

CONCERTINAS IN THE COMMERCIAL ROAD: The Story of George Jones

by *FRANK E. BUTLER*

With additional notes and commentary by Joel Cowan

[Reprinted in its entirety with permission from the EAST LONDON RECORD, Number 3, 1980. C&S gratefully acknowledges the assistance of C. Kerrigan, of the East London History Society, and C&R Dipper, Concertina Makers. Original carte-de-visite of George Jones appears in the text courtesy of Frank Butler. —Ed.]

THROUGHOUT much of Queen Victoria's reign, Stepney (a borough of London) was an important centre in the music world. It was the home of George Jones's concertina factory.

George Smith Jones was born in Spencer Street, Commercial Road, on February 29, 1832 (he never let the family forget the date, protesting that he was only entitled to a present every fourth year), the eldest surviving child of Robert Jones, carpenter, and Sarah Swan Barnes, who married at St Botolph's, Aldgate, in 1830. There is no record of his education, but he must have been an instinctive scholar for he read widely, was good at figures, a fluent correspondent and an astute man of business. According to



George Jones, circa 1880
(Photo from his carte-de-visite.)

his memoir ¹ he started work at the age of twelve, going straight into the trade of concertina-making. From then on the story of his life is inseparable from the history of the concertina.

Charles Wheatstone (the physicist) had invented this new "Wind Musical Instrument" in 1827. His patent of 1829 was for the "Symphonium" ² in a variety of forms. One of them, an instrument with 24 keys and a four-fold bellows, was certainly a concertina, though the name was not adopted for several years. In 1844 his new patent for "Concertinas and other Musical Instruments" included the concertina as we know it today.

It was an immediate success, commercially and artistically. It featured in classical concerts (Chopin was once annoyed to find he had to share the stage with one) and was much in demand for "at homes". ³ The Wheatstone firm had to abandon their other musical ventures and concentrate on making concertinas and publishing concertina music. In the beginning purchasers were mostly well-to-do; one in ten were from titled families. But later in the century the concertina became a working-class instrument, the delight of buskers and amateur musicians.

Small-scale Manufacturer

Concertina manufacture at first was carried on chiefly by outwork, that is, workmen made the components, or did partial assembly, at home, and took the results to Wheatstone and Co. for completion. Inevitably, where two or more could combine their skills, they did so and set up on their own—not much attention was paid to the Wheatstone patents. ⁴ From 1830 to 1850 there were rapid and surprising changes of loyalty, with the establishment of short-lived businesses.

George Jones began work in 1844, with Jabez Austin, who made "pans" for Wheatstone at their West End headquarters off Regent Street. A few years later Austin and Jones transferred to the firm of Joseph Scates in Frith Street, Soho, "Mr. Austin attending to the woodwork and myself looking after note fixing, reducing and voicing" he notes in his memoir. "Very shortly....Mr. Austin also started manufacturing on his own, and as I went with him I was able to learn every branch of the business". Austin's striking out on his own, with Jones's eager support, may have been in 1850, for that is the date Jones later used in advertising. *GEORGE JONES & CO. ESTABLISHED 1850*, the signboard above his shop proclaimed.

While working with Austin, the young manufacturer undertook repairs on his own account. Within a few years he had also bought and taught himself to play a 'French' accordion and a 'German' concertina, which sounded adjacent notes of the scale on the press-and-draw of the bellows. The latter he soon replaced with an improved model designed and made by himself.

In 1852, when he was 20, he felt enough confidence in the future to marry. His bride was Caroline Chard, aged 18, of Brick Lane, Bethnal Green, the daughter of a mariner. Jones's own address is given on the marriage certificate as James Street, Bethnal Green, and his trade that of "musical instrument maker".

