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Louis Lachenal

"Engineer and Concertina Manufacturer"

(Pt. 1)

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Preamble: The Sources

Until now there have been only three published sources that provided information about Louis Lachenal (c. 1821-1861), the man who revolutionized concertina making in England in the mid-nineteenth century.

(1) *George Jones:* The most reliable source is Lachenal's near contemporary, George Smith Jones (1832-1919), himself a major concertina maker and author of the invaluable memoir, "Recollections of the English Concertina."[1] His credentials as a witness could hardly have been bettered:[2]

> . . .At eight years of age he was an excellent performer on the French accordion,[3] which was then becoming a very popular instrument. A friend of his father's, Mr. Austin,[4] one of the outdoor workmen at Messrs. Wheatstone's—took great interest in him, and frequently sent him with messages to the firm. . .Soon after, Mr. Skeats [read: Scates],[5] whose many

[1]The full title is "Recollections of the English Concertina from 1844 by George Jones, born February 29th 1832." I have not had access to his original manuscript, but only to a (silently edited?) transcript in Neil Wayne's *Concertina Book: Final Edit* (unpublished typescript, 1986), [63-65]. The "Recollections" appear—heavily edited and with commentary by Frank E. Butler and Neil Wayne—as "The Concertina Trade in Victorian Times: An Echo from the Past—Recollections of the English Concertina Trade by George Jones," *Free Reed: The Concertina Newsletter* 16 (November 1973): 14-20. Here, Wayne gives his source for the "Recollections" as the *International Concertina Association Newsletter* of September 1855 [sic]. Presumably, the date should read September 1955, but I have not been able to verify this. On Jones, see Butler (and Joel Cowan), "Concertinas in the Commercial Road: The Story of George Jones," *Concertina & Squeezebox* 20 (Summer 1989): 5-14.

[2]The short biographical sketch that follows is taken from an unsigned article, "Men We Have Met: George Jones," *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review* 88 (1 January 1885): 203.

[3]The instrument is better known today as the "flutina."

[4]Jabez Austin, described on his death certificate (21 July 1857) as a "master carpenter"; Austin "made the [reed] pans complete for Wheatstone. . .all done by hand, outdoor"; see Jones, "Recollections," [63].

> messages to the firm. . .Soon after, Mr. Skeats [read: Scates],[5] whose many improvements in the English concertina have made his name well known, commenced manufacturing. Mr. Austin being engaged by him on the establishment, introduced his young friend [Jones] to Mr. Skeats, whose service he entered with a view to apprenticeship,[6] but he was compelled to leave after a few months, in consequence of his father thinking that the business would not be a success. Through the kindness of Mr. Skeats, he had learnt the groundwork of reed-making and tuning... Mr. Austin left Mr. Skeats and started on his own account,[7] when young Jones was articled to him for a term, during which he became a perfect master of all branches of the trade. . .

We should bear in mind, though, that it was only towards the end of his life that Jones wrote his fascinating and invaluable "Recollections"[8] and that he was writing about events that happened up to seventy years earlier. That his memory may sometimes have been at fault—as was often his spelling of names—can hardly be doubted.

The two other sources are much further removed from the events of the 1840s-50s that I wish to examine, but nevertheless had close associations with the firm of Lachenal & Co. Moreover, I am glad to have had the privilege of meeting both of them, both through the International Concertina Association and at their workshops.

(2) *Harry Crabb:* Henry Joseph ("Harry") Crabb (d. 1981) was a third-generation concertina maker. Both his grandfather John and his grand uncle Charles worked for Louis Lachenal (see Part II, forthcoming in *FRJ,* vol. 2). Harry told Richard Carlin [9] that his "grandfather's brother [Charles] worked for Lachenal all his life," and that Charles's two daughters—Elizabeth and Louisa[10]—"were there 'til they died, in their seventies, and they were still doin'

[5]Joseph Scates, reed-maker and tuner, worked for Wheatstone's before starting his own concertina manufactury in 1844.

[6]This was in 1844, when Jones was only twelve years old; see Jones, "Recollections," [63].

