

**THE**

# **INTREPID REPAIRER MAGAZINE**

**ISSUE 101**

**SUMMER  
2021**



*Magazine of the  
National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers*





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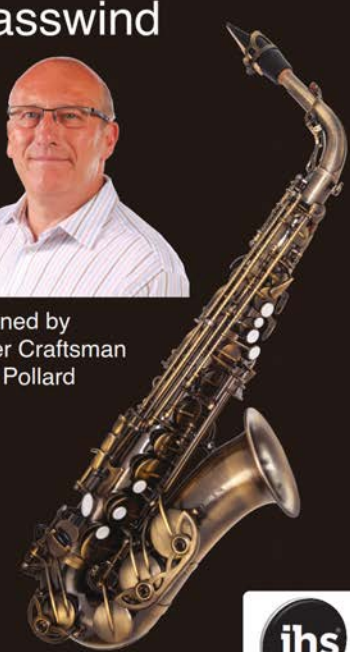


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### Your Intrepid Repairer

We welcome articles and comments from our members.

Deadlines for copy (space permitting):

**1st of March, June, September & December.**

Please send copy as Word documents or PDFs and your pictures as high resolution .jpps or .pngs to: [namireditor@gmail.com](mailto:namireditor@gmail.com)

**Please note:** All or any views or opinions, suggestions or technical procedures put forward with this magazine do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers or its members, and no legal liability will apply to NAMIR as a result thereof. Such views and opinions expressed in articles are personal to the writer of the article only.

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### Welcome to the Intrepid Repairer Issue 101

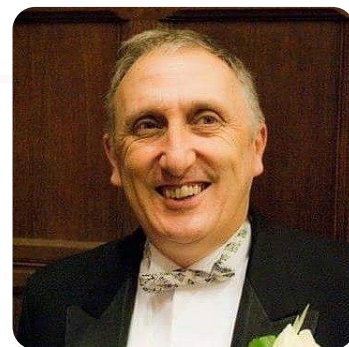
Hopefully the restrictions placed on us by the COVID-19 situation over the last year will start to ease considerably over the next couple of months, and we can all get back to some kind of 'normal' very soon.

I've identified a problem with the Adobe shared documents link, but have now found out what it is and why there have been issues with it. The link on the next page is correct as of May 2021, so you can all access the shared documents folder by copying it and pasting it into your internet browser. I may be wrong, but it seems that Adobe in their infinite wisdom randomly cause these links to expire, hence users having to create new ones. I'll keep you all posted and will update the Facebook page with the new links if this keeps happening.

Please do avail yourselves of the new list of parts available from Dawkes Music as supplied by Sunniva - some true bargains to be had there, and we are very grateful to Dawkes Music for making them available exclusively to NAMIR members (*see page 7*).

Regards

**Colin G Dance - Editor**



## FREE Expert Help & Advice

From our team of Friendly Faces

Below are some of our specialist repairers who are happy to offer help and advice to members. Please feel free to contact them if you need help with tricky repairs, tools, spares or with any NAMIR related problems.



**Gale Lawson 020 8368 4296**  
[gale@galelawson.plus.com](mailto:gale@galelawson.plus.com)  
All brass instruments repairs.  
Trombone slide specialist. Ultrasonic cleaning expert.  
Chairman of NAMIR



**Reg Thorp 01730 814782**  
[r13pres@btinternet.com](mailto:r13pres@btinternet.com)  
Author of Complete Woodwind Repairer. A must have volume for every workshop.



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Member of NAMIR & NAPBIRT



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Saxophone & Woodwind repairs.



**Mike Huntriss**  
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Woodwind repairs  
specialising in clarinet and sax.

### **Welcome to new members:**

**Kim Boller; professional member (Brass, Woodwind and Strings)**

**- from Robertsbridge, East Sussex**

**Teemu Kallio; professional overseas (Brass and Woodwind)**

**- from Kuopio, Finland**

***At a recent committee meeting on Zoom, the subject of 'members meetings' was discussed as it appeared there was some confusion over the use of the word 'meeting' in describing them. Suffice to say, these meetings are more of a 'members conference' and are definitely not just 'committee meetings'.***

***To encourage more people to attend these get-togethers - often held at Dawkes and the like, we will refer to them as 'member conferences' in future as they are great days not to be missed!***

NAMIR members can access documents and information from the NAMIR download site using this link:

**<https://shared-assets.adobe.com/link/26d4f73d-b10d-4c35-7f81-bb446d63e3b7>**

Once on the site, add it to your "Favourites" & rename as NAMIR Downloads

Items currently available are:

Past Issues	Namir Logos
Namir Leaflet	Articles of Association
Annual Accounts	Stolen Instrument Listings
Membership List	Serial Number Lists
Leak Lights:	A Rough Guide by Simon Bruton
Curt Altarac:	Saxophone Repair Procedures.
Elinor Barlow:	Bookkeeping Advice

### **NAMIR News**

NAMIR News emails are sent out from time to time. If you are not receiving these, please inform;

***[elinor.namir.committee@gmail.com](mailto:elinor.namir.committee@gmail.com)***

***Please keep her updated with any change in your contact details for the database and the web site.***

NAMIR will send out emergency messages about **stolen or lost instruments** providing that you include contact details and the owner's permission.