Versatile Young Man

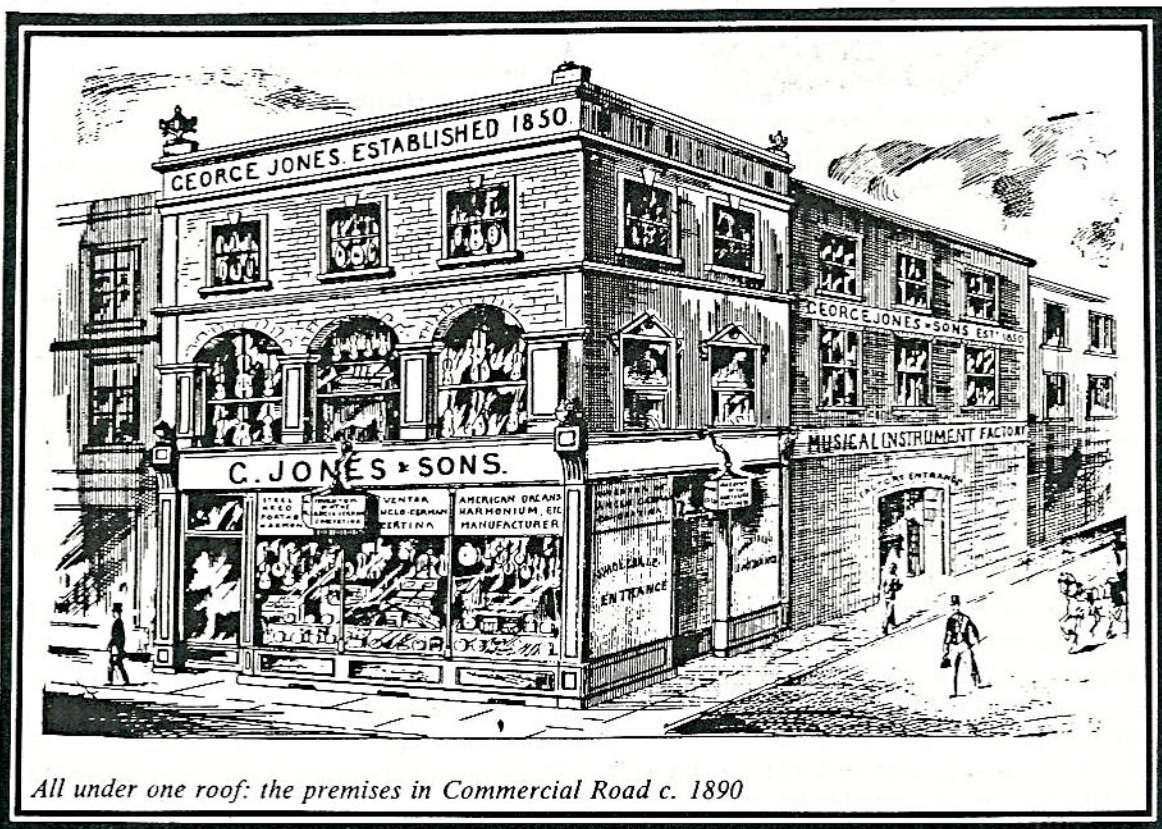
The 1850s were boom years for the music hall. With two brand-new musical instruments at his command, plus an agreeable light tenor voice, Jones was tempted away from his workshop to the music hall stage. How long he continued there is not known, but it was long enough to justify his later claim to have been the first performer in public on the two instruments. The livelihood of a music hall

artiste was precarious, however. Conditions were primitive and sometimes sordid, so Jones "tired of the life of the Music Halls". Perhaps he began to think the life of a singer/concertina-player undignified for a family man.

On leaving the music halls he worked with John Nickolds, another former employee of Wheatstone who had set up his own factory in Woodbridge Street, Clerkenwell. This firm later became Nickolds and Crabb, which under the name Harry Crabb and Son are the only concertina makers in existence today.⁵

Jones did not stay long in Clerkenwell, for Jabez Austin, "my first master, invited me to manage his new premises in Commercial Road, teaching, managing the shop and supervising the workshop". This was at 3, Crombies Row on the north side of Commercial Road, next to Jubilee Street. Jones goes on to say "the business made money fast, too fast for Mr. Austin, who spent liberally on drink and being taken ill, died soon after." This was in 1857⁶ and presumably Austin had no heir, for apparently Jones took over the business without any formalities and enjoyed an interval of growing prosperity.