[7]This must have been in 1850. Jones, who carried on the business after the untimely death of Austin at age forty-two in 1857, claimed—in a George Jones & Sons catalogue of circa 1890—that the firm was "Established 1850"; see also, Jones's "Directions for Repairs" card (S. Chambers Collection) and numerous advertisements.

[8]Wayne, *Concertina Book,* [63], dubs the "Recollections": "The George Jones 'Memoir' of 1913." He offers no evidence for dating the "Recollections" from that year, and other references to them give no specific date. Wayne states that they were "wisely preserved for us by his grandson Frank E. Butler. Sadly, Mr. Butler died on 21 February 1992, and I do not know what has become of the original manuscript.

[9]See Richard Carlin, "An Interview with Harry Crabb," in *English Concertina* (New York: Oak Publications, 1977), 54-56.

[10]I am indebted to Ms. R.A. (Robina) Phillips for most of my information about Charles Crabb's family. She is a great-great-granddaughter of Charles Crabb (1835-1885); her great-grandmother was his daughter, Elizabeth Mary (1861-1921), who married a fellow concertina- (cont.)

action work and things like that." Further, according to Wayne, "on the closure of Lachenals, their last manager, Mr. Sanders, work[ed] for Crabb,"[11] while Tommy Williams (see below) recalled that the other partner, Ballinger, "turned over all the Salvation Army orders to Harry Crabb, whose father was dead then, rather than let Wheatstone's have it."[12] Unfortunately, the chronology and dates of Crabb's early years seem to have gone badly adrift, as will presently become apparent.

(3) *Tommy Williams*: A great character of the concertina world, who played the McCann duet by ear, Tommy Williams[13] started working for Lachenal & Co. as a reed maker and tuner after World War I. Such tasks would always be done as "outwork" (see note 23) because, as Tommy said, "they [Lachenal's] didn't have separate rooms [for the tuners], and you'd interfere with another man's tuning."[14] Tommy would no doubt have heard many stories about the history of the firm from his fellow workers: ". . .they was all pretty old, perhaps been with the firm since it started, around 1829 [*sic*]," he said.[15] Yet most of what Williams said makes perfect sense, and his evidence is very credible.

The Career of Louis Lachenal

I have chosen to discuss Lachenal's career by first setting out statements about him that appear in our three sources and then comparing those statements with information that I have recently discovered in the course of my research about both Lachenal in particular and the history of the concertina in the nineteenth century in general.[16]

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maker, William Francis North (1857-1944), on Christmas Day 1879. Elizabeth's sister, Louisa Matilda (1863-1946), was a tuner of concertinas. Finally, Ms. Phillips has written a thesis entitled "Great Great Grandfather, Concertina Maker," presented for the University of London Diploma in the History of the Family (1 June 1990).

[11]*Concertina Book*, [70].

[12]On the partners in Lachenal & Co., Sanders and Ballinger, see Wayne, "The Tommy Williams Interview—Part 2," and "The Tommy Williams Story—Part 3," *Free Reed: The Concertina Newsletter* 5 (May 1972): 7, and (August 1972): 12, respectively (see note 13). Of the two partners, Williams notes that "Sanders had the bigger share: he owned the property."

[13]Williams was interviewed by Neil Wayne in 1968; transcripts from this interview were published in three installments in *Free Reed: The Concertina Newsletter*, under various titles: "Tommy Williams," 3 (January 1972): 5-6; "The Tommy Williams Interview—Part 2," 5 (May 1972): 6-7; and "The Tommy Williams Story—Part 3," 7 (August 1972): 10-12. An edited version appears in the sleeve notes to his LP recording, *Tommy Williams—Springtime in Battersea*. Free Reed Records, FRR 008 (1976).

[14]"The Tommy Williams Interview—Part 2," 7.

[15]"The Tommy Williams Interview—Part 2," 7.

[16]The references to Jones, Crabb, and Williams refer to the items cited in notes 1, 9, and 13. I have occasionally added or altered punctuation—silently—in order to clarify the sense of the passage.

