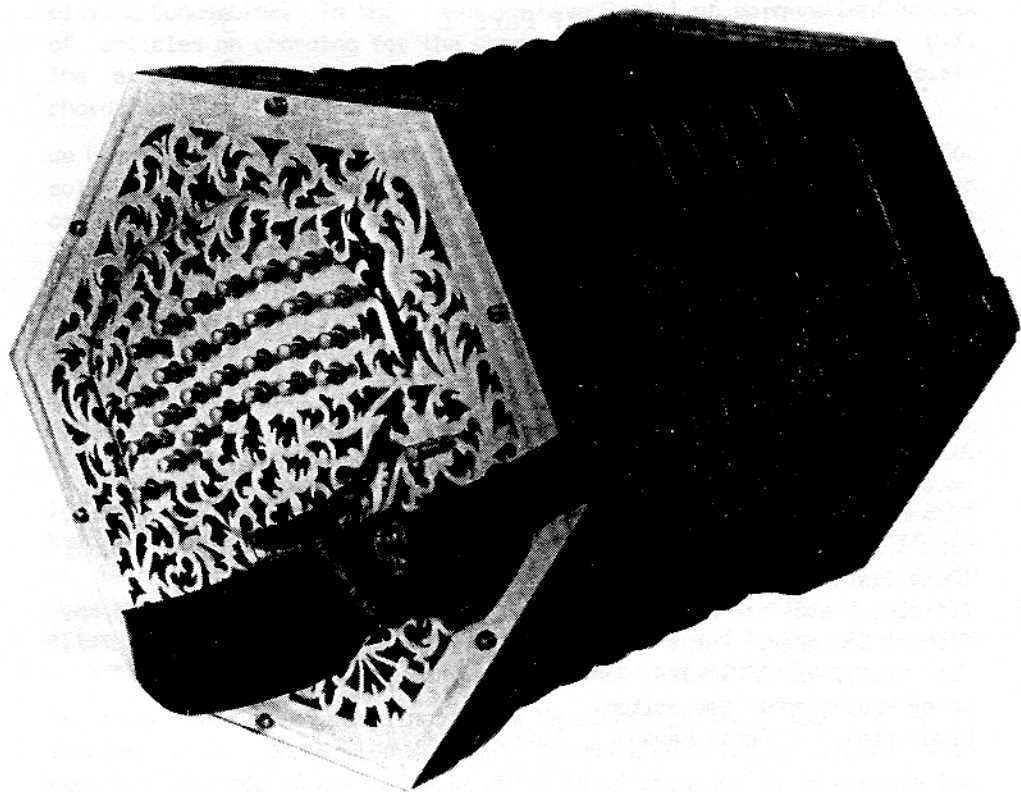


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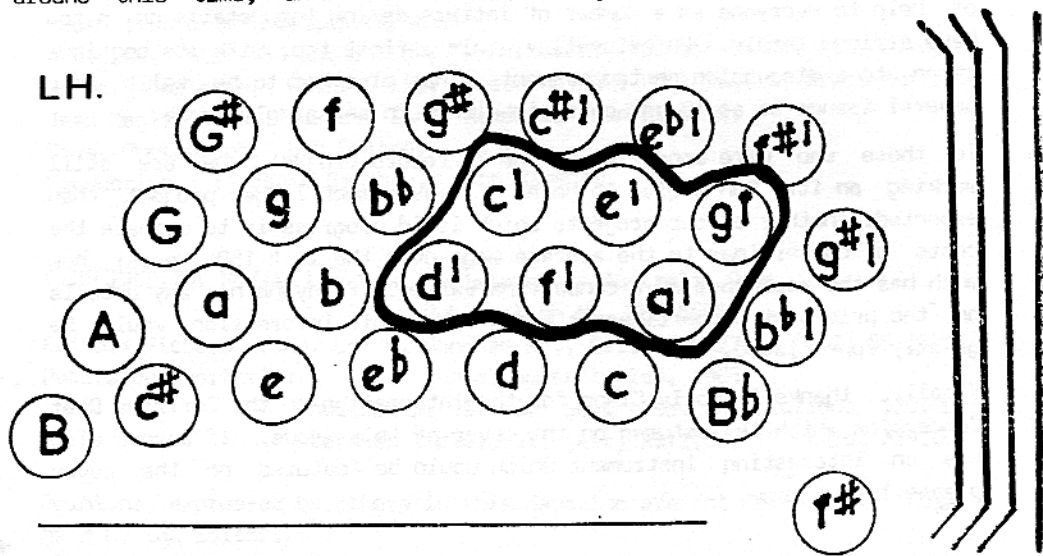
INTERESTING INSTRUMENTS