The business expanded and sales in the music shop were brisk, while on the domestic scene three daughters made their appearance. But about 1861 catastrophe struck—the premises in Commercial



All under one roof: the premises in Commercial Road c. 1890

350, Commercial Road, London, E. 8

ENGLISH BARITONE CONCERTINAS.

Sounding One Octave below Treble.

- 1. Rosewood, moulded tops, ivory studs, forty-eight keys, bushed holes, metal reeds, five-fold morocco bound bellows, in rosewood case ... £10 0 0
- 2. Ditto, superior finish, steel reeds, silver studs, six-fold ornamented morocco bellows, in rosewood case... .. 15 0 0

ENGLISH BASS CONCERTINAS.

Sounding Two Octaves below Treble.

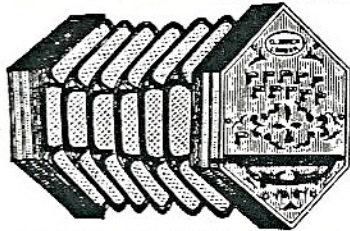
- Rosewood, single action, forty-eight keys, silver studs, bushed holes, steel reeds, six-fold morocco bellows, in rosewood case 14 0 0

ENGLISH PICCOLO CONCERTINAS.

Sounding One Octave above Treble.

- Forty-three Keys, finished as No. 5, with steel reeds 8 8 0
- Instruction Books, 1s., 6s., and 10s. 6d.

ANGLO-GERMAN CONCERTINAS.



Each instrument is Stamped on the Right Hand Strap Rail with the



CLASS "A."

The bottom angle of the right hand side of each Instrument in this Class bears a Stamp indicating whether Steel or Metal Reeds

MAHOGANY TOPS, double screwed notes, five-fold bellows (flush with frames), in covered case, with lock and key.

	20 keys.	22 keys.	24 keys.	26 keys.	28 keys.	30 keys.
Metal Reeds ... £1	2 6... 1 5	0... 1 7	6... 1 10	0... 1 12	0... 1 15	0
Steel " " ...	1 10	0... 1 13	6... 1 17	0... 2 0	0... 2 3	6... 2 7 0
ROSEWOOD:—						
Metal Reeds ... £1	6	6... 1 9	0... 1 11	6... 1 14	0... 1 16	6... 2 0 0
Steel " " ...	1 14	0... 1 17	6... 2 1	0... 2 4	0... 2 7	6... 2 11 0
SPECIAL CHEAP LINE, steel reeds, nickel silver tops:—				30 keys.	32 keys.	
	£3	3	0... 3	7	6	

From Jones catalog circa 1890.

was a challenge to cheap concertinas made in Germany from inferior materials and sold for as little as 3/6 [three shillings and sixpence; then about 95 cents—Ed.] compared with Wheatstone's original "English type"⁹ which cost £2 (\$10.00). Today it is still possible to obtain a German concertina for £16, while the superior English-made Anglo costs £200.¹⁰

Jones recorded in his memoir that about this time he was joined by a Mr. Shaller who had been a toolmaker at Louis Lachenal's concertina factory in Bedford Row, Bloomsbury. With his aid Jones not only made both Anglo and English concertinas, but began making reeds for the harmonium, to sell at 5 guineas (\$27) each. With the working-man's wages at £1 per week or less, Jones's customers for the harmonium were no doubt mission halls, "gentlemen's families", and a few better-off artisans. He evolved the first portable harmonium, with sides, pedals, and base all hinged to fold under the

Road caught fire and burned to the ground. George and Caroline escaped with their three girls, Jeanette, Margaret and baby Caroline. Following the practise of the time, Mrs. Jones was careful to rescue her "marriage lines", and the charred document still exists. Also saved from the shop window, for some reason, was a miniature banjo no more than four inches long. This relic disintegrated a few years ago. It bore marks of the fire and was brought out many times on the telling of the story over the following seventy years.⁷

Among the crowd at the scene of the fire were James Welsh, and his daughter Mary Matilda, of White Horse Place not far away. Mary Matilda used to tell how she saw the rescue of the family, who were strangers to her, never thinking at the time that within twelve months she would be the new Mrs. Jones. For although unhurt, Caroline did not long survive the fire, and on June 28, 1862, George and Mary were married at St. Peter's Cephas Street, Mile End, and at the age of twenty- two Mary became step-mother to the three girls.