***Please make use of the group Facebook page for other queries & notices.***

### First Understand the Problem - then Do the Repair.

I was interested to read the question and answers, regarding the repair of a sticking cornet valve, which were reproduced in the recent Intrepid Repairer. It has always been my philosophy that I would not commence a repair until I understood how the item works and what was wrong with it. All the advice given was valid for specific problems but to go straight to something like lapping in a valve without first finding out if that was the problem has prompted me to put pen to paper. I thought it would be worth listing what I would do to find out the cause of a sticking valve.

- 1) Bent valve stem. If the valve stem rubs the rim of the valve cap at any point it will probably stick. Remove the finger button depress the valve and check that the stem is still central in the hole of the cap.
- 2) Remove the bottom cap. On several instruments I have found that the excessive tightening of the cap distorts the casing resulting in the valve sticking at the bottom of its travel.
- 3) Press the valve down so that it sticks and apply hand pressure to the relevant slide. Apply in both directions. If the valve releases then at some time sufficient pressure has been applied to distort the valve casing at the point where the slide arms join it. For instance, sitting on the instrument or a badly fitting case.
- 4) Take the valve out and remove the spring and the guide. Replace the valve stem and put the valve back into the casing. If it falls through the casing without snagging then the problem is with the valve guide, most likely the slots where the guide runs up and down. If the guide snags then the valve will appear to stick. Damage to these slots can sometimes happen when a screwdriver has been placed between the slots in order to help remove a seized valve stem.
- 5) Is it the correct valve guide? There are slight differences between many of the guides in use today.
- 6) If the valve sticks at the bottom of its normal travel then the base of the casing is restricted, probably by a mix of lime scale, dirt and old grease. Brush on some acidic lime scale remover gel and allow to stand for an hour.

This should soften the deposit and allow easy removal. (See 7 below).

*Note: This build up will have taken place over time whilst the top felt has been gradually compressed to an extent that the valve finally meets the build up.*

7) By this stage the problem with the valve action should have been identified. If the inside of the casing is dirty then a light lapping can be done to clean it, possibly with a detergent (washing up liquid) or a detergent/Brasso mix. This is done to remove the dirt not the brass from the casing wall.

8) Finally, removing metal from a damaged casing can be done by lapping and/or reaming. This is the final stage and should be contemplated with care once all other possible problems have been eliminated. Do not forget that valves have moved freely up and down in the instrument, often for years. Such action wears the brass of the casing away with time, rather than the harder nickel of the valve. Only damage or distortion of the casing can justify the removal of metal from the internal wall.

**Jim Pagington,**

**Retired NAMIR member.**



**Bb Cornet**



We had a bit of a tidy up at Dawkes Music during 2020, and we've re-fitted the whole shop, made a new workshop modelled on Jack Dawkes' original workshop in the shed where it all started, and we even made a Trade Workshop specially made for our fellow repairers.

In the Trade Workshop we want to offer support in choosing tools, offer exchange of technique, training and advice tailored to fit each repairer. We want to showcase tools and materials that we find interesting, offer our combined experience of over 70 years in the trade and are looking forward to further strengthening our relationship with all our trade customers.

You're all invited once we can safely meet each other again.

Hopefully we'll see you soon to show you all our exciting new projects in person.

In the meantime we're getting rid of some materials that are not on our system and won't be sold online. Many of these have been in the drawers for quite some time, so we'll offer them to any repairers who might find them useful, as a NAMIR exclusive. We can supply you with photos of any of the parts by email, and we will post an album on the NAMIR Ltd. Facebook group for those who have access to that.

To buy any of these items please email Sunniva on [sun@dawkes.co.uk](mailto:sun@dawkes.co.uk) with the parts you're interested in. It's "first come first served", so get in while you can.

*Best wishes from all of us in the team at Dawkes Music.*

Description	Quantity	Size	Price
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Assorted Flute Pads	75g	assorted	£7
Flute pads w/o hole	10	25.5x 3 mm	£2
Flute pads w/o hole	9	26.5x3 mm	£2
Red Sound Flute pads w/o hole	9	17.5x2 mm	£3
Pearl Flute pads	8g	assorted	£3
Mypad Flute pads	13	assorted	£2
Old style Yamaha Flute pads	5 sets	assorted	£10
White Flute pads	10	18mm	£2
Hermes Flute pads	13	assorted	£2
Yellow skin clarinet pads	20	12.5mm	£3
Yellow skin clarinet pads	17	9.5mm	£3
Deluxe yellow skin clarinet pads	20	9mm	£3
Valentino joint "corks"	1 set	assorted	£2
No brand white shouldered pads	17g	assorted	£2
Clarinet pads	11g	16mm	£6
Valentino pads	11	assorted	£2
kid leather pads	17	assorted	£3
White Flute pads	4	15mm	£2
Valentino sample pack	1	assorted	£2
Valentino Flute pads white	9	18.50 mm	£3
Valentino Flute pads White	11	19.50 mm	£3
Valentino Clarinet pads white	9	16 mm	£3
Assorted Mypad Clarinet pads	13g	assorted	£2

