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Frans Brueggen to Fred Morgan, 17.2.1976

Where the hell is Daylesford 3460? - I cannot find it on the map - and more importantly - are you happy there?

Fred Morgan to Frans Brueggen, 24.2.1976

Daylesford 3560 is a very small town, about 2700 people, and some dogs and cows, about 70 miles from Melbourne. The building I have is an old Hotel, with 20 bedrooms, and two large workrooms. My work is coming so much faster here, away from the pointless speed of Melbourne.

I am pretty happy, but also (still) feeling that I will come to Europe again soon. Can you give me an idea of some things in Amsterdam, or maybe The Hague? These are my thoughts - I miss being close to the old instruments, and think I will do much better with building if I am on the spot in Europe. However, I do not want to leave Australia for good.



Fred set up a workshop in Amsterdam in 1978 to be closer to the great European players and, in particular, the original instruments that he found so inspiring.

During this time he taught recorder making at the Royal Conservatoire of Music at The Hague, and measured and made drawings of all the historic instruments in the private recorder collection of Frans Brügggen. A beautiful edition of these drawings was published by Zen-On in 1981.

Ultimately, the bustle of Amsterdam was no substitute for the privacy of rural Victoria, Australia. Fred's heart was closer to the sprawling countryside around Wombat Hill, Daylesford. It was to here that Fred and Ann returned in 1980.

In 1982 he made a visit to Denmark expressly to measure two recently discovered 17th century recorders found in the Rosenborg Castle/Copenhagen by the Danish player Eva Legène, and made from the tusk of narwhal for King

Fred Morgan to Frans Brueggen: 16.3.1978

Frans - I am looking forward more than I can tell you to living and working in Holland - close to the old instruments, close to the musicians and to the teachers, to going to hear some concerts for a change, and to all the life thought of Europe. Probably I will not want to leave.

26.4.1978

I have your letter of the 17th. That's wonderful news about the work-space. The size is excellent. Thank you very much. I am writing my thanks to Henk de Wit too. On a canal sounds just too good. I will bring with me some soprano recorders all ready for block-fitting, voicing, tuning, so that I don't need a machine for a month or two. They can come by sea. Time is getting short now, with still a few instruments to finish, and lots of packing.

Christian IV. He subsequently produced a batch of exquisite maple recorders derived from these originals, and some years later, even carved a pair from narwhal tusk brought to him by Legène.

In 1986, Fred moved his workshop from the Daylesford township to within a stone's throw of the family home at Snake Hill, Coomoora (northeast of Daylesford) and continued to refine and improve his recorder making skills in this idyllic setting.

He was a meticulous craftsman and particularly skilled at 'voicing' - the final delicate shaping of the windway, which critically determines the recorder's sound quality. Fred once wrote that the four most important aspects of a recorder's character and performance are: 'speech, intonation, a beautiful sound, and a fine appearance.' He delighted in making unusual recorders at a variety of pitches. He pioneered the development of a modern Ganassi-type recorder, now widely used as a preferred instrument

for the solo Mediaeval, Renaissance and early Baroque repertoire. He was still experimenting with new recorder designs right up to his untimely death. His passion for innovation never flagged, and he was never complacent.

Fred generously and patiently shared his skills and knowledge with all the musicians and instrument makers who made the pilgrimage to his workshop.

He was very popular at music camps and festivals. He was an articulate speaker and lecturer, and wrote many articles published in Australian and international journals. From 1985-1995 he worked as associate editor of the *Victorian Recorder Guild's* journal; in 1996 he became the patron of the Guild.

Fred was gracious and shy, a gentle giant of a man. It is remarkable that his large hands were capable of such finesse. His voice will sing on through his instruments and the world will continue to be touched by the magic of his craft.

Practical things of recorder making

To return to more immediately practical things, something should be said about tools, methods and boxwood.