Soon after the fire Jones moved into a new premises at 2, Lucas Place, a terrace on the other side of Commercial Road.⁸ There he started production of the "Anglo" concertina after receiving a large order from Dublin from his former employer Scates who had settled there. The "Anglo", short for Anglo-German,

wind-chest, and permit the closed instrument to be carried by a strap across the shoulder. For a long time it was much in demand for outdoor religious meetings, but is rarely seen today.¹¹

Family Arrangements

Jones's second wife, Mary Matilda, bore three sons and three daughters; and at one stage father, mother and all the children were all involved in the concertina business. When she could be freed from housework, Mother became responsible for the shop and retail sales, not only of all types of instruments but a great deal of sheet music. She could play a scale or chord on almost any instrument in the shop, had an encyclopaedic knowledge of sheet music, including composer, publisher and price and, equally important, the collecting houses and trade terms.

As the years went on the business was extended to supply all the instruments of orchestras and military and brass bands, a profitable line since owners of big factories often gave financial and practical assistance to workers to found works bands. The Jones catalogue has tables of the instruments required to establish bands of different sizes. There was a considerable trade in pianos, often made by the firm of Broadwood & White, but with the Jones label, which sold at £10 each. Banjos were listed as "own make" at prices from 6 shillings and sixpence (\$1.75) and the purchaser could also buy a *Tutor* for it, written by George Jones. He also wrote and published a *Tutor* for the Anglo Concertina. At that time, in 1876, it was the only one available, and remained so for many years. It was published by Wheatstone after the closure of the Jones business, and was still available unaltered until 1960.

The range of concertinas made by Jones was immense. He catalogued more than fifty variants of the Anglo, including an "organ-tone" Anglo, with reeds playing in octaves, and his so-called "Perfect" Anglo, patented in 1884, which was fully chromatic. He made eleven different styles of English concertina, in addition to piccolo, tenor, baritone and bass instruments, which is used in conjunction with the treble made it possible to play very ambitious works, especially string quartet music. There was also an "organ-tone" English concertina, and a piano concertina which had the studs coloured

12 George Jones & Sons, Manufacturers & Importers,

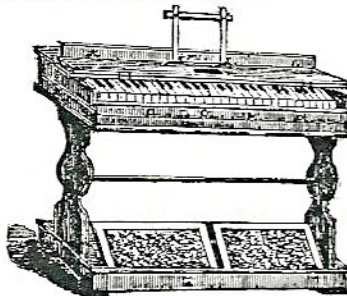
PORTABLE HARMONIUMS.

GEORGE JONES,

Manufacturer of the Newly Improved

FOLDING HARMONIUM.

The lightest and most portable yet introduced. Compass, four octaves from F; wide scale of keys. In polished walnut case. Height, when open, 2ft. 8in.; length, 2ft. 3in.; width, 12in.; weighing thirty-two pounds. Expressly adapted for the profession and mission work.



When closed: length, 2ft. 3in.; width, 12in.; depth, 10in. May be carried by a strap as easily as a portmanteau, without fear of damaging.



1. Two sets metal reeds, one stop	...	...	...	...	£6	6	0
2. Extra finish, ditto, ditto	...	...	...	...	7	7	0
3. Five stops, ditto, ditto	...	...	...	...	7	10	0
4. Extra finish, powerful tone	...	...	...	...	8	8	0
5. Two sets steel reeds, one stop	...	...	...	...	9	10	0
6. Extra finish, ditto, ditto	...	...	...	...	10	10	0
7. Five stops, ditto, ditto	...	...	...	...	11	0	0
8. Extra powerful, made for concert use	...	...	...	...	13	0	0

From Jones catalog circa 1890.