Description	Quantity	Size	Price
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Plastic resonators	26g	30.7 mm	0
Hermes copper reso			
Sax pads	6	36x4mm	£3
Hermes Assorted Sax pads	13	assorted	£3
CLG Ass. Bassoon pads	20g	assorted	£5
Green felt bumpers	15	9x12mm	£2.50
Yanagisawa clip on plastic resos	17	assorted	0
MyPad Oboe regent set	1	assorted	£2
Natural cork water key corks	5g	9.8x4.8mm	£3
CLG Ass. Bassoon pads	13g	assorted	£4
Prestini Copper reso sax pads	4	43x4mm	£2
Lucien Deluxe clarinet pads	15	assorted	£5
White flute pads	14	24mm	£4
white rubber pads	29	9mm	£1
CLG Brown leather clar pads	6	15.5	£3
Mypad white flute pads	10	16x3mm	£2
Assorted Clarinet and oboe pads	58	assorted	£4
Assorted domed reso sax pads	22	assorted	£4
Small mixed woodwind pads	28g	assorted	£5
Medium Mixed Woodwind pads	20g	assorted	£5
Large Flute and Clarinet pads	116g	assorted	£10
Small mixed woodwind pads	77g	assorted	£8
Broken pieces of white shellac/French cement	73g	N/A	£0
Synthetic Buffet style cork	200g	assorted	£2



## Q&As from our Facebook page



**From Dick Hamer:**

*Hi David, don't know if it will help, but instead of paper, I have used a little piece cut from old laundered ladies tights (donated by a friend, honest!!- they are great for ragging around posts on flutes and clarinets). You can stretch it over the tenon, very thin but does the job without too much pressure being exerted, and easy to trim afterwards. No need to glue if you don't want to.*

**From Jason Smith:**

Hi. Can anyone help please? I'm looking for a collar for a trumpet extended main slide section. As you can see from the pics the one in question has snapped. I've tried to take out the small bit left in to rebuild but it's not budging and there's not enough to get to grips with. I need the collar to re-fix to the inner slide. The picture shows how it should go together. The model of trumpet is King liberty model. Size (inner diameter) is 0.480" or 12.20mm. Length 1.485" or 37.75mm. I can adjust the length if required so the diameter of tube is the more important. Thanks.

**From Bill Drain:**

*Looks like it's probably straightforward to repair if you are used to this kind of work but a bit difficult to advise on as without seeing better pics etc. wouldn't want to lead u up garden path. Again hard to tell from your photos but a full leg is probably easiest method.*

*Think probably worth talking to McQueens as they are prob nearest to you with the stocks of brass tubing etc. Whatever you decide watch out n take care especially if it's a customers pride n joy as all that old tubing will be fragile now.*

**From David Kingston:**

Hello everyone. I have a buffet E13 for repair. Beside the repair its in for the bell rings are loose. In the past I have remedied this with a Dampit in the case for a while the keeping the instrument in a good environment. Reg Thorp recommends gluing the flare rim and paper to secure the other. The thing that worries me with this is the bell is very tight on the tenon and the cork is flush. My feeling is the wood needs to be hydrated. I'm just wondering what people thoughts are on this.

**From Alan Gibson:**

Hi folks, looking for a bit of advice please on sticking bells. Apparently Buffets have well-known issues with tenons binding? Stephen Howard has mentioned this too in his pages. I've been given this pair to look at and you can see that the bell on the E11 A goes nearly all the way on and the RC Bb is several mm out. They've been sitting in the case like this for at least 10 years. I've managed to get them apart and although copious amounts of cork grease certainly helps, the wood's definitely binding - the middle picture is showing rings from the contact. Judging by Reg Thorpe's manual this likely needs to be trimmed slightly on a lathe? Just wondering if that's the way to go? I'm leaving everything apart for a few days to see if it helps but happy to take them down to Wales the next time I'm down for some guidance. Thanks for any info.

**From Nigel Salmon**

*They usually go oval due to the grain run through the joint. Clean off the grease and then cut a thin strip of 400 grade wet and dry ( the width of the wood tenon ring only.) very lightly scuff the surface of the rings so they go Matt. Gently enter the tenon into the socket - don't go too far. Take it apart and carefully look at the tenon rings. The areas that are binding will be shiny. Using another thin strip of 400 grade abrasive gently sand the shiny areas. Use a bench peg and a ragging motion. Repeat the process.*

*It takes time. Do not take too much off- little and repeat is the best way.*

*I've done dozens like this over the years. It's better than using a lathe as it's far more gentle and easier to see what you're doing.*

Good luck!!



**From Kaiya Mitchell:**

Anyone got any saxophone tips? Had one come in today that's been dropped, I changed the F & F# pads because they were gaping at the back, and the neck pad because it was leaky foam, but it's still not playing 100%, it keeps cutting out around E. The G# was leaking a tiny bit, but I fixed that and I can't see any other leaks. It's a nice enough Martin Sax, just getting on my nerves.

