popularity. While we now associate the instrument with rural, traditional dance music, Worrall shows the instrument making its first inroads amongst urban street musicians and buskers. With careful reading of historical sources, Worrall gives fascinating accounts of the lives of London street musicians who used it. He shows that some concertina-playing street musicians were able to earn a middle-class income; others, perhaps with less skill, led a hand-to-mouth existence, wearing out the cheaper instruments that they played on. The London street of the nineteenth century was a cacophony of competing sounds, where buskers and concertina-equipped street beggars added to public entertainment and, to some ears, brought new possibilities of noise pollution. Henry Mayhew, in his account of the London poor, interviews street musicians who describe targeting the house of an invalid, and refusing to be moved on by the annoyed residents until they had extorted two shillings from them. The concertina was adopted early into the standard instrumentarium of the minstrel show, and here its use, particularly for dance music and sentimental and comic song, along with the banjo and the bones, cemented its popularity in low-brow entertainment. Skilled stage acts demonstrated the musical capabilities of the humble instrument. At the same time, the Salvation Army adopted the instrument into its street performances. But its great penetration was amongst the many amateurs who took it up, and Worrall documents it use on picnics, outings, and the like.

Meanwhile the instrument spread to the countryside, and by the late nineteenth century, it was affordable by at least some agricultural labourers. It was used for social and seasonal ritual dancing, in domestic households as well as in pubs and churches, augmenting its urban street entertainment and theatrical uses. In such a context, in 1899 English folk music collector Cecil Sharp met with the concertinist William Kimber of the Headington Morris dance team and initiated the Morris dance revival. German and Anglo-German concertinas were being used for Morris and other dance throughout a number of areas of England, and expanded in their use amongst revivalist Morris dancers. Worrall presents biographies of and stylistic commentary about many other English traditional players, demonstrating the varied playing

approaches which they took in solving problems of range, in providing octave and other chordal support for a melody, and aiming for, or alternatively in eschewing separate or legato bellows actions. The instrument began to decline in popularity after the 1920s, until the second English folk revival of the post-W.W. II period, and especially the English dance movement of the 1970s and 1980s, brought new players and musical approaches to the instrument. These new players and markets stimulated demand for and production of quality instruments.

The instrument's trajectory in Ireland followed a slightly different path, musically and socially. The English concertina was used by middle class and Anglo-Irish players, but as in England, German and Anglo-German concertinas were hugely popular from the late nineteenth century, in Dublin as in London, and they soon took their place in providing music for social dance in the countryside. The great Irish nationalist music revivalists of the turn of the century were troubled as this instrument replaced pipers and fiddlers, but concertinas, along with melodeons, became the popular choice for rural house dances. In Clare in particular, a group of players developed a more complex technique to play fast dance tunes in keys of D and even A on the instrument. These players, as well as players in less fluid styles, continued the instrument's use through the twentieth century. The instrument has been entirely embraced by the post-war Irish traditional music movement. As in the documentation for England, Worrall provides a well-judged history of the musical venues in which the concertina found a home in Ireland.

The sailor with a concertina became a cinematic and popular cliché in the twentieth century, and Worrall interrogates this association. Given that many folk music revivalists have been suspicious of such popular distortions, his conclusions of extensive and distinctive use on naval and merchant ships is perhaps surprising. Here he points out that both romantic imaginings and sceptical rejections of these can be evaluated with internet-based document searching. His conclusions here demonstate the power and potential of his research techniques.

In Africa, the concertina hitched a ride on the colonisation of the continent and it became part of the transplantation of European dance styles while being absorbed into new musical uses which were fundamentally based on African musical aesthetics. Afrikaner musicians developed what was one of the most vigorous uses of the instrument in their Boorenmusiek, where farm house dances provided the most important context. Here the emblematic 'vastrap', or stamp-down dance, is associated with compacting a beaten earth floor. Worrall points out that the Afrikaners continued to favour the concertina until much later than comparable English players and audiences, and that they developed sophisticated 'modernist' playing styles thorough the twentieth century. Its continued use now is mediated by a self-conscious cultural

movement, even though the place of Afrikaner culture in post-apartheid South Africa is a fraught one. However, its concertina music remains a vital popular genre.