THE CHROMATIC

ANGLO-GERMAN CONCERTINA

TUTOR

BY

GEORGE JONES.

ENT. & T.M. MARK.

PRICE, TWO SHILLINGS.

PUBLISHED BY G. JONES, INVENTOR OF THE ANGLO GERMAN CONCERTINA
with Perfect Chromatic Scale

160, COMMERCIAL ROAD LONDON, E.

black and white and grouped as on the piano. All were available in qualities "A", "B", and "C" and there was plenty of plating and gilt inlay on the more expensive models.

He also adopted "Celestial" as his trade name, and fitted his concertinas with specially designed "broad steel reeds", advertised as "never wear out, never go out of tune". He had to enlarge the instruments to take them, but it enabled him to offer the most powerful concertina made.

The Salvation Army was a major customer for fifteen years. General Booth himself placed the orders, chiefly for Anglos, which had to be in the same pitch as the brass-band instruments of the Salvationists.¹²

It was an invariable requirement that the letters "S.A." should be incorporated in the fretted design of the end-plates. Jones always told the story of being asked by General Booth to don Salvation Army uniform when calling for orders, and of being reproved for his bad language when he refused what he thought was an impudent request. But it did not deprive Jones of the order.

By 1879 Jones's "Celestial" concertinas were stocked by leading dealers throughout the country, and he also used the trade-name for melodeons and harmoniums of his own manufacture, the latter being called "English" organs.

His premises were commodious, judging by the illustration on the back page of his catalogue. There were three storeys, with separate retail, trade and factory entrances, and there was, at times, some living accomodation. About fifteen people were employed in the factory, and others in the shop, and there was at least one traveller. The one was always remembered because he pawned his samples in a moment of financial stress, and lost his employment. He was a cheerful rogue, and succeeded in remaining on good terms with the family.¹³ Jones does not appear to have used outworkers at this later stage of the business. "I have had fifteen apprentices, most of whom have later done very well in the trade", he said.

How this venerable Victorian found time to teach is a marvel, but in his catalogue he claims some notable pupils among music hall artists and members of the six minstrel troupes then popular. A long testimonial is included from George Seddon, of the City of London Orchestral Union, which says that Jones "elevated the Concertina from being an obscure musical toy to a valuable adjunct to instrumental music".

Jones was particularly proud of having taught the Brothers Webb, musical clowns of international fame who combined their clowning with musicianship of very high order, and used treble and baritone concertinas in a performance of standard classical works.¹⁴

Although the shop included living accomodation, both the needs of the family and Jones's standing as a local tradesman called for his removal to a separate and better dwelling. He moved first to 3, Oriental Street, East India Dock Road, Poplar. An opportunity arose to buy No.1, and he did so in about 1887 with the intention of altering it. But while the builders were at work, he moved the family to Jessamine Villa, Fairlop Road, Leytonstone. This address would have been quite convenient for travel to and from Commercial Road, since Leytonstone and Stepney East Stations were on the Great Eastern Railway route from Fenchurch Street to Loughton, which opened in 1854.

Putting the Children to Work

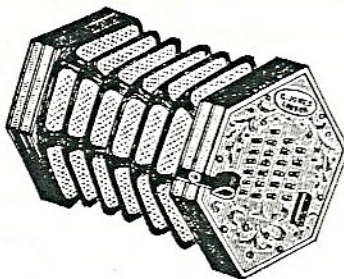
All George Jones's children had to work in his factory, the girls making the bellows, or *bellass* as they are known in the trade to this day. There is no doubt that Jones pinned his hopes for the future on his eldest son Willie who was given the best education and musical training of them all, and for whose benefit a pipe organ was erected in the factory. He became organist at St. Michael's, Paternoster Royal [*founded by Dick Whittington —Ed.*] but unfortunately died suddenly at the age of 27, a loss not only to the family and the business, but to the many street musicians whose instruments he used to repair free of charge.

It is a strange fact that of the seven surviving children (Jeannette as well as Willie died young) who worked in the business, none emerged as a good concertina player, and the girls never played the instrument at all.