**From Andrew Wheeldon:**

*If it is a Martin it will have soldered tone holes. If it has been dropped there is a good chance that the solder has popped somewhere on one or more tone holes.. Particularly look at the tone holes near the bell brace.*

*The solder on a y Martin now will be old and corroded and not that strong.*

**From Bill Drain:**

*Look at the top E key that's a fav one for a slight leak if it's been knocked over.*

**From Sunniva Cherrox Hellerud:**

*I'd recommend checking the side keys, and not just trust your leak light but also a feeler paper. When I can't find anything else wrong but a sax isn't playing quite right it's sometimes a side key that might hide a small leak. I'd also double check for subtly shifted pillars near the top that might have made a pad a bit light on the back or something. In general: an indented and old pad held shut can still leak. Might not be it, but it's a tip anyway.*

**From Linne Lauesen:**

*I once saw a trick on Youtube on how to use small drops of spirit or similarly thin liquid around the tone hole solder to see if it enters the body to find leaks. They are invisible with a leak light. I am about to restore a Martin Comm 1 but need to finish an Indiana with drawn tone holes first, so I haven't tried the liquid trick myself yet.*

**From Andrew Wheeldon:**

*Linne Lauesen this is a good trick.*

*If the problem is a result of being dropped though, the damage is often more evident and can often be seen (once you are looking for it) or with the aid of a leak light.*

**From Linne Lauesen:**

Hi all. I am about to restore a Martin Handcraft Comm. 1 alto saxophone soon. I am in doubt whether to choose rivet only pads or flat resos pads. Any opinions?

**From Timo Myllymäki:**

*I used rivet pads on my Martin Comm 1 and I like them, but then again I have no other experience. Comm 1 had only rivets originally I think, but flat resos should work fine also..*

**From Bill Drain**

*Resos will probably make it a bit more punchy n slightly brighter. My experience is these usually suit flat resos.*

**From Roger Price:**

*My recommendation like Bill's is flat metal resos for it (and all vintage saxes). Brightens them up nicely without over doing it. Sometimes customers have other ideas!*

**From Andrew Wheeldon:**

*Personally I really don't think it matters. What is important though is getting pads of the correct thickness or you will struggle. Martin pads are subtly thinner than regular modern pads. This can make it difficult to seat as they are heavy at the back and also lead to consequent problems with regulation and venting because of the pad thickness.*



**Editor's note:**

***The views and suggestions expressed by our members on our Facebook page are posted in good faith, but they are the views of those posting, and are not necessarily the views of NAMIR Ltd.***

## Orchestra of Broken Instruments



**When Grammy award-winning composer David Lang** was 10 years old, he tapped his music teacher on the shoulder and said: *"I want to play in the school band."*

The teacher handed him a trombone and that became the musical instrument he played all the way through graduate school.

*"This musical instrument changed my life and that's why I'm a composer,"* said Lang, who won the Pulitzer prize for music in 2008. *"All because of my public school."*

In 2017, Lang premiered the Symphony for a Broken Orchestra in Philadelphia, where he has written music for 400 musicians – from eight to 83-year-olds – who will play broken musical instruments. That's right, broken. More than 1,500 broken musical instruments have been sourced from the dusty corridors of the School District of Philadelphia, which has no budget to fix them.

*"If there are 1,500 broken musical instruments, that's 1,500 children who should be playing these instruments and whose lives could be changed,"* said Lang. *"There is something heartbreaking about it."*

The idea came about last year when Philadelphia curator Robert Blackson was walking through an untended school in south Philadelphia. Broken pianos, which were huddled together in the gymnasium, caught his eye. It sparked an idea to fix the pianos and get them working again.

*"It was the tip of the iceberg,"* said Blackson, who is the director of Temple Contemporary, an art gallery at Temple University's Tyler School of Art. *"I thought: If there are that many broken instruments in this room alone, how many more could there be?"*

He contacted the school district's music teachers and began collecting hundreds of the school district's broken instruments. *"It kept growing past 1,000 instruments,"* he said, *"and that's when I thought, 'hey, there's something here.'"*

Blackson photographed each instrument and uploaded it to their website "Adopt an Instrument", where anyone can pay a minimum of \$50 to sponsor the repair of a musical instrument from the Philadelphia school district.

After each instrument has been repaired, it will be returned to the public school it came from and put back in the hands of students. So far, 500 instruments are being repaired thanks to donations from online sponsors. According to Blackson, they have already raised \$280,000. The money will go toward a legacy fund for the Philadelphia school district, *"so they will always be able to repair their instruments in perpetuity,"* said Blackson.

Over the past 10 years, the Philadelphia school district's musical instrument repair fund of \$1.3m has been slashed to \$50,000. The goal is to raise \$1m to replace the original funding cut for the school district's repair fund. *"What was apparent from beginning is that it's as much a social and community project as it is a musical project,"* said Lang. *"These instruments represent something larger than themselves."*



But what does a broken musical instrument sound like? It can't be that pleasant. However, the composition Lang has written specifically fits the sounds these instruments make in their broken state. *"The point was not to end with a beautiful piece of music,"* said Lang, *"but to raise the money to repair the instruments and get them back into the hands*

of the children who need them.”