In preparing boxwood for use, I have found it best to cut it up as soon as possible for drying. If pieces are cut well oversize and then turned to round, they can be measured and also marked with the date of cutting.

Boxwood has a marked tendency to warp about its length, and it should be allowed free rein to do so before it is bored. If warping occurs after the first turning, re-turn the piece straight. Do this each time warping occurs, at intervals of a few weeks, and eventually you will see that the warping is over.

Only then should a hole be bored through the centre, as, if a piece warps after the first boring is done, the hole will warp too, and the piece may have to be discarded. I have some boxwood which has been drying in the log for over 40 years, and some of it still warps slightly in the first few weeks after it is cut and turned.

Apart from this disadvantage of warping, which is not unimportant, boxwood is a beautiful material to work, and allows the maker

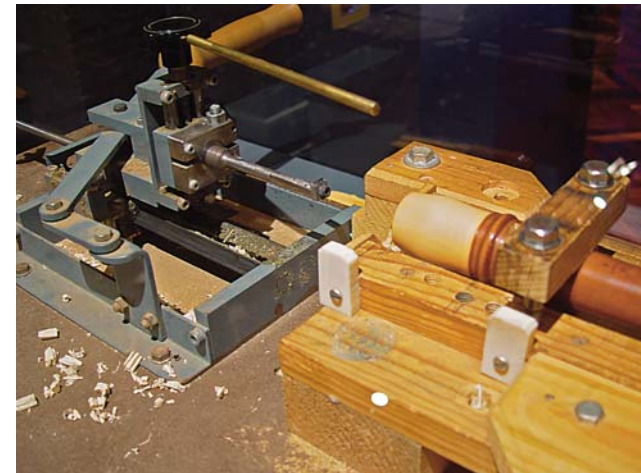


Adjustable six-bladed reamer for making prototypes or experimenting with bores

← Modern reamer

great freedom in cutting the windway because it can be cut cleanly even when the windway is wet from playing. For making prototypes, or experimenting with bores, adjustable six-bladed reamers are very useful, as is wax or plasticine in teaching one the connection between particular areas of the bore and individual notes or harmonics.

Once the bore profile is decided upon, good reamers can be made of mild steel by turning a blank rod to the exact profile of each section of the bore, then grinding a single cutting edge into it. This is usually known as a D-bit. Some experimenting is necessary with rake and clearance angles to obtain the best cut, but such a steel reamer can be made in about a day or a little less, and will last for a long time before repeated sharpening takes it to the point of inaccuracy. Hardening will make it last even longer, but also carries some risk of warping.



Fred Morgan's windway machine

Hand tools for windway cutting and finishing



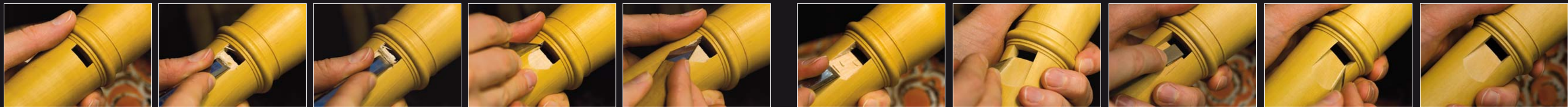
Windways can be cut in a variety of fashions. For myself, I use a small hand machine which carries a cutter of the desired curve on a slide. This will lay out the windway accurately in line with the bore of the head joint, and the taper can then be made with hand tools.

The top of the windway is also cut and finished by hand, using a multi-toothed broach (made out of an old square or three cornered file) for removing wood quickly, and a curved section chisel ground to a scraping edge (not a cutting edge) for fine finishing. This scraping tool has a slightly smaller-radius curve than the windway curve, and

so allows wood to be removed from any area of the windway surface. The windway can also be adjusted to match the lip curve as desired, should the lip change its curve during playing-in and final voicing.

The slide-mounted cutter cuts the lower surface of the lip very well, and this area can also be adjusted further with hand tools if desired.