The only clue we have about Jones's relations with other employees is that he seems to have been able to retain their services, and some remained in communication with him after many years. For several years he took a house at Margate in the summer and gave the unmarried hands the opportunity of a holiday there also. Presumably, as in Dickens' *Sketches by Boz*, Margate was only considered suitable for tradesmen like George Jones, the better class folk going to Ramsgate. Mrs. Jones remained in Margate for the summer months, while her husband travelled to and from London on the Granville Express. He must have made an early start from Margate to be able to spend in

2 George Jones & Sons, Manufacturers & Importers,

ENGLISH CONCERTINAS.



Forty-eight Keys, Double Action, Screwed Notes, Improved Riveted Levers, Compass from G below the Stave to second C above.

1. Mahogany, four-fold purple bellows, flush, with frames, in covered case, with lock and key £2 2 0
2. Rosewood, superior four-fold green bellows, with nuts, in frames, and brass screws to tops, in mahogany case ... 2 12 6
3. Rosewood, five-fold bellows, brass screws and nuts, in mahogany case 3 5 0
4. Rosewood, moulded tops, bushed holes, five-fold morocco bound bellows, in rosewood case 5 0 0
5. Rosewood, moulded tops, bushed holes, extra fret, German silver studs, five-fold morocco bellows, in rosewood case ... 6 0 0
6. Rosewood, moulded tops, extra finish, with silver studs, gilt morocco bellows, in rosewood case 7 0 0
7. Same as No. 4, but with steel reeds 8 0 0
8. Rosewood, extended fret, German silver studs, morocco bellows, steel reeds, in rosewood case 10 0 0
9. Ebony, extra open fret, inlaid corners, silver or glass studs, German silver screws, plated finger rests, steel reeds, gilt bellows, in ebony case 12 12 0
10. Amboyna, same as No. 9, in Amboyna case 13 13 0
11. Ebony, with nickel plated centre to tops (new model), ivory studs, and best finish throughout, in ebony or leather case 14 14 0

From Jones catalog circa 1890.

Stepney the four or five hours he always claimed to have devoted to the business at that time, for the afternoon train left Victoria Station at 3.15.

Jones extended his interest in property, owning houses in Manchester Road, Cubitt Town and Swanscombe Street, Canning Town, and others off Burdett Road, Limehouse. He lent money on mortgage, mostly at 5%. He had money in Consols, and the Stepney Building Society, of which he was reputedly a founder member. He retired in 1899, leaving his two remaining sons to succeed him in a highly prosperous business. But they lacked their father's devotion to the trade, and possibly did not make a good partnership. Within a few years the concern began to fail, and George Jones returned to sell up and pay off the creditors, at some loss to himself, before settling down to a decade of peaceful retirement. In his declining years he was a stern grandparent, more respected than loved by his grandchildren, and always addressed with Victorian formality by his children.

He moved to Brixton in about 1904, where he gathered new friends. But he never lost touch with his old pupils, the Brothers Webb, who invariably sought his counsel. He kept a very good table and cellar, and over meals would pour out jokes at which the dutiful offspring laughed. All admired his poetry, much of which still exists in manuscript, and is in fact fearful doggerel. He became stone deaf, but would occasionally bring out a small concertina and play "Ecoutez Moi" on it, a drawing-room solo of the Victorian era. He would visit the band performances in the London parks, and often the conductor and bandsmen would come and talk to him in the interval. *The Musical Opinion* printed a biography of him in 1885, and a long notice on his retirement in 1899.

The 1914-18 war brought out his patriotism, and he wrote a number of jingoistic ballads. At the age of 85 he defended his house against looters while the one next door was burning from an incendiary bomb. George Jones died in 1919 and is little remembered now. His last instruments would be eighty years old and are practically museum pieces. As far as is known none of his descendants is in the trade, and only the author (a grandson) is a concertina player, teacher and composer. There are two male descendants in the direct line, with considerable mechanical ability and some musical talent, but quite unconnected with concertinas.