Consider it an experimental music composition, something along the lines of John Cage, Tony Conrad or Morton Feldman. *“We wanted to make sure everyone who played in this piece is represented in the community, not just give instruments to professional musicians,”* said Lang.

Among the 400 musicians performing on Sunday, there will be schoolchildren learning to play their first instruments alongside improvisers, jazz, folk and classical musicians and parents. *“As a composer, the problem for me is how to write the kind of music that could be played by a wide variety of musicians,”* he said. *“Most of the instructions are not musical notation where you see notes and staves, its straightforward instructions.”*

Some of the musicians, for example, have taken a broken double bass, laid it on its side and tapped on it with drumsticks. *“Some instruments can only be used for percussive abilities because they’re so damaged but they still sound beautiful,”* said Lang. *“It’s kind of magical, each player discovers what’s unique about the instrument and what it can do.”*

On top of fixing the musical instruments, which were returned to the public schools for the fall of 2018, they are also installing “instrument repair kits” in every public school, which can help with minor repairs.

It taps into not only the sustainability of school funding, but institutional funding in general. *“In this country, there is not enough money to supply or fix things or continue the institutions we inherited,”* said Lang. *“We are using a piece of music to heal this community.”*

However, to Lang, this small community project addresses a larger problem. *“Today, people are breaking into little tribes and going against each other, but that is the opposite of what everyone learns in music,”* he said. *“Music teaches people how to be better citizens, how to work in a group and how to overcome problems, we need more of that in our world today.”*

*(Based on an article courtesy of Nadja Sayei of The Guardian newspaper published in December 2017).*



## IMIT

**The Institute of Musical Instrument Technology** was founded in 1938 from the ideas of Sydney Hurren to advance musical instrument technology through the exchange of information and ideas.

Since its foundation the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology (IMIT) has been recognised as the main professional body covering the whole of the musical instrument industry. Past presidents have included piano-makers, organ-builders, a harpsichord-maker and bell-founder among others. Its membership includes leaders in design, construction, maintenance and restoration of most types of musical instruments, such as brass, woodwind, and bowed stringed instrument makers, as well as electronic instrument innovators and constructors. Membership of the Institute is the only professional qualification covering the whole field of musical instruments.

The Institute meets on a regular basis to discuss the advancement of musical instrument technology as a whole. Members of the musical public requiring an instrument technicians in a particular field can be assured of the technician’s qualification and their ability to work to a high standard. . The IMIT is not in itself a training organisation, nor does it offer grants or bursaries.

Through their website you will be able to locate a technician for the type of instrument you wish to maintain. There are also links to various training organisations and other associated web sites.

<https://www.imit.org.uk>





## John Cook Harmonicas



Coming from a background as a precision toolmaker in 1981, John Cook started repairing musical instruments in the late 1990's, eventually opening his own instrument repair store, East Coast Music in 2003 in East London, UK. Initially repairing Brass and Woodwind instruments, the business grew into a full-service music store servicing a wide range of instruments. In 2015 the store relocated to larger premises. Although John owns East Coast Music, his main role is in the repair department where he has been the full-time repairer for the business for over 15 years. A member of the Yamaha Guild, John has taught instrument repair to students around the UK.

With his engineering background John not only repairs instruments but actively designs, manufactures and sells his repair tools all over the world to assist others in following this trade. Teaching others to understand how a harmonica works is a big part of what John does.

John's love of harmonicas started as a young player in local amateur blues bands as far back as the 1980's. It wasn't long before he started taking them apart to see how they worked and to see if he could make them play a little better. Today, his fully equipped workshop now handles services and repairs, restoration and modifications to all harmonicas. Regularly holding harmonica master-classes and lectures on the subject up and down the country.

**[www.johncookharmonicas.com](http://www.johncookharmonicas.com)**

John was honoured to attend the prestigious Hohner harmonica accreditation training under the guidance of Ciro Lenti and Gabi Hand in Germany in July 2016. He was proud to be accepted as part of the worldwide accredited Service team for the UK.

John now services and repairs harmonicas for the UK's leading players, including , Johnny Stafford, Paul Lamb, Paddy Wells, Donald Black, and many others,

His involvement in designing new ways of improving the maintenance and servicing of Harmonicas is second to none, with his tools, processes and modification techniques, reaching a global audience through his regular repair tips on Facebook and various international forums. He is also a contributor to the Harmonica World Magazine where he regularly writes columns on repairs and servicing tips and historical manufacturing techniques. To see what his customers think of him you only need to walk into his workshop to see the walls covered in "thank you" letters. If you have a harmonica that needs fixing, John is your man.



John also runs a variety of harmonica repair workshops, and sources a plethora of tools for this work, all of which can be found on his website.