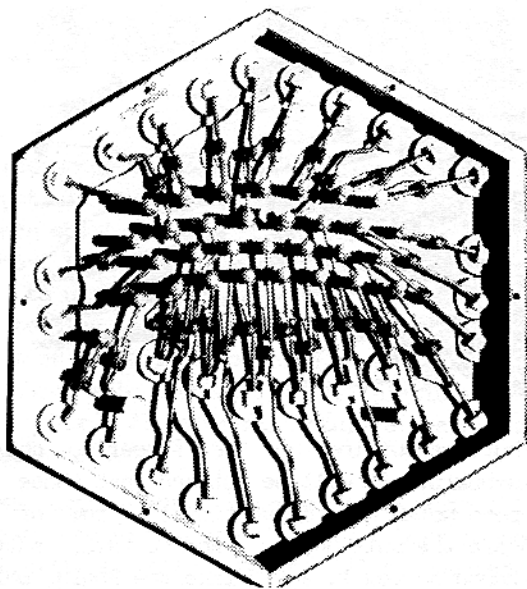
The interesting instrument on the cover of this issue was made by Jeffries Brothers in the late 1920s, and is now owned and played by Polly Clapp of Sydney. She acquired it from Crabbs in 1983, and it was previously used by one of the Liverpool concertina bands, of which there are several still in existence. These bands are rarely to be heard, normally performing only annually in the Liverpool and Southport Orange Day parades. They tend to favour duet concertinas of all systems, and unlike other concertina bands, there is little or no attempt to play parts or harmonies.

The concertina illustrated is typical of Jeffries instruments in its construction, with rivetted action, linear reed chambers (as opposed to the more normal radial chambering), very hard steel reeds, gold embossing on the bellows frame, etc.

Charlie Jeffries was a travelling tinker who dealt in, amongst other things, concertinas, mainly purchased from Crabbs. Eventually, around 1870, he began making his own. The earliest Jeffries instruments were rather crudely made 20 or 26 key anglos, wooden ended, and often signed "Charlie Jeffries, his own make" in ink on the reed pans. The more common metal ended instruments followed, inscribed "C. Jeffries, Maker", sometimes with an address "White Lion Passage, Edgware Road."

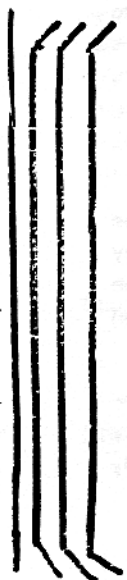
In the early 1920's, Charlie's four sons took over the business, and moved to Praed St., London W.1. The Jeffries Duet was developed at around this time, and the Brothers also began making a few English,



