

A GUIDE TO DATING BOOSEY & Co./BOOSEY & HAWKES INSTRUMENTS BASED ON SERIAL NUMBER

The Boosey & Hawkes Archive contains production records that make it possible to date instruments made by the company based on their serial numbers. The following information allows most woodwind or brass instruments produced under the Boosey & Hawkes name to be dated to within a maximum of three years. A number of the company's predecessors are also represented in the archive, most significantly Boosey & Co. When Boosey & Co. and Hawkes & Son merged in 1930, the resulting Boosey & Hawkes Company continued to use the Boosey serial number sequences for woodwind and brass instruments, and the records cover almost the entire period of instrument production at Boosey. This means that almost any instrument bearing the Boosey & Co. name can also be dated.

There are also a few, more sporadic, records relating to other companies that later became part of Boosey & Hawkes. Brass instruments bearing the Distin name that were made after the factory was bought by Boosey in 1868 (serial numbers above 10052 for cornets and 20100 for other brass instruments) appear in the records. The British arm of the French company Besson was bought up by Boosey & Hawkes in the 1940s, and the name was retained for many Boosey & Hawkes brass instruments until 2002. Brass instruments bearing the Besson name that were manufactured by Boosey & Hawkes (the UK instruments with serial numbers 185200 - 890008) can be found in the main Boosey & Hawkes brass instrument sequence. The dates for Besson brass instruments made in London before the takeover can be roughly determined from an estimated list that appears below.

The other two most significant companies that went to make up Boosey & Hawkes were Hawkes & Son and Rudall Carte & Co. The earlier histories of both of these companies are represented in the archive, but it is very difficult to derive any serial number information from the records. In the case of Hawkes & Son, very few records survive, despite their production levels having been on a par with those of Boosey & Co. The Rudall Carte records are complicated by the fact that separate serial number sequences were maintained for each type of instrument produced, and that only intermittent records survive. The company was bought by Boosey & Hawkes during World War II, but Rudall Carte instruments do not appear in the main Boosey & Hawkes woodwind serial number sequence until 1955. Instruments stamped with the Rudall Carte name and a serial number above about 70000 can be dated from the lists below.

In 1981, Boosey & Hawkes bought the French woodwind instrument firm Buffet Crampon. Unlike in earlier takeovers, the production of Buffet instruments continued in Paris and was not integrated into the Boosey & Hawkes Edgware operation. They therefore retained a separate serial number sequence, and dates for some Buffet instruments from the period 1928-1998 can be found in the list below. After the collapse of Boosey & Hawkes, Buffet Crampon again became independent. In 2006, Buffet acquired the Besson Company, and Besson brass instruments are now produced in Markneukirchen, Germany.

WOODWIND

[Boosey & Co./Boosey & Hawkes woodwind serial numbers below 68956](#)
[Boosey & Hawkes/Rudall Carte woodwind serial numbers 68956-595973](#)
[Buffet Crampon soprano clarinets, Harmony clarinets, saxophones and oboes.](#)

BRASS

[Besson brass instruments \(excluding trombones\) serial numbers below 124350](#)
[Besson trombones serial numbers below 124350](#)
[Distin/Boosey & Co./Boosey & Hawkes brass serial numbers below 560000](#)
[Besson/Boosey & Hawkes brass serial numbers above 560000](#)

BOOSEY & CO./BOOSEY & HAWKES WOODWIND SERIAL NUMBERS
BELOW 68956

The information presented here relating to the Boosey & Co. serial numbers up to 1932 is taken from Kelly J. White and Arnold Myers: 'Woodwind Instruments of Boosey & Company', *The Galpin Society Journal* No. LVXX, May 2004, pp.62-80. The later serial numbers were researched by Gavin Dixon and Neil Raj.

According to the *New Langwill Index* (compiled by William Waterhouse, London 1993), woodwind production began at Boosey & Co. in 1851. However, the earliest surviving records detailing flute production date from 1857, where the lowest serial number given is 4513. The surviving records for reed instruments begin in 1879 with the serial number 5968. It is therefore safe to assume that instruments bearing lower serial numbers than these were produced between 1851 and the respective sequence start dates. The only known exception is a short run of clarinets that were made at a much later date. These bear serial numbers in the range 2782-3025 and were completed between 1940 and 1942. They should be distinguishable by the fact that they carry the Boosey & Hawkes stamp rather than that of Boosey & Co.