The website also contains a wealth of information on the subject of harmonica repair, and reviews about his work. I quote:

*'John, What a superb job on restoring my bruised and battered Chrominica! The job included a new comb and a new windsaver as well as a replacement slider, which I already knew about of course and all wrapped in a sturdy box on return. Your friendly manner and efficient service are not only a credit to you and your business but are becoming increasingly rare qualities in these strange times. I would certainly recommend you to anyone whose harmonica needs some t.l.c. or a major overhaul! With many thanks and kind regards, Roger.'*

## Euphonium Restoration

*With kind permission of the author Iwan Fox from the popular brass band website: [www.4barsrest.com](http://www.4barsrest.com)*

# 4barsrest



***‘Old instruments like ageing Hollywood actors can sometimes benefit from an expert bit of overhaul surgery.’***

Steven Mead recently purchased a rather decrepit euphonium from a friend: Forlorn, battered and seized it should have been ready for the instrument equivalent of a retirement home for aged contest stage performers. Not surprising really as it came off the production line in St Albans in 1915 - the same year Ingrid Bergman and Orson Wells were born.

### ***Sorry state***

The Salvation Army Class A ‘The Triumph’, was anything but. The dents, grime and pockmarks told a story of use and misuse. It was in a sorry state.

However, there was still something about this former star that intrigued Steve - a glint of past glory. So after getting in touch with his friend Andy Kershaw and researching its provenance, a rather sad, more than bashed and battered euphonium was given the promise of a new, caring home.

***[www.4barsrest.com](http://www.4barsrest.com)***

## ***Beyond salvation***

*“As soon as I saw the instrument on Facebook I was intrigued by it,” Steve said. “The link with the Salvation Army was obvious but it still seemed to be a little bit different - the shape was unlike any old euphonium I’d seen before. I simply wanted to play it, but after trying to have a blow I knew that it needed a complete restoration.*

*The valve speed was glacial to say the least, it leaked air like an old bicycle tyre and to forgive a pun, it looked well beyond salvation.*

*There was only one person I could think of who could bring it back to working order, so I contacted Rick McQueeney at McQueen's Musical Instrument Repairs in Manchester and asked him to have a look.”*



McQueen's has a worldwide reputation for the excellence of its repairs and restorations – and not just on brass instruments.

A little while ago they gave the Premier League Trophy a much-needed overhaul, and they have also restored the FA Cup and the BBC Sports Personality of the Year trophy.



## ***All corners of the globe***

Started by Rick McQueeney in 1985 it now attracts customers from all corners of the globe, as Rick told 4BR with a chuckle.

*"It's incredible. Each morning we get packages from countries that we sometimes have to look up on the map! In the past few weeks alone, we have had items from Peru and Brazil as well as the a little closer to home from Yorkshire and Scotland."*

Rick has over 45 years of experience to his name - being one of the last craftsman apprentices who had to learn all aspects of their trade.

As a result, his work and that of his four other long term members of staff, including his son, is valued by individual customers and bands as well as the likes of the Football Association, Premier League and the Ministry of Defence.

## ***Years of experience***

*"Quality craftsmanship comes with years of experience," he said. "I learnt from some great men at Barratts of Manchester and their attention to detail and pride in their work has never left me."*

*Now I ensure we take our time and that our reputation for quality is never undermined. It means we do have a waiting list, but it also means we don't get complaints about our work."*



That was certainly the outcome with Steve's old instrument, although Rick revealed it very quickly became a Frankenstein series of body parts that were rather unceremoniously placed in a plastic container soon after it was dropped off by Steve at the workshop in Manchester.

*"After discussing what Steve wanted I got to work," Rick said.*

*"Taking it apart was easy enough - heating the joints to soften the 40/60 solder mix which is the same today as when this instrument was made over a hundred years ago".*

## ***Biggest problem***

*"The valves were the biggest problem though – with one needed to be totally remade from scratch and the other three rebuilt as they were so badly worn."*

*I love working on these old instruments though as the quality of the brass is so much better and you can see the handmade care that has gone into making them."*



He added: *"Modern instruments are made with what I call 'soft brass' that doesn't have that crispness of feel and makes the instrument sound dull to me. I don't know how many will last a hundred years or more like the one Steve brought in."*

## ***No computers***

This is where all those years of experience came into play, with Rick making a brand new valve, puncturing and drilling the holes and aligning things to perfection in hard brass – all without the use of a single bit of computer wizardry.

*"The traditional methods are still the best," he says. "The instrument comes to life in your hands. It's a bit like heart surgery – get it right and the instrument is in perfect health".*



*"Get it wrong and it soon ends up in the box. With 'The Triumph' we had to put it all back together to make sure the valve block didn't leak and everything worked perfectly."*



Rick admits that he put in over 50 hours or more in restoring 'The Triumph' to its former glory – although like all instruments that come to his workshop, it wasn't the time but the end result that mattered to him most.

*"The processes we go through – from the making of new parts to the removal of dents and imperfections, burnishing and polishing in taking instruments such as 'The Triumph' back to the base metal, takes time, but it is all worth it when you hear it being played again."*

## **Style to substance**

The final step in this case was to add style to be added to the substance.