Most concertina makers closed between the wars. Wheatstones survived in the Boosey and Hawkes group, but have discontinued production and sold the plant, so now there is only the family firm of Harry Crabb and Son with the expertise to make concertinas for the current modest revival.¹⁵

I am particularly indebted to Carolyn Merton for considerable help with this article.—FEB

NOTES

1. Manuscript published in *Free Reed*, the Concertina Newsletter, No. 16, November 1973.
2. Illustrated in *Sir Charles Wheatstone*, by Brian Bowers, Science Museum, HMSO, 1975.
3. *A British version of the soirée, now largely defunct, at which family members and their guests would perform musical solos, recite poetry, etc.—Ed.*
4. Wheatstone's patents seem to have been ignored by his competitors long before the expiration of the statutory period of protection—the same can be said for Jones's patents later on.
5. *Frank Butler here refers, of course, to British concertina makers. Since this article first appeared in 1980, a small number of new manufacturers such as C. & R. Dipper, Hamish Bayne, and others have appeared on the scene, to the satisfaction of all enthusiasts. On the other hand, with the untimely death of Neville Crabb, in February of this year, the*

future of this renowned firm is in question.—Ed.

6. Index of deaths at General Register Office, St. Catherine's House, Aldwych, London, WC2. September quarter 1857, Stepney.

7. *It is a curious fact that George Jones was fond of miniature instruments. The firm manufactured a variety of extraordinarily small concertinas and they are still occasionally found; a rare miniature 10-key Jones Anglo recently surfaced in England, for example. The miniature is traditionally played with a very rapid movement of the bellows, and although they are usually thought of as novelty instruments suitable only for a stage act, it is possible to play sensitive music on one. Frank Butler at one time owned two miniatures that had belonged to the Webb brothers.*

George Jones also had a commendable penchant for curiosities of all sorts. The Commercial Road establishment, being then the main road to the London docks, was a favorite haunt of sailors who brought a lot of business to Jones in addition to bizarre souvenirs of their voyages, such as rhinoceros feet.—Ed.

8. The earliest of his concertinas known to survive, number 4996, bears a Lucas Place label and is thought to date from after the fire. The name Lucas Place was abolished by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1874, the music shop premises being re-numbered as 350 Commercial Road.

9. The English concertina, in frequent use in genteel circles at mid-century, is the instrument best suited to classical music, although there is also a Duet concertina, with treble and bass on opposite sides, the type favoured by Alexander Prince, a virtuoso who could play even the Tannhäuser overture on it. At no time did Jones make Duet concertinas, to which he had a marked aversion.

10. *A new German or Italian anglo concertina may still be purchased for under \$100 U.S., but an English-made instrument will cost at least \$1000 and up, depending on the maker—Ed.*

11. The rapid pedalling necessary to maintain the air supply was often a matter of ridicule. John Alvey Turner of Cheapside sponsored this development, and was the principal distributor. But Jones was quite unable to keep up with the demand, and it was ultimately met by a manufacturer in France, probably Bresson, who improved the design and brought out a "lap-organ". [Readers interested in this instrument should read Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume's definitive work *Harmonium: The History of the Reed Organ and its Makers. Highly recommended! —Ed.*]

12. An international pitch was only agreed in 1939.

13. *This was Talbot Barnes, a relation of George Jones's, whose "financial stress" on this and apparently numerous subsequent occasions was a result of his intimate acquaintance with the Demon Rum. He died around 1933 and was buried in Acton Cemetery. Unfortunately, his slumber was rudely interrupted during the Second World War by direct hit from a bomb, which "left a crater where Talbot Barnes had been," as Frank Butler wryly comments: "he always had been a restless individual." Talbot Barnes's son, "Young Tal", emigrated to Australia and had four children. It is not known whether any of them imitated the example set by Talbot Sr.*

George Jones was himself no teetotaler, and took up smoking at the age of 78 on the advice of his doctor! During his perambulations in later years he would occasionally disappear into a pub for a drink, leaving whichever grandson who happened to be in attendance upon him that day cooling his heels outside on the pavement.—Ed.