The Boosey Company maintained separate serial number sequences for flutes and reed instruments throughout their history as an independent company. The merger with Hawkes & Son occurred in 1930, but the new company continued to manufacture instruments under the Boosey & Co. name until around 1932. At the end of the 1940s, the two serial number sequences were merged, with the flute sequence coming to an end and all subsequent flutes given numbers from the continuing reed sequence. The last number in the flute sequence is 31199 for an instrument completed 9/5/1950, while the first flute to appear in the reed sequence has the serial number 42799 and was completed 3/11/1949. Despite the overlap in production dates, these numbers appear to have been issued sequentially in the last months of 1949.

The following table is based on the dates serial numbers were given out and states the lowest number for each year. Assuming the numbers were given out sequentially (and there is some evidence that minor exceptions occurred), this allows individual serial numbers to be linked to specific years. The year given will indicate when the instrument was ordered from the factory rather than the actual production date, but the likelihood is that the instrument was completed either in the year stated or in the following year.

LOWEST FLUTE SERIAL No.	YEAR	LOWEST REED SERIAL No./ LOWEST WOODWIND No. (AFTER 1949)
4513	1857	
4817	1858	
5139	1859	
6086	1860	
6432	1861	
not recorded	1862	
6979	1863	
7307	1864	
7568	1865	
7802	1866	

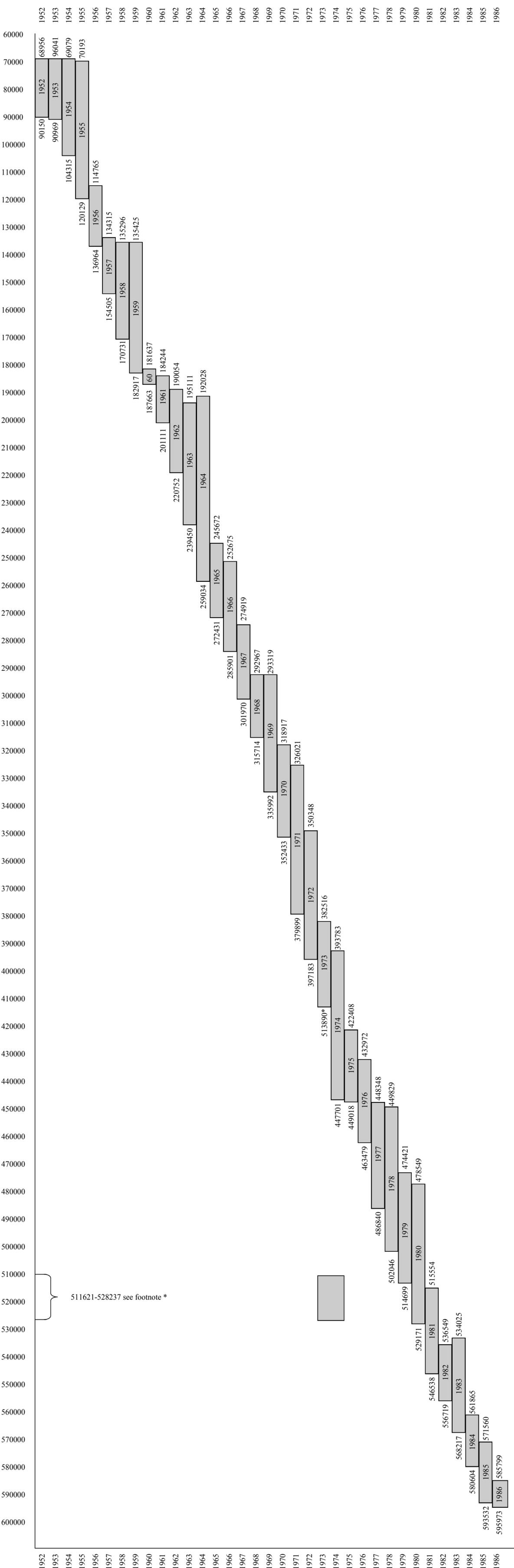
8018	1867	
8224	1868	
8475	1869	
8735	1870	
8911	1871	
9307	1872	
9527	1873	
9770	1874	
9913	1875	
10159	1876	
10393	1877	
10638	1878	
10888	1879	5968
11145	1880	6061
11275	1881	6380
11474	1882	6763
11665	1883	7211
12020	1884	7551
12352	1885	7930
12614	1886	8252
12781	1887	8732
12937	1888	9093
13126	1889	9537
13381	1890	10052
13703	1891	10498
14020	1892	10994
14338	1893	11436
14567	1894	11845
14810	1895	12162
15015	1896	12472
15239	1897	12797
15571	1898	13184
15724	1899	13552
16062	1900	13865
16307	1901	14328
16506	1902	14793
16715	1903	15261
16977	1904	15682
VOLUME MISSING	1905	16228
	1906	VOLUME MISSING
	1907	
	1908	
	1909	
	1910	
	1911	
1912	19437	