*"The instrument has to look as good as it sounds – so we ensure that it's taken back to its base finish before its dipped in a tank for its 'undercoat' finish."*

*When that's completed it goes into our main tanks for at least three hours to be electroplated with silver. Then we put it all back together and give the instrument its final mirror polish."*

Throughout the process Steven Mead received regular updates on progress – accompanied by photographs of the instrument as it started on its long journey back to pristine condition. Just after Christmas, he got the call he had been waiting for and he set off to Manchester to pick up the instrument.

## **Incredible**

The restoration job was incredible.

*"It was an amazing piece of expert craftsmanship," Steve said. "It was literally like new and it played so beautifully too, with a focussed, sweet sound throughout the range and excellent tuning right up to the top."*

*The valves now work brilliantly thanks to the craftsmanship of Rick and his team, and I'm sure the finish is probably superior to that when it was originally made!"*



## **Diary**

As part of the restoration work, Rick kept a restoration 'diary' which was posted on Facebook and which has now been seen over a million times gaining hundreds of messages from people engrossed, engaged and even emotionally linked to the transformation.

*"I hope people watch the video and admire just what Rick has done. I can't thank him enough although I can assure him his work will be both seen as well as heard for many years to come. I will feature the 'The Triumph' in concerts with the first one being in Bournemouth on March 11th".*

**Iwan Fox**

**[www.4barsrest.com](http://www.4barsrest.com)**

**'A vote of thanks'.**

**Steve with Rick**



## Cleaning Hints and Tips

### Instrument Clean- What does it mean?



**Instrument hygiene and maintenance** has always been an integral part of an instrumental hobby no matter what kind of instrument it is. It is only due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has put this subject in the highlight and under scrutiny. There are three main processes to cleaning, and these are the basic cleaning (to remove standard dirt) then there is disinfection and sterilisation. As a brass instrumental teacher, I wanted to know the difference between the latter two types. As I scrolled down the many articles and many websites it was quite clear there was a mass of information out there. For me I needed clarity, so I combined all the information into these three processes in one document.

### CLEANING

- Achieve/Maintain to a standard deemed visually clean.
- Removal of foreign material from surface areas and objects.
- Reduces amount of organic matter that develops the spread of bacteria and viruses.

### DISINFECTION

- Does not remove dirt. (hence needs cleaned first).
- Destroys pathogenic (virus and bacteria) micro-organisms and most organisms on surfaces.
- Destroys or interferes with the metabolism (rate of spread) of cell wall of microbes.
- Does not kill all micro organisms.
- Less effective than sterilisation.

- Disinfected for longer time than sterilisation.

### STERILISATION

- Eliminates and kills all forms of virus (fungi, bacteria, spore forms).
- Time limited.
- Airborne not sterile anymore.
- Touched or handled not sterile any more but it is clinically clean.

Within the brass there are many types of material, brass, lacquer, plated and plastic. Plastic is always the easiest to maintain hygiene as these can be washed in a mild detergent (and disinfected by immersing in a mild solution of Milton fluid if also wanted) rinsed in water then left to air dry. In the linked document (*see Adobe Link on page 5*) I have broken down these three processes at every level of cleaning: Cleaning Brass Instruments, Cleaning Mouthpieces Metal and Plastic and finally Cleaning Plastic Instruments.

As I was researching instrument hygiene from the brass point of view it quickly developed into looking at other instrument families. This information is not based on my opinion, but factual evidence provided by official medical and instrumental organisations.



### CLEANING

- FLUID: Soap and water, mild detergent
- FRICTION: Rubbing/scrubbing with a cloth  
Wipe with lint free cloth (soaked with warm not hot soapy water)
- BRUSHING Mouthpiece brushes, tuning slide brushes, tuning slide flexi brushes
- WITHOUT cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation are less effective.

## DISINFECTION

- Soapy water
- Manufactured brass soaks (brass soak, Edgware brass soap (Eco Friendly) mild detergents.
- Milton Disinfecting Fluid used by hospitals for floors and utensils etc.
- Always dilute detergents and disinfectant fluid with water as stated in the instructions.

## STERILISATION

- Ultrasonic cleaning
- Chemical cleaning
- Lime scale remover C10 Winter Halter descale fluid for example.
- Antiseptic hand wipes baby wipes
- Isopropyl Alcohol wipes cleaner (not hard rubber mouthpieces)
- Sterisol germicide solution (plastics, hard rubbers, and metals)
- Windcraft Steri-spray water-based Mi-T mist mouthpiece cleaner water based (not hard rubber mouthpieces)
- Water/vinegar solution 50% water to 50% vinegar
- Water/hydrogen peroxide 50% water to 50% Hydrogen peroxide

Having the knowledge and understanding of the three processes and how it relates to each part of the instrument and what you can and should not do with certain material has given me the ability to clarify and advise my Line Manager within the Instrumental Music Department, work colleagues and band players. There are links for more information on the steps to clean these instrument materials within the three processes. I also hope that my instrument repair colleagues find this information useful particularly those that are new to the repair business.