The window and ramp can be cut with very good control using a sharp chisel and small knives. A scraper is also useful here, and offers less risk to the delicate lip than the chisel.



‘I asked him if he would like to teach a class of recorder making in the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, and he accepted, to our great delight.’

Ricardo Kanji, Brazil

When I was appointed as the recorder teacher and successor to Frans Brüggén in the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague in 1973, I was 25. At that time, I knew very little about recorder making, and had lots of difficulties making my instruments play the way I wanted. My friend and colleague Bruce Haynes was more experienced than I in the area of recorder maintenance, and so together we decided to start a recorder maintenance workshop. Guido Klemisch was also involved. We revoiced the instruments, worked on tuning, and learned to make blocks for those instruments that were in bad shape. It was quite a useful experience for me and for the students at a time when very few artisans made instruments that were good enough for performance.

The name Fred Morgan was mentioned to me as that of an outstanding recorder maker from the other side of the world, from far, far away in Australia. He was known to have a very long waiting list but, perhaps it was because of my position as a teacher, I got two beautiful instruments from him in quite a reasonable time and was very happy with them both: a soprano Stanesby, developed by him, and a beautiful alto Debey, both of stained boxwood. I used these instruments a lot in concerts and recordings for a long time.

We wrote letters occasionally to each other, and I had already established very friendly contact when Fred decided to spend some time in Europe, choosing Amsterdam as his base. He wanted to be near the many museums of Europe in order to study the original instruments more closely. The year was 1978. As soon as he arrived, I asked

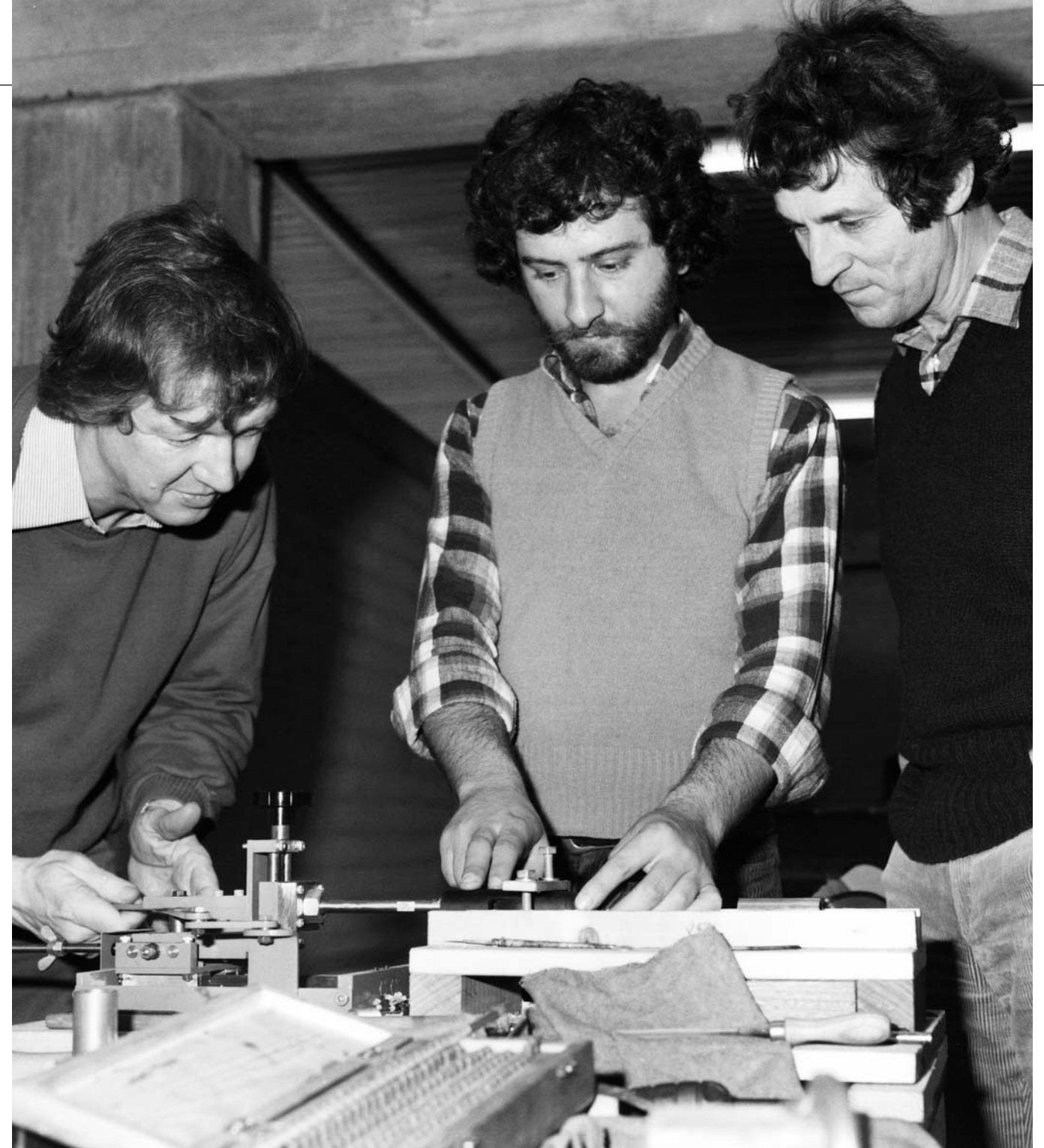
him if he would like to teach a class of recorder making in the Royal Conservatoire, and he accepted, to our great delight.