19344	1913	20062
19602	1914	20525
20132	1915	21182
20431	1916	21605
20588	1917	21963
20794	1918	22192
20936	1919	22406
21090	1920	22918
21415	1921	23488
21672	1922	24064
21907	1923	24730
22146	1924	25144
22329	1925	25661
22541	1926	26172
22698	1927	26824
22786	1928	27339
22830	1929	27874
22936	1930	28696
23056	1931	29447
23264	1932	29809
23520	1933	30403
23659	1934	31000
23870	1935	31540
24075	1936	32099
24289	1937	32757
25404	1938	33383
24697	1939	34028
24931	1940	34721
25085	1941	35514
25099	1942	36256
25102	1943	36318
25109	1944	36437
25122	1945	36602
NONE ISSUED	1946	36967
	1947	37564
25142	1948	39589
30257	1949	42900
	1950	49091
	1951	LOWEST NUMBER ISSUED IS IN THE RANGE 56803-56842 NOTE: A volume of miscellaneous serial numbers lists two sequences of clarinets as ex-frozen stock. Numbers 60000-61539 were given to clarinets completed in the period 1946-1948, and numbers 68275-68320 were given to clarinets completed in 1950. However, the numbers were issued twice and were also given out in 1951.

BOOSEY & HAWKES/RUDALL CARTE WOODWIND SERIAL NUMBERS 68956-595973

Compiled by Gavin Dixon based on research by Gavin Dixon and Neil Raj

The following graph gives production dates for woodwind instruments produced by Boosey & Hawkes with serial numbers above 68956. Serial numbers are given on the vertical axis, and the bar or bars that appear in the corresponding horizontal position give the range of possible years in which the instrument was made. Serial numbers were attributed chronologically (with a few minor exceptions) when instruments were ordered from the Edgware factory by the Regent Street head office. However, the date at which these orders were placed is not systematically recorded after 1951. Instead, each record gives the date the instrument left the factory. The different times taken to make the individual instruments mean that the completion dates do not link chronologically to the serial number sequence. This is why the following graphic representation of the data is required, with each bar representing the range of serial numbers from the lowest to the highest dispatched in any given year.



* Around 2000 serial numbers were mistakenly issued in December 1973 with the first digit as a 5 rather than a 4. The instruments bearing the following numbers were completed between December 1973 and the first months of 1974. The corresponding numbers in the 400,000 range were not subsequently issued.

- 511621 to 511630
- 511641 to 511665
- 511831 to 511880
- 511956 to 512480
- 512491 to 513290
- 513316 to 513390
- 513541 to 514115
- 514301 to 514334
- 514560 to 514584
- 514735 to 514809
- 528213 to 528237

**MANUFACTURING DATES FOR BUFFET CRAMPON SOPRANO
CLARINETS, HARMONY CLARINETS, SAXOPHONES AND OBOES**

SOPRANO CLARINETS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER</u>
1928	1
1929	2501
1930	5000
1931	7500
1932	10000
1933	12501
1934	15001
1935	18001
1936	20001
1937	22001
1938	24001
1939	26001
ESTIMATIONS BETWEEN 1945 AND 1957	
1945	27001
1950	34000
1951	36400
1952	38800
1953	41100
1954	45500
1955	48800
1956	51800
1957	54800
1958	58365
1959	59144
1960	62458
1961	65957
1962	69718
1963	75320
Jan – May 1964	78094-79864
VOLUME MISSING COVERING 79865 - 93203	
1967	93204
1968	99332
1969	105618
1970	111417
1971	117748
1972	126210
1973	133904

1974	143518
1975	153324
1976	163568
1977	173827
1978	183902
1979	191873
1980	201532
1981	210653
1982	221261
1983	234696
1984	250372
1985	266397
1986	277483
1987	284741
1988	302624
1989	312700
1990	324770
1991	337911
1992	352251
1993	367800
1994	381620
1995	394536
1996	408798
1997	423777
1998	439775

HARMONY CLARINETS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER</u>
1950	19506
1951	19579
1952	19639
1953	19681
1954	19782
1955	19966
1956	20092
1957	
1958	20155
1959	20238
1960	20402
1961	20503
1962	20512

1963	20693
1964	20776
1965	20855
1966	20912
1967	21055
1968	21210
1969	21539
1970	21433
1971	21501
1972	21588
1973	21628
1974	21703
1975	21797
1976	21954
1977	22000
1978	22115
1979	22234
1980	22351
1981	22426
1982	22536
1983	22693
1984	22860
1985	23060
1986	23275
1987	23463
1988	23620
1989	23876
1990	24191
1991	24509
1992	25222
1993	26078
1994	26992
1995	27801
1996	28676
1997	29532
1998	30573