—*"Messers. Lachenal, Hervy & Shaller came over from Switzerland and started screw making"* (Jones, "Recollections," [63]).[17]

On 29 December 1839, three young Swiss arrived in the Port of London aboard the *Harlequin* from Boulogne. They were Charles Auguste Golay, Elie Golay, and Louis Lachenal. Their Certificate of Arrival lists the occupation of all three as "watchmakers" (see Fig. 1).[18]

Louis Lachenal would then have been eighteen years old,[19] and perhaps he too had been apprenticed as a watchmaker; certainly the Golay brothers were to follow that calling. There are no Directory entries for any of them until the late 1840s, but no doubt they first worked for others before starting their own firms.[20]

London was at this time a center of excellence and innovation in engineering. The workshop of Joseph Clement (1779-1844) in particular was described as "one of the best schools of its time for the training of thoroughly accomplished mechanics"; one of Clement's "ingenious inventions was his Planing Machine. . .For ten years after it was set in motion [in 1825]. . .it was often kept going night and day,— the earnings by the planing machine alone during that time forming the principle income of its inventor. . .some ten pounds for every day's work of twelve hours."[21]

It is tempting to speculate that young Louis Lachenal perhaps honed his skills in such a workshop, but we will probably never know just what he did

[17]Jones can be interpreted in two ways here: either that Hervy and Shaller were already Lachenal's companions when he arrived in England, or that they were simply two fellow-Swiss immigrants who worked with him later. According to Jones, Shaller was a toolmaker whom he (Jones) later employed to make the tooling to build "Anglo" concertinas (c. 1854?). Can it be just coincidence that one of the two servants in the Lachenal household at the time of the 1851 census was named Mary Ann Shaller? Finally, the *Dictionnaire historique et biographique de la Suisse* (Neuchâtel, 1928) includes entries for the surnames "Hervé" and "Schaller," which may be the correct (or at least the original) spelling of the names. About Hervy I know nothing; perhaps it is an error for Golay (see below). Finally, he should quite obviously not be conflated with the French composer-conductor-singer Florimond Ronger (1825-1892), who had close connections with London's Covent Garden and Empire Theatre in the 1870s-1880s and used "Hervé" as a stage name.

[18]Public Record Office HO2 74, Nos. 6587, 8, 9 (the final entries for 1839).

[19]His Census Returns contradict themselves regarding his age. In 1851 (30-31 March), he is stated to be thirty, but in 1861 (7-8 April), he is listed as being thirty-nine (but should have been forty if the 1851 Return is correct). Both Returns agree that he was born in Geneva. The documents are: 1851 Census HO 107/1510 480 (p. 27) and 1861 Census RG 9/192 (p. 25). Finally, his Death Certificate (18 December 1861) gives his age as "40 Years."

[20]*Britten's Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers*, 9th ed. (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1990), 458, has the following entries: "GOLAY, Charles A., 1856-75; 35(6) Davies st., Berkeley sq.; watch maker (dir)."; and GOLAY, Eli, 1849-53; 6 Lr. Charles st., Northampton sq. 1849; 19 Spencer st. 1851; 23 Spencer st. 1853; watch maker (dir)."

[21]Samuel Smiles, *Industrial Biography* (London: John Murray, 1863), 249-51, 257. The term "mechanic" is an old name for an engineer.

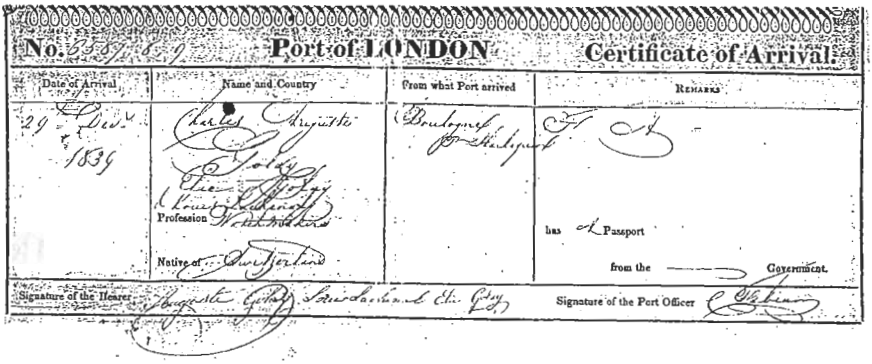

Fig. 1. Detail of the Certificate of Arrival for Charles Auguste Golay, Elie Golay, and Louis Lachenal (Public Record Office, HO2 74, Nos. 6587, 8, 9).