Fred was very diligent in planning the whole course, and made an accurate and extensive list of the machinery and tools that we would need: an impressive list of several pages, all written out in his beautiful hand. The Conservatorium, gave us all we needed. I was his assistant in the class that took place every Friday afternoon, from 2 to 6pm. There, all the interested students gathered to learn, this time with the great master. Fred had developed a copy of a Ganassi recorder, playing at A466; he taught us how to build this and also how to make an instrument in C after his drawings of the instrument in G.

The wonderful thing about this class was that we had incredible freedom. We had several students also from outside the Conservatorium, attracted by the great master, who came to work and learn with him. I was always there helping Fred and the students as much as I could. It was a time of wealth and prosperity for the Conservatorium, and the director, my beloved and recently deceased friend, Jan van Vlijmen, was very helpful and supportive of the whole idea of a recorder making course, something absolutely unprecedented in a conservatorium.

As a result, many students of this course became professional makers – Jacqueline Sorel, Adriana Breukink, Ardal Powel, Shige Hirao, Peter van der Poel, Paul van der Linden and others, and this we owe to Fred’s generosity, dedication and devotion as a teacher.

Fred’s patience and methodological vision worked very effectively, and we all learned a lot. Just to watch him turn-



Fred Morgan, Ricardo Kanji, Hans Linnartz

ing a piece of wood was a huge lesson in itself, but he was also able to transmit the technique to the students often using very basic statements: ‘This is how you hold the chisel,’ or, ‘Keep an eye on the profile you are making.’ We also learned from him how to sharpen tools and keep them in order, and how to make the special tools necessary for the specific task we needed, like windway rasps and scrapers, window knives and scrapers, undercutting knives, etc. To

this day I still recall one of his basic pieces of advice on voicing: ‘Don’t do two things at the same time’, he would say to me, an eager young man who wanted, for example, to lower the block and do the ‘down chamfer’ together just to save time. His very artistic and detailed drawings of instruments in Museums and private collections have also been a model and inspiration to all of his students.

In that period, Fred and I used to spend time doing



Interview

Frederick G. Morgan – Geoffrey Burgess



During the 17th century and into the Baroque period, the recorder was developed through the van Eyck type of instrument, which would play two octaves with fingerings we know as 'Baroque' or 'English', into the well known Baroque type of instrument made in three sections with ornamental turnery at each end and at the joints.