Amongst Africans the concertina was also adapted into many neo-traditional and popular musical styles through the twentieth century. Given the great impact of touring minstrel troupes on South African popular music, it is not surprising **that** South African Sotho and Zulu musicians took to the instrument. Here it was often used to provide accompaniment for walking, a role which it took over from other indigenous portable instruments. The cyclic repetitive forms played in 'squashbox style' to add rhythm and entertainment carried walkers on 'concertina transport'. Often, where European players used the instrument to play the symmetrically phrased melodies of dance and song tunes, Africans saw the instrument as a resource to play repeated rhythmic patterns. Sometimes tuning arrangements were modified, neutralising the diatonic effect of the row, and opening up new approaches to the connections between motoric patterns of finger and bellows and musical output. Although the concertina was most consistently adopted in South Africa, Worrall finds evidence of its use in small ensembles in Kenya, Congo, and especially in west Africa. In Ghana and Nigeria it was easily adopted into the palm wine and early highlife and juju music which developed from the 1920s onwards. Although the instrument was generally eclipsed by other instruments in the many developing African popular genres of the later twentieth century, one suspects that further deep research into historical sources would find more evidence of its use.

I turned to the chapter on Australian uses with a forensic eye, having a greater familiarity with sources and uses here, in comparison with some of the other sections of the book. Worrall's documentation and interpretation are almost flawless. The mass production and marketing of concertinas coincided with the rapid white settler migration to Australia which followed the gold rush period of the 1850s and 1860s, the urban expansion, and the progressive settlement of the agricultural land, both in large-scale pastoral properties and small family farms. Worrall is able to follow the instrument importations, as well as its use in gold rush settlements, and amongst the new rural proletariat of itinerant workers, as well as amongst the settlers in areas of denser population. Here local dances in small rural halls provided contexts for dance music. Worrall points out both the stylistic and social similarities of the uses of the concertina in rural England, Ireland, South Africa, and Australia, a convergence based on the similar social and musical demands of public domestic playing. Though concertina players became less popular as the twentieth century wore on, skilled players like Dooley Chapman of Northern NSW and others were discovered by folk enthusiasts and folk music collectors such as Chris Sullivan and Peter Ellis from the 1970s onwards, and their polkas, schottisches, varsoviennas and other quadrille-style and couples dances were taken up by traditionalist sectors of the folk music movement. In New Zealand in the settlement period, similar uses are documented, which is not

surprising, given the degree of migration between Australia and New Zealand in the period. The different patterns of land expropriation and indigenous displacement in the two colonies are reflected in the use of the instrument by the indigenous populations. While there is only limited use of the concertina by Australian aborigines, New Zealand Maoris were able to adopt it for native dances as well as using it when they participated in wool shed balls. No players comparable to those of England, Ireland, or Australia were able to be located when a new folk awareness reached New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s, and the relatively few current New Zealand players are more likely to be influenced by Australian or Irish movements.

The last regional chapter, 'The Concertina in North America', documents patterns similar to those of England and Australia, with some modifications. American sources reiterate the same class distinctions between the English and the German systems, as well as the typical uses of the instrument in public space amateur playing, for social dancing, and by the Salvation Army street bands. Given the demonstrated importance of concertinas in minstrel shows, Worrall produces only a scant history of its adoption here. Further the German, Czech, and Polish musicians who developed polka music into a thriving popular music in the Midwest abandoned the smaller German concertina for larger rectangular Chemnitzer instruments, which were outside of the remit of this book.

Worrall finishes his book with twenty-eight transcriptions of tunes referred to in the text. Fingering indications illustrate some of the musical strategies of the styles which Worrall describes, such as octave playing, two- row octave playing, along-the-row playing and others. For player or scholar, this is an invaluable illustration of the music, especially when coupled with listening to the recordings of these players (to the extent that they are available).

Worrall's work is monumental in its breadth, and makes exemplary use of new internet-based resources in amassing hundreds of illustrations and threads of documentary evidence. He has used these to provide convincing quantifications of such elusive ideas as 'popularity', where number of 'sightings' are seen to rise and fall over a period of a century. Thus his work moves the study of the concertina into an area some have labelled as a new 'empirical musicology'. Fruitfully, this emphasis allows him to range over musical genres, and to judiciously evaluate uses across social and geographical divides. This book is a monumental achievement, which sets a high standard for following authors writing a social history of an instrument.