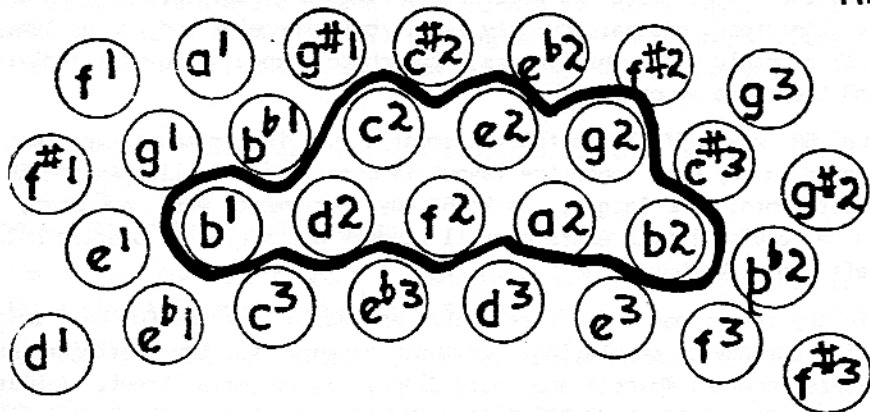


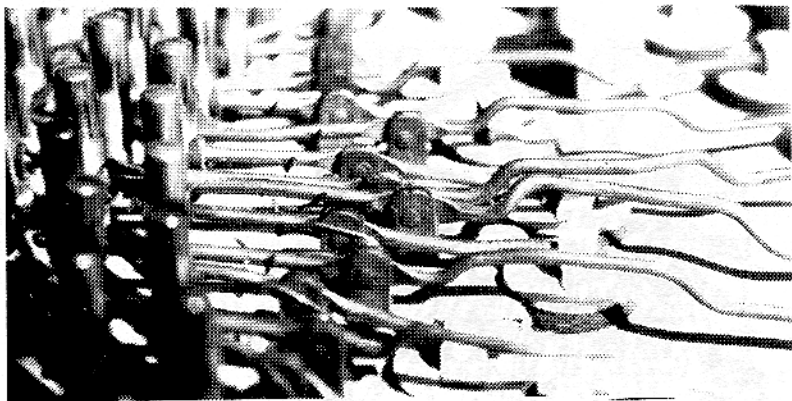
McCann and Triumph (Crane) models, though the Anglo remained their most popular line, with a reputation for sturdiness, reliability, response and volume. Jeffries Brothers apparently ceased trading during the war years.

The initial response of anybody picking up a Jeffries Duet for the first time, or indeed looking at a keyboard diagram, is bewilderment that anyone could ever learn to play such a system. There seems to be no obvious logic, unlike the other duet systems, and the keyboard is often likened to a typewriter! However, astute anglo players will soon realise that there are similarities between the Jeffries Duet and the Anglo.



RH.





If one concentrates on the buttons outlined on the fingering chart, known as the "core" of the keyboard, it will be noticed that those on row 2 are the same as the push notes on a conventional C row of an Anglo, whilst those on row 3 are the pull notes. Accidentals, sharps and flats, are mostly to be found on row 1, again like the Anglo, while row 4 contains an extension of the range, downward on the left hand side and upwards on the right, again as found on the larger Anglos. It seems clear that the Jeffries Duet owes its origins to the Anglo system, not surprising when one considers that Jeffries were Anglo specialists. (Incidentally, the system was apparently never patented, and both Crabb and Wheatstone have produced them, and more recently Colin Dipper.)

Why should one want to play the Jeffries Duet rather than any other Duet system? Personally, I believe the main attraction is the sound of the Jeffries; I can see little advantage of a Wheatstone-made Jeffries system over a McCann or Crane Duet. However the similarities to the Anglo would perhaps appeal to ear players. It is not easy to play the Jeffries from music, due to the irregularity of the layout, and the fact that each octave has a different fingering pattern. Playing scales is therefore not particularly easy, but arpeggios and chords tend to fall smoothly under the fingers, the chord shapes being very individual and therefore memorable.

The 58 key Jeffries is fully chromatic over four octaves, so can be played in any key, once the layout is memorised. Smaller 44 and 50 key instruments, and larger, up to 88 key instruments were produced, the latter giving little extra overall range, but a greater overlap between left and right hands.

If any reader has a Jeffries Duet, and would like any further information or advice on playing, or music arranged for the Jeffries Duet, please contact Malcolm and Polly Clapp, 33 Victoria Street, Ashfield, N.S.W. 2131 (tel. 02 7985953)