**Denise Crighton-Ward**

**NB:** *The full article is available from the Adobe shared documents link.*

## Dawkes Brass Repairs

### BRASS REPAIRS AT DAWKES MUSIC

Here at Dawkes Music we have four highly skilled brass repairers on site. The team are on hand to help with any brass related repairs by appointment from Monday-Saturday 9.30am-5.30pm.

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Here at Dawkes our ethos is to Create, Inspire and Support musicians and our brass repair workshop is on hand for you six days a week. We are proud professional members of the National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers and play an active role in the repair community. NAMIR was founded in 1993 to help ensure and promote a high quality of craftsmanship within the repair community in the UK.

Our aim is to support your musical journey, and our team of experts in the workshop pride themselves on the high quality of their work.





## Trevor Head - Llangunllo School

**Trevor Head** is the director of courses, a trombone player and a qualified teacher with a 'Certificate in Education'. He has 45 years' experience in the field of musical instrument repair, 29 years at Merton College in South London and more recently teaching all of the brass instrument repair courses here in Wales.

He works with a small team of experienced subject tutors, all of whom are successful in the music retail and repair industries.

Trevor is a 'Founder Member' and President of NAMIR and has a professional qualification in 'Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering'.

As well as continuing to repair brass instruments for local bands and professional musicians, he is one of the country's leading experts in trombone slide repair and alignment.



I hope you enjoy browsing his website at [www.trevorhead.co.uk](http://www.trevorhead.co.uk) and are able to find a brass or woodwind instrument repair course to suit your needs. Courses run from March to November and are from two to six days' duration. He caters for a range of abilities and experience, and offers courses from Foundation to Advanced levels.

Overseas students are always welcome and many attend from as far away as China, Australia, Japan, Africa and all over Europe. Fluency in English is not essential as our workshop sessions are mainly practical. Many of our students are now running their own successful repair businesses in the UK and other parts of the world.

The school is situated in a beautiful Mid-Wales location within easy reach of some of the most dramatic landscapes in Wales. We are close to the centre of the unspoilt village of Llangunllo and within easy walking distance of the Greyhound Inn.

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### Old Instruments & Tools Please

Following the article in IR93 and an impressive talk from Jim Trott at our spring meeting, the NAMIR committee would like to encourage members to support the appeal from **Brass for Africa** for tools, instruments and equipment that is no longer of any use.



**Dawkes Music** is supporting this worthy cause by co-ordinating the collection & despatch of the above. Please contact Abi Taylor on 01628 630800 if you have anything to offer,

or email [abi@dawkes.co.uk](mailto:abi@dawkes.co.uk)

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*Best wishes from the team at Dawkes Music.*



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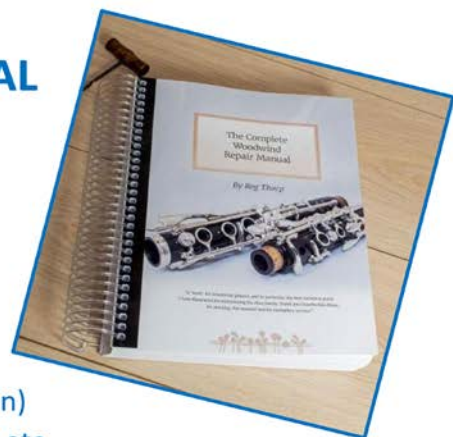
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## Subscription Rates

After extensive discussions during the last few years, the committee concluded that our current membership categories & tariffs were suitable for the purposes of NAMIR.

However, previously UK student members who had been paying subscriptions at the concessionary rate of £ 17.50 p.a. for 5 years or more were then directed to pay a membership subscription of £40 p.a. To achieve this, they were advised to become *“Associate Members”*.

The *“Associate Member”* category is now considered to be inappropriate for members who are repairing musical instruments and the committee has agreed that long term Student Members should continue to be categorised as *“Student Members”* but pay the unsubsidised annual fee of £40.

Please see list of membership categories and subscription rates on page 22. Please make sure that you have informed us of any changes in contact details. I.e. Address... Telephone Number ... email address.

*Thank you*

## NAMIR Facebook Group

This group is proving to be a very useful resource for NAMIR members. Since the group was set up, hundreds of our members have joined. Many have requested help and received replies from experienced colleagues almost immediately. (Please see the article on page 8 of this issue).

Members have been helped on this forum with:

- Elusive or obsolete spare parts wanted or for sale.
- Advice on which tools to use.
- Tools wanted & for sale.
- Stolen instrument warnings.
- Instruments for sale & wanted.
- Finding suppliers.
- Help & tips with tricky repair problems.
- Be first to be notified of **Job Vacancies**.



Many of the responses are from some of NAMIR's most experienced and respected repairers. Join now; you may be able to help another repairer or seek help yourself when you need it.

Type **NAMIR Ltd** into the Facebook search box and click **join**

or

contact **David Chapman** by email : [dnsbrass12@gmail.com](mailto:dnsbrass12@gmail.com)

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