In England, where recorder makers were apparently widely held in high esteem for the quality of their instruments, the primary recorder to emerge was the treble in f' or *concert flute*. Some of the other sizes, especially the smaller ones, were known by their distance in pitch from the concert flute.

So, our descant in c'' was known as a 5th flute (a 5th higher than the treble) and many concertos were written in London for one or two 6th flutes (descants in d'') with string orchestra and continuo.

Our soprano was an 8^{ve} flute. The *voice flute* (tenor in d') was also sometimes called a 3rd flute (a 3rd below the treble), as was (alas for clarity) a little treble in a' (a 3rd above the treble).

This same confusion is shown in two surviving instruments: a tenor in b♭ by Stanesby Junior, stamped with a '4' to indicate 4th flute and a descant in b♭ by Bressan, also stamped with a '4'.

It seems that, as the descant is a 4th above and this big tenor is a 5th below the treble, the '4' designation indicates a recorder in B♭, whether above or below the treble. It means that we cannot be really sure whether Dieupart

meant his *Suites for 4th Flute* (as an alternative to the violin) to be played on a descant in b♭' or a tenor in b♭, and whether Bigaglia's *Sonata in A Minor* (described as for 4th flute) sits less than ideally on a B♭ descant unless transposed into G minor. Perhaps the tenor in c' was also thought of as a 4th flute (below the treble) as is suggested by the editor of this piece in the Moeck edition.

If we now make a list of Baroque sizes, we have several in addition to our well known consort of four:

- soprano in f'' or 8^{ve} flute
- descant in d'' (6th flute)
- descant in c'' (Sammartini's 5th flute concerto)
- descant in b♭' (4th flute)
- descant/treble in a' (3rd flute)
- treble in g' – this is a doubtful size, perhaps tied up with the question of Church pitch and Chamber pitch
- treble in f' (*concert flute*)
- treble in e♭' – very uncommon but one of the Chester set of Bressan recorders is in E♭.
- *voice flute* in d' – very popular in England, though we do not really know what they were used for. It is uncertain whether the German makers made voice flutes, though it seems likely that Rottenburgh did. This is also a Church pitch matter.
- tenor in c'
- tenor in b♭ – also clearly known as a 4th flute.
- bass in f.

Recorder Sizes during the Baroque Period



- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Soprano in f'', <i>Octave Flute</i>, by Benjamin Hallett (ca. 1713–ca. 1753, England)</p> <p>2 Descant in d'', <i>Sixth Flute</i>, by Thomas Stanesby (Junior) (1692–1754, London)</p> <p>3 Descant in c'', <i>Fifth Flute</i>, by Richard Haka (before 1646–1705, Amsterdam)</p> <p>4 Descant in b' flat, <i>Fourth Flute</i>, after Thomas Stanesby Junior by Frederick G. Morgan</p> <p>5 Descant in a', <i>Third Flute</i>, after Bressan by Frederick G. Morgan</p> | <p>6 Alto in g' by Johann Benedikt Gahn (1674–1711, Nuremberg)</p> <p>7 Alto in f' by Jan Steenberg (1676–1733, Amsterdam)</p> <p>8 Tenor in d', <i>Voice Flute</i>, by Peter I. Bressan (1663–1731, London)</p> <p>9 Tenor in c' by Hotteterre (17th/18th century, Paris?)</p> <p>10 Tenor in b flat, <i>Fourth Flute</i>, by Thomas Stanesby Junior (1692–1754, London)</p> |
|--|--|
- No. 1–3 and 6–10: Recorder Collection of Frans Brügggen, Amsterdam
 No. 4: in possession of Frans Brügggen, Amsterdam
 No. 5: in possession of Daniël Brügggen, Bussum/Netherlands