between his arrival in England and his starting to work for Wheatstone & Co. Certainly iron planing was later to make money for him also. The only trace of him in the meantime occurs in September 1841, when "Louis Lachenal of Fitchfield [*sic*] Street, Soho, Mechanic, and Antoine Vieyres, Watchmaker, of Pall Mall," took out a Patent for "machinery for cutting bottle corks."[22]

> *—In 1844 I commenced working for Mr. Austin, who made the pans complete for Wheatstone, the inventor, all done by hand, outdoor;[23] Mr. Dowsett made tops,[24] bellows frames and cases outdoor; Mr. Card,*

[22]British Patent No. 9066, 4 September 1841. A Machinery for Cutting Cork." The reference to "Fitchfield" Street in the Patent is problematic, since no street of this name existed. It may be a misprint for Litchfield (as it was then spelled) Street—Lachenal was later to live in King Street, which joined with Litchfield Street—or perhaps Titchfield Street, but I have not been able to trace Lachenal in either of those streets in the 1841 census. Soho was then a very cosmopolitan area of London, full of craftspeople since its settlement by Huguenot refugees starting in the late seventeenth century. It would have had obvious attractions for French-speaking watchmakers and engineers.

[23]In other words, as "outwork," work done away from the shop or workroom.

[24]This is the traditional name for the ends or fretwork of the concertina. To judge from the tasks he carried out, Robert Dowsett must have been a "fancy cabinet maker." Such work more typically consisted of making tea caddies and ladies' work boxes, which were usually rosewood veneered on a deal carcase—just like a concertina case. The surviving "Wages Books" (see below) show that he was paid weekly, usually four or five pounds in 1845-1846 and five, six, or seven pounds in 1848-1849, and that he always signed for his money.

According to Henry Mayhew's letter to the *Morning Chronicle* (22 August 1850), times had grown hard for fancy cabinet makers during the previous twenty years. One of his informants stated: "I've now been on tea caddies, 12 inch, with raised tops. The materials—rosewood veneers, deal, locks, hinges, glue and polish cost me £1 for the dozen. I must work hard and very long hours, 13 or more a day [seven days a week, with the help of his wife and daughter], to make two dozen a week, and for them I only get, at the warehouse, 28s a dozen. . .That's 16s a week for labour." I am sure that Dowsett must have been employing others to be drawing such large sums each week. There is a London directory entry for him in 1852 (cont.)

> *bellows;*[25] *Mr. Jackson, metalwork; Mr. Rock Chidley* [26] *and Mr. Dove* [27] *were finishers; Mr. Saunders*[28] *and Mr. Scates, tuners. Every part was then made by hand; no press tools were then in use . . . About 1847 Mr. Nicholds and his sons were engaged to make tools to produce the metal-work, they being machinists* (Jones, "Recollections,"[63]).

Jones worked only briefly as a concertina maker at this time (aged twelve), as his father, "thinking the trade would not be any good, refused to apprentice [him] to Scates."[29] There would, therefore, seem to be a gap of some six years before he once again worked in the concertina trade with Austin, circa 1850.

I believe that Jones is here confusing some tool making undertaken by Nickolds circa 1844-1845 with the tool making for "mass production"undertaken by Louis Lachenal circa 1847-1848. Certainly, instruments made in 1845 start to show evidence of new tooling,[30] both in connection with the shoes (reed frames) and the actions (lever mechanisms). They exhibit two features that were to reappear later in instruments built by the Nickolds family.

