

HISTORIC AND ANTIQUE WIND INSTRUMENTS

I have long held an interest in old instruments, particularly wind instruments. They are not so common now but thirty or forty years ago pre WW2 instruments were always cropping up as they had been purchased cheaply by beginners in the hope of learning to play. The problem was that most of these were manufactured in "high pitch" and therefore played out of tune with modern instruments. Put simply, the pitch of A above middle C was around 450 Hz pre war but in 1939 was standardised by most countries of the world to 440 Hz. This resulted in these older instruments becoming obsolete and in many cases being thrown away.

Fortunately many of the better examples did survive thanks to museums and collectors who saw the merit of saving these very well made musical instruments so that future generations might benefit from their examination and study.

Personally I have a small collection of instruments, mostly flutes and clarinets from the 19th century. It is a great pleasure to play these, although many await restoration and for the present remain unplayed exhibits.

If you have any old or historic wind instruments in the loft, or in the shed, or at the back of a cupboard I would be pleased to hear from you. You could email or phone me with a description and any markings or numbers stamped on the body and I will attempt to send you some information, dates and perhaps a little history, which you may find of interest.

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