14. *A droll memoir of these celebrated musicians may be read in the Concertina & Squeezebox double issue #18-19. Aside from the various miniatures and piccolos appropriate to their profession, George Jones also manufactured for the Brothers Webb one of the most peculiar instruments in concertina history: the essentials of a 48-key English system concertina secreted in the body of a truly immense imitation 20-key "Anglo", which from photographs appears to have been about the size of a large chest of drawers, and would have been nearly as portable. It rather prominently featured the Jones name on the ends and thus must have been an effective, if somewhat obvious, advertising gimmick. This instrument, according to recent information supplied by Frank Butler, was apparently bought by Wheatstones, who removed the Jones label, and was last seen around 1960 when the company sold up. The legendary Tommy Williams bought it, presumably "to cannibalise for parts"! Perhaps he had an order from Paul Bunyan. We will try to find a copy of the photo to print in a future issue.*

Jones also produced an experimental English concertina in which all the reeds were enclosed in a swell box, like an organ, which according to Mr. Butler was opened by a lever just beyond the thumbstrap. When FEB inherited this

unusual and apparently beautiful instrument, he found the swell box did not really enhance the tone, and so removed it; this left reed chambers an inch deep which actually did provide a good tone, and he used the instrument that way for years!—Ed.

15. An interesting short piece on this firm, rendered somewhat obsolete by the deaths of Harry and Neville Crabb, is to be found in *Handmade in London* by Andrew Lawson, Cassell 1978. See note 5. —Ed.

JONES CONCERTINAS: *An Editorial Commentary*

Despite the fact that most surviving Jones concertinas are approaching their centenary, great numbers of them are still in regular use today and I have met several players who prefer Jones models above all other makes, including the legendary Jeffries. Their reasons are often more valid than mere chauvinism. The main appeal of a typical vintage Jones instrument seems to lie in its tone. Possibly (if not probably) because of the patented *broad steel reeds*, they almost always have an agreeably soft sound and are excellent for song accompaniment for that reason.

Similarly, Jones concertinas do not tend to be especially fast or dynamic players, although a model in good condition can put on a surprising turn- of-speed for its age, an attribute much appreciated by players of dance music who may also find the cheaper price of the average Jones Anglo in particular a merciful alternative to scaling the dizzying financial heights usually required in this day and age for the procurement of a top Jeffries or Wheatstone. Another real advantage is that the aforementioned tone is rarely head-splitting, making the choice of a Jones appropriate for apartment dwellers with uncouth neighbors who are inclined to hammer on the walls whenever the cat sneezes.

One does not see a Jones English system too often these days, but Anglos are not at all uncommon and these are found in the usual configurations of 20, 30, and 40 keys. I have frequently handled rosewood and metal-ended models with 34 or 36 keys, always very handsome instruments. As Frank Butler observes, the company did not skimp on decoration; some of the English models had engraved strap-bolts and finger-rests, and even the cheaper 20-key models are prettily finished. In my experience a Jones 20- key Anglo will often be superior to other contemporary makes such as Lachenal. Some were made with unusually ample bellows, open fretwork and big round buttons reminiscent of modern German instruments, and when in healthy condition these are very pleasant players.

Jones had three different designs for bellows papers; a star pattern for cheaper instruments, a cross-hatch for what may be termed the mid-range, and a floral for the best quality models.

Jones concertinas were sold under a variety of labels. As F.E.B. mentions, Scates ordered them in quantity and sold them under his own name. Jones had similar arrangements with other dealers, including J. Wallis, whose instruments had customised fretworking showing his initials, after the practise of the Salvation Army. Colin and Rosalie Dipper have even restored a Jones 40-key Anglo stamped *C. Jeffries Maker* with an Edgeware Road address.

Material in the famous tutor is clearly presented, and though there are one or two tearjerkers, most of the music is rather urbane for a mid-Victorian concertina tutor. For readers interested in investigating for themselves we have a new fundraiser: a quality reprint of Jones's original *Tutor for the Anglo-Chromatic Concertina*, out-of-print for many years, may be purchased for \$12.00 postpaid from *Concertina & Squeezebox* P.O. Box 2343, Bellingham WA 98227. — Joel Cowan