The first of these appears in the brass nut or reed clamp (the rectangular clamping plate) that holds the reed in place on the shoe. Formerly, this nut had two holes drilled through it for the note screws (see above) to pass through, but Wheatstone concertinas of this period have the nut grooved by a nibbling tool at either end to receive the screws.

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as a concertina maker (Wayne, *Concertina Book*, [71]), and another in the *Musical Directory, Register and Almanack*, 1853, at 18, New Gloster Street, Hoxton.

[25]According to Jones, "Recollections," [64], James Card later worked for George Case and Keith, Prowse & Co., as well as for Jabez Austin/George Jones. He appears in London directories in 1856 as a concertina bellows maker at 104, Shaftesbury Street and in 1859 as a concertina maker at 63, Son Street (as the street is cited in Wayne, *Concertina Book*, [75]).

[26]Rock Chidley is said to have been a nephew of Charles Wheatstone. The work of a "finisher" would have involved the inspection and final assembly of the parts made by the various specialist craftsmen employed by Wheatstone's. Chidley set up his own business circa 1850, as he appears as a "concertina and musical instrument manufacturer & music publisher, 135, High Holborn" in the *Post Office London Directory*, 1851. In his prospectus for the Great Exhibition of 1851, he claimed to have inspected nearly three-quarters of Wheatstone's production while he worked there.

[27]William Dove set up his own short-lived business circa 1849; there are London directory entries for him in 1850-1852 (Wayne, *Concertina Book*, [67]) and the *Musical Directory, Register & Almanack*, 1853, at 20, Poland Street, Oxford Street.

[28]A letter from J.A. Black to the Editor of *Musical Opinion & Music Trade Review* 208 (1 January 1895), [222], refers to "T.W. Saunders, who, with his father (the first tuner of the concertina, and the first man to produce a free reed in this country) was in the employ of Sir Charles Wheatstone."

[29]Jones, "Recollections," [63].

[30]We see it, for example, on Wheatstone No. 1006, a forty-eight-key instrument, sold to Mr. Chappel on 22 November 1845 (S. Chambers Collection).

The second innovation, the first real "engineered" improvement in concertina-making, is the lever construction often referred to as "hook action"or, more commonly—because it was used in virtually all Lachenal instruments—as "Lachenal action." Ironically, I believe that this was the one design improvement, used in the later "mass-produced" models, that had nothing to do with Louis Lachenal, as it appeared too early for his involvement. I find it not without significance that the Nickolds family would use a similar (but open-sided) lever mechanism in concertinas of their own manufacture, perhaps reclaiming it for themselves while getting around Wheatstone's 1844 Patent[31] Shown in Figure 16 of the Patent, it is described as being advantageous in that "the lever can be instantly detached from its bearing to be examined" and—perhaps more significantly(?)—"the workmanship required is less."

This Patent is otherwise largely an attempt to prolong the life of Wheatstone's original Symphonium Patent of 1829,[32] which had covered the principle—but not the specific details—of his yet-to-be-invented English concertina. It was a classic ploy. Such "Improvement" Patents provided a "way in which a monopoly in an important invention [could] be kept alive after the patent ha[d] come to an end. . .by patenting large numbers of minor improvements to the original invention. . ."[33] It was evidently not successful, as most of Wheatstone's employees seem to have set up as concertina makers in their own right during the next fourteen years (the life of the patent), starting with Joseph Scates in 1844, the very year in which the patent was taken out.[34]

—[There] was difficulty in obtaining note screws.[35] *Lachenal . . . started screw making . . . and was introduced to Wheatstone's . . . Mr. Lachenal, being a clever tool maker, soon displaced Nickolds and sons, who started to make concertinas in Clerkenwell* (Jones, "Recollections," [63]).

[31]British Patent No. 10,041, 8 February 1844: "Improvements on the Concertina and other Musical Instruments, in which the Sounds are Produced by the Action of Wind on Vibrating Springs."