NOTE

1. See Lewis Jones 'Bound for Botany Bay', *Musical Traditions* (2009), available online at *http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/transprt.htm.*

Marches & Tunes, Hawkwood Concertina Band, Concertina Bandbox CBX 001 (2009)

Reviewed by Rachel Wells Hall

The English concertina's history as a community band instrument in the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries is well documented.[1] The earliest concertina bands grew out of the brass band movement, which attracted working-class men in Britain during the late Victorian era. Their repertoire, like that of brass bands, consisted of marches, popular songs, local folk dances, and the odd light-classical piece. Town bands typically involved twenty-odd amateur musicians playing a full range of concertinas, including treble, tenor, baritone, and bass instruments (and sometimes more unusual varieties, like "piccolo" and "clarinet"), a drummer, and a conductor. Salvation Army concertina bands, which emerged a few decades later, differed both in their composition—many players were female—and their religious repertoire.

Despite the fact that some concertina bands continued into the postwar era, only a few recordings of the old bands survive. The revival of the British concertina band tradition began with weekend meetings of the West Country Concertina Players in the 1980s. WCCP member Nigel Pickles's *The Mexborough English Concertina Prize Band* (Plant Life Records PLR 055, 1983) is a multi-tracked recording of himself playing the original scores and instruments of the defunct Mexborough band. Dave Townsend and Jenny Cox, original members of the West Country Concertina Players, began organizing the Concertinas at Witney event in 1991; and in 2000, Jenny and her husband Peter Cox started annual meetings at Hawkwood College to play band music. These meetings have resulted in this CD: as the liner notes describe, 'In April 2009, twenty-four musicians gathered at Hawkwood College in the Cotswolds to record a wide-ranging selection of music arranged for treble, baritone and bass concertinas. This is the first commercial recording by a full concertina band for some seven decades'.

The Hawkwood Concertina Band's delightful album, *Marches & Tunes*, takes its title from an old-timer's account of the sort of music concertina bands used to play, and, in many ways, takes inspiration from the old bands. Although the band's twenty-four members are scattered throughout England, Scotland, and Wales and can only meet once a year, they describe themselves as a 'community band' in spirit. The band includes the standard treble, baritone, and bass concertinas, occasionally supplemented by piccolo concertina and the 'clarinet concertina' which has 'wider reeds and extra resonating chambers' (according to the liner notes). For the most part, the players are amateur musicians. They are ably assisted by a few pros: wind and brass band leader Steve Ellis and concertinist Dave Townsend conducted the ensemble, while Townsend also composed a 'Fantasia on a Theme of Ralph Vaughan Williams', arranged more than half the pieces on the album, assisted in production, and performed on a few

tracks. Described as the 'keystone of this recording', Robert Harbron, also a master concertina player, engineered and co-produced the album (Harbron deserves special mention for its consistently warm, natural sound).

For an amateur ensemble to produce a recording of this quality is an impressive feat. Playing the concertina beyond an elementary level presents several challenges—challenges that are only compounded in an ensemble. Without proper bellows control, the instrument sounds quite mechanical, like a sort of musical typewriter. Accenting and phrasing, with attention to attacks and releases of notes, are the keys to avoiding a monotonous sound. A moderate dynamic range is possible, but soft or loud playing makes precise rhythm difficult, as the reeds take longer to speak quietly but may jam if played too loudly. The pure, sustained tone that attracts many people to the instrument is unforgiving of deviations in either pitch or rhythm. Baritone and bass instruments have additional physical challenges that are compounded by the poor condition of many of the rare surviving instruments.

I enjoyed this recording immensely. The Hawkwood band's spirited playing and the overall quality of the arrangements and production more than compensate for their occasional lack of precision. Certainly, there are imperfections: the odd note is out of tune and the concertinas sometimes speak late. For the most part, these add to the charm of the recording, which recreates the 'community band' sound. It was especially satisfying to hear the baritone and bass concertinas, which have rarely appeared on modern recordings.

Marches & Tunes features a variety of pieces from the seventeenth century to the present day. In keeping with the title of the album, the band seemed most at ease with the marches. My personal favorite, 'Slaidburn', a brass band piece by William Rimmer, was in the repertoire of the Bolton Concertina Band, while the original Mexborough Concertina Band played the album's opening track, 'Lady Florence' (it also appears on Pickles's LP). Jenny Cox's arrangement of 'Florentiner March' and Townsend's arrangement of 'Slaidburn' are particularly successful in making use of the range of the ensemble, from bass to treble ('Florentiner March' even includes piccolo). The full 'pipe-organ' sound of the concertina band is here in all its glory. The awesome bass solo in "Slaidburn" is reason enough to purchase this album.