[32]British Patent No. 5803, 19 June 1829: "A Certain Improvement or Certain Improvements in the Construction of Wind Musical Instruments." Both this patent and the account given in the *Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature and Art* (April-June, 1830): 397, of Charles Wheatstone's lecture at the Royal Institution, 21 May 1830, give the name of the instrument as *Symphonium.* However, later sources—including music published for the instrument by Wheatstone & Co.—use the more correct form: *Symphonion* (italics added).

[33]See T.A. Blanco White and Robin Jacob, *Patents, Trade Marks, Copyright and Industrial Designs* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1970), 50.

[34]Scates first appears as "concertina maker" in the 1845 *Post Office London Directory*, which would have been printed the previous year. It was in 1628 that the Statute of Monopolies established the life of a patent at fourteen years, the term of two apprenticeships.

[35]These are the small machine screws that clamp the concertina reeds in place on their shoes (reed plates).

We are fortunate that there survive from this period two dark-red leather notebooks that list the weekly payments to Wheatstone staff and outworkers.[36] The first is titled "Mens' [*sic*] Wages," and covers the period 25 January 1845-1 August 1846. The name "Nickold" appears on the very first page, drawing the sum of 17/6 (shillings/pence) and various such (low) amounts every following week; the largest sum he is paid for one week's work is £1.16.0 (pounds, shillings, pence) on both 2 and 9 May 1846.

"Mr. Lachenal" appears only occasionally, and is paid larger sums: for example, £5.11.0 on 8 Feburary 1845, £4.0.0 on 14 June 1845, and the enormous sum of £33.0.0 on 12 July 1845. However, from 9 August 1845 (£2.6.0), payments to Lachenal become weekly and increasingly larger than those to Nickolds, rising to £7.18.0 by the end of the book, a year later.

More is revealed on 16 May 1846, when the entry reads "Mr. Lachenal for Men's Wages £7.5.0," while "Nickold" receives only £1.4.0. Thus Nickolds was still an ordinary employee, while Louis Lachenal was by then employing staff on behalf of Wheatstone & Co.

A very significant entry appears on 20 May 1846: "Carpenter on a/c [account] for shop fittings in Georges [sic] Yd. £1.10.0." It would be another two years before a Directory entry would appear for "Lachenal Louis machinist George yard, Princes st., Soho,"[37] but this 1846 payment shows that Wheatstone & Co. must have helped Lachenal already set up or improve his workshop there.[38]

[36]They are accompanied by production books and sales ledgers, the set as a whole being known as the "Red Books." They were preserved by the late Harry Minting, who was Wheatstone's Sales Manager at the time of the move to the Boosey & Hawkes factory and the winding down of the business. Housed for a number of years at the former Concertina Museum, Belper, Derbyshire (under the numbers C 1055 and C 1056, and cited as such in the literature listed below), they are now at The Horniman Museum, London, where they await cataloguing. On the set of books, see Wayne, "The Wheatstone English Concertina," *The Galpin Society Journal* 44 (1991): 144-5; Allan W. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 146; idem, "Who Bought Concertinas in the Winter of 1851? A Glimpse at the Sales Accounts of Wheatstone & Co.," in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Selected Proceedings of the First Conference*, ed. Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 65 and n. 8.

[37]*Post Office London Directory*, 1848. George Yard is now called Dansey Place. It was later rebuilt as a result of the considerable demolition required to drive Shaftesbury Avenue through the district (completed 1886). Princes Street is now known as Wardour Street.

Lachenal's neighbors in George Yard were William Harpur, coachmaker, and Michael Trenklee, music engraver. Interestingly, there was already a link between Wheatstone and Trenklee, since the latter engraved for Wheatstone & Co. some songs by Samuel Godbé (c. 1796-6 May 1841), who performed on the Symphonium in 1830. I have two such songs, *Mary Lee* and *They Knew Me Not* in my collection.

[38]Unfortunately, the Westminster Rate Books shed no light on just when Lachenal moved into George Yard, as the column for "Occupier" is never filled in.

The entries for him in the *Post Office London Directory* for the period 1850-1853 would change to read "machinist, iron planer, small screw & piano rivet manufacturer," and he would still describe himself as "engineer"on most official documents.[39] But the firm's advertised claim from 1866[40] to be "20 years maker of the English patent concertina" would seem to be quite justified, as Lachenal was evidently already deeply involved with Wheatstone & Co. and concertina making by 1846. The second of these surviving notebooks, titled "Wages Etc 1848," covers the period January 1848-30 June 1849. Weekly payments to "Mr. Lachenal" start at ,8.14.8 on the first page and end at ,24.0.0 on the last. The entry for 2 June 1849 once again makes it clear that this is money "to pay workmen"; it is by far the largest single expenditure each week. There are no more payments to Nickolds in this book, and we know that the Nickolds family started to manufacture concertinas themselves at 5, Woodbridge Street, Clerkenwell, in 1848.[41]

[39]Including the birth certificates for his children and his 1851 Census Return: "Master Engineer."

[40]*Post Office London Directory*, 1866.

[41]John Nickolds (1787-1862) is listed as a "tool maker" in the 1848 *Post Office London Directory*, but it is probably significant that he moved to new premises, at 5, Woodbridge Street, Clerkenwell, that year. His directory entries would continue to read "machinist" for the next few years (but so too did Louis Lachenal's) until the entry changes to "Nickolds Bros. concertina ma.[nufacturers]" at the same address in 1854. F.C. Nickolds (son of the above, 1826-1892) & Son advertised in *The Concertinist's Guide* (London: Howard, [1888]) as "Established 1848," while an advertisement for Nickolds in *The Musical Directory, Register & Almanack*, 1874, indicates that the firm is "established 26 years." A very interesting "trade card" has survived for a sometime partnership of Nickolds, Crabb & Co. (it probably dates from the period 1860-1864); it reads:

NICKOLDS, CRABB & CO.
MANUFACTURERS OF THE
Improved English Concertina
AND INVENTORS OF THE ANGLO-GERMAN
ESTABLISHED 1848
(Late of Messrs. Wheatstone & Co.)
5, WOODBRIDGE STREET, CLERKENWELL
LONDON

INSTRUMENTS MADE TO ORDER AND TUNED TO ANY PITCH

Concertinas, Flutinas, Accordions &c Tuned & Repaired

ALL KINDS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS SUPPLIED ON THE LOWEST TERMS

Merchants and Shippers Supplied

The document is reproduced (very indistinctly) in Wayne, *The Concertina Museum: An Illustrated Checklist and Historical Introduction* (Belper: Free Reed Press, 1986), 70.

It would seem reasonable to speculate that Lachenal's increasing involvement with the firm of Wheatstone & Co., together with other engineering work he would still have been carrying out (as witnessed by his *Directory* entries), gave him the financial security and confidence to marry. He must have journeyed home to Switzerland in 1847, for on 10 November of that year, he returned to England through the Port of Folkestone "with his wife."[42] Her maiden name was Jeanne (or Françoise[43]) Marie Elisabeth Irion, and she came from Ferney Voltaire, just across the French border from Geneva.

I have found no trace of their marriage in England, and it no doubt took place either in Ferney Voltaire or Geneva before their trip to London. She was to be known in England as Elizabeth Lachenal. The first of their eight children, Marie, was born at home on 13 August 1848. The address on the Birth Certificate is 26, King Street,[44] so we know that Lachenal was then living in the row of houses behind which lay George Yard and his workshop.

1848 was also to witness the birth of a new model of concertina, with "important improvements" at "a very considerable reduction in price," as announced in the following Wheatstone price list of that year:

By Her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent.
THE
CONCERTINA
A NEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENT,
MANUFACTURED BY THE PATENTEES,
MESSRS. WHEATSTONE & Co.
20, CONDUIT STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON

THE CONCERTINA possesses qualities which have never hitherto been combined in a single Musical Instrument. It is equally adapted to the most expressive performance, and the most rapid execution; whether confined to the succession of single notes, as most other wind instruments are, or in harmony of two, three, or four parts. From the remarkable simplicity of its fingering, and the great facility with which its tones are produced and sustained, it is very easily learnt; and as it cannot be sounded out of tune, the most perfect crescendos and diminuendos may be obtained, without the practice requisite on other instruments. To these advantages may be added the peculiar beauty of its tones, and its extreme portability.