The band tackles some ambitious classical and light-classical repertoire, including Jenny Cox's arrangement of Grieg's 'Homage March from Sigurd Jorsalfar', which is over nine minutes long; Dave Townsend's 2005 composition, 'Fantasia on a Theme of Ralph Vaughan Williams'; Alfred Ketèlbey's 'In a Persian Market', described as 'an Edwardian programme piece'; and Arthur Sullivan's 'The Lost Chord'. Contrasting textures and tempos make 'In a Persian Market' the most successful of these. I found the long, slow sections of some of the classical pieces ponderous—stringed

instruments, which are capable of more subtle variation in timbre, have a definite advantage in slow, sustained playing.

A number of short pieces demonstrate the ensemble's versatility. These include a humorous take on Percy Grainger's setting of the Morris tune 'Shepherd's Hey', the tango 'The Song of the Rose', the Welsh hymn 'Cwm Rhondda', Iosif Ivanovici's rousing 'Waves of the Danube', and two early music pieces, 'Courtly Masquing Ayres' and 'Mortlack's Ground'. 'Mortlack's Ground', in particular, is a lovely piece that demonstrates Townsend's skill as an arranger for concertina band; it starts with a small section of the ensemble, builds to include the bass instruments, and then features the high trebles before concluding with the full ensemble.

In recording *Marches & Tunes*, the Hawkwood Concertina Band has set out to show that the glorious sound of the concertina band has not been forgotten, and they have more than proved their point. This album should be a welcome addition to the library of any concertina enthusiast.

NOTE

1. See Stuart Eydmann, 'The Life and Times of the Concertina: The Adoption and Usage of a Novel Musical Instrument with Particular Reference to Scotland', Ph.D. dissertation, Open University (1995), especially chapter 8; online at *http://www.concertina.com/eydmann/*; Les Branchett, 'A Note on Salvation Army Concertina Bands', *PICA,* 3 (2006) 27-32.

CONTRIBUTORS

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RACHEL WELLS HALL (rhall@sju.edu) started playing English concertina in her late teens. In 1991, she received a Watson Fellowship to study traditional music in Scandinavia and the British Isles. She has toured the Mid-Atlantic states since 1995 with the folk trio Simple Gifts and recorded three albums. She plays a variety of styles, including Scandinavian, Eastern European, North American, and British Isles music, and has appeared as soloist with the New Philadelphia Classical Symphony in 2006. She has led concertina bands at the Northeast Squeeze-In, the Northeast Concertina Workshop, and Folk College. Rachel is an associate professor of mathematics at Saint Joseph's University, where she researches applications of mathematics to music.

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DAN WORRALL (danworrall@msn.com) has written *The Anglo-German Concertina: A Social History*, published by Concertina Press in 2010, and *The Anglo-Concertina Music of William Kimber*, published by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 2005. He has also written numerous articles on the history of the concertina to be found at the Concertina Press website (www.angloconcertina.org), at *The Concertina Library* (www.concertina.com), and in the *Papers of the International Concertina Association*. He has played both Anglo and English concertinas for over 35 years, and belongs to a small group of acoustic musicians who play for various types of traditional dances in his home area of Southeastern Texas. For a number of years he has organized a concertina workshop at the Palestine Old Time Music Festival in the small town of Palestine, Texas. Worrall holds a Ph.D. in geology from the University of Texas at Austin and is retired from a career in petroleum industry research. Married with two grown children, he and his wife raise peaches, figs, and longhorn cattle on a small farm in southeastern Texas.

The Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments,

The Graduate Center of the City University of New York

Housed at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, the Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments (Allan Atlas, Director) fosters research and discussion about all aspects of all free-reed instruments. To that end, the Center sponsors a concert/colloquium each Spring semester, maintains a library/archive of materials pertaining to free-reed instruments (the jewels of which are a large collection of Victorian music for the English concertina and the Deiro Archive, which preserves the documentary and recorded legacy of the legendary accordionists Guido and Pietro Deiro), has published four volumes of The Free-Reed Journal (1999-2002), and now co-publishes with the ICA Papers of the International Concertina Association. Among past events: 'Tango-Bandoneón-Piazzolla' (2000), 'The Accordion as an Icon of Italian-American Culture' (2001), 'The Incredible Concertina: A Concert in Honor of Sir Charles Wheatstone--A Bicentennial Celebration' (2002), 'Free Reeds of Asia' (2003), and 'Viva Regondi' (2006).

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