The performances of Signor Giulio Regondi, Mr. George Case, Mr. Richard Blagrove, and others, at the principal Concerts during the past and

[42]Certificate of Arrival. Public Record Office, HO2 163, Nos. 1868/69.

[43]She was to change her first name from "Jeanne" to "Françoise" on the birth certificates of their children.

[44]Now part of Shaftesbury Avenue.

present years, have frequently enabled the Musical Public to judge of the effects and capabilities of this Instrument. An inspection of the music published will shew that, either for solos or accompaniments, it is not less efficient than the instruments in present use; whilst in its peculiar effects, and particularly in those of its harmonies, it is unrivalled. The Concertina is capable of performing music written for the Flute or Violin, besides music expressly composed or arranged for the instrument.

All the instruments in the following list have, besides a complete chromatic scale, additional notes for the purpose of making the chords in different keys more perfect and harmonious than they can be on the Organ or Pianoforte, and for rendering the fingering of the scales in different keys equally easy.[45]

In the single-action Concertinas, the tones are produced only when the bellows is moved in one direction; and it is necessary to attend to the same rules, with respect to the management of the [air] valve, as those regarding the management of the breath in singing, or in performing on wind instruments.

In the double-action instruments, the tones are produced whichever way the bellows is moved, and its management is then much easier, and resembles that of the bow of the Violin and Violoncello. The double-action Concertina is more easy to learn; but, with more practice, equally good effects may be obtained with the single-action instrument.

N.B. No instruments, except those manufactured by Messers. **WHEATSTONE** and Co. are constructed with the improvements for which a second Patent was obtained by them in February, 1844, and which all other parties are prohibited from employing. This notice is rendered necessary by the fact, that, since the expiration of the original Patent, instruments have been imported from abroad, as well as made in England, with very inferior workmanship, which can give but a very imperfect idea of the capabilities of the improved Concertina. Notwithstanding these important improvements, a very considerable reduction in price of the various descriptions of the Concertina has been recently effected, as the subjoined list will show.

[45]This refers to the "meantone" tuning in which the concertina had fourteen notes per octave, with separate buttons for D sharp/E flat and for G sharp/A flat, and with the E flat and A flat sounding higher than the D sharp and G sharp, respectively.

1848.

COMPASS OF INSTRUMENTS.[46]	SINGLE ACTION Plain			DOUBLE ACTION Plain			Best		
	£	*s.*	*d.*	£	s.	*d.*	£	*s.*	*d.*
Scale from b *to* d''' *Two octaves and Two Notes, 32 Keys.*	5	15	6	8	8	8	11	0	0
Scale from b *to* a''' *Two octaves Seven Notes, 40 Keys.*	7	0	0	11	0	0	14	0	0
Scale from g *to* c'''' *Three octaves and Three Notes, 48 Keys*	8	0	0	14	0	0	16	16	0

TENOR CONCERTINA.

Scale, Three Octaves, from c *to* c''' 16 Guineas.

BASS CONCERTINA.

Scale, Three Octaves, from C *to* c'' 16 Guineas.

The Tenor Concertina is a little larger than the Treble Instrument. The fingering is the same, but the sounds produced are an octave lower.

The Bass concertina is nearly double the size of the Treble Instrument; it has a single action, the fingering is the same, but the sounds produced are two octaves below those of the Treble Instrument.

The above Instruments are also made in sets, accurately tuned together, according to the standard pitch, for the performance of Trios, Quartets, &c.

A Case is provided with each Instrument.

(Part II of this article will appear in FREE-REED JOURNAL, Vol. II.)

[46]Besides naming the pitches, the document notates them on the staff. I use the following octave indications: C, c, c', c'', c''', c'''', in which c' = "middle c."