SAXOPHONES

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER</u>
1952	2925
1953	3115
1954	3389

1955	3763
1956	4223
1957	4817
1958	5391
1959	6172
1960	6697
1961	7407
1962	8656
1963	10064
1964	10761
1965	11644
1966	12778
1967	13742
1968	14487
1969	15307
1970	16323
1971	17319
1972	18445
1973	19911
1974	21441
1975	22637
1976	24416
1977	25911
1978	27280
1979	28723
1980	30190
1981	31539
1982	32961
1983	33924
1984	34664
1985	35733
1986	37429
1987	37722
1988	37807
1989	37973
1990	38237
1991	38321
1992	38458
1993	38601
1994	38686
1995	38758
1996	38977
1997	39301
1998	39657

OBOES

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER</u>
1962	2856
1963	3060
1964	3126
1965	3182
1966	3236
1967	3299
1968	3361
1969	3441
1970	3496
1971	3610
1972	3740
1973	3868
1974	3929
1975	3989
1976	4062
1977	4131
1978	4208
1979	4191
1980	4407
1981	4440
1982	4539
1983	4652
1984	4760
1985	4862
1986	4921-4976
PRODUCTION STOPPED BETWEEN 1987 AND 1990	
1991	8010
1992	8315
1993	8396
1994	8591
1995	8747
1996	8903
1997	9067
1998	9211

**BESSON BRASS INSTRUMENTS (EXCLUDING TROMBONES) WITH SERIAL
NUMBERS BELOW 124350**

The British arm of the Besson Company was bought by Boosey & Hawkes in the 1940s. As part of the purchase, a number of stock books were acquired relating to the activities of the London Besson factory in the 19th century. These have been examined in some detail by Arnold Myers and Niles Eldredge, who include the following list (and introductory paragraph) as an appendix to their article ‘The Brasswind Production of Marthe Besson’s London Factory’ (*The Galpin Society Journal* vol. LIX, May 2006, pp. 43-75).

‘Since the stock books record when instruments were sold, the dates when they were entered into stock can only be estimated. Their serial numbers were apparently allocated when instruments were ordered from the workshop, and no records survive of these dates, which would represent the dates the design of an instrument was current. The dates given here are the latest possible date, assuming strict chronological numbering, when the serial numbers were allocated. It can be assumed that the valve stampings (serial numbers etc.) and the bell stampings (such as the number of medals of honour) were determined at a date or dates no later than when instruments were entered into stock.’

SERIAL NUMBER LATEST POSSIBLE DATE

9395	16/3/1869
9656	17/6/1869
10150	22/9/1869
10448	17/12/1869
10794	31/3/1870
11137	18/6/1870
11406	28/9/1870
11664	10/12/1870
11939	31/3/1871
12195	30/6/1871
12422	26/9/1871
12778	22/12/1871
13109	20/3/1872
13487	20/6/1872
13815	20/9/1872
14118	23/12/1872
14335	28/3/1873
14395	22/5/1873
16026	25/3/1874

16491	25/6/1874
16978	19/9/1874
17256	12/10/1874
17610	13/3/1875
18720	31/12/1875 estimated
20360	31/12/1876 estimated
21990	31/12/1877 estimated
23620	31/12/1878 estimated
25260	31/12/1879 estimated
26890	31/12/1880 estimated
28530	31/12/1881 estimated
30160	31/12/1882 estimated
31800	31/12/1883 estimated
33430	31/12/1884 estimated
35070	31/12/1885 estimated
36700	31/12/1886 estimated
38432	27/10/1887
38526	6/12/1887
39258	8/3/1888
39759	30/6/1888
40081	20/9/1888
40670	28/12/1888
41885	29/4/1889
42175	21/6/1889
42646	14/9/1889
43489	20/12/1889
44231	1/3/1890
44881	12/6/1890
45659	28/9/1890
46340	31/12/1890
46778	20/3/1891
47422	30/6/1891
48355	30/9/1891
49094	19/12/1891
49432	31/3/1892
50126	30/6/1892
50776	29/9/1892
51566	22/12/1892
51837	3/3/1893

52663	16/6/1893
53043	30/9/1893
53477	31/10/1893
54214	22/3/1894
54509	18/6/1894
55167	29/9/1894
55483	21/12/1894
56272	8/3/1895
56909	25/6/1895
57661	28/9/1895
58122	18/12/1895
59442	31/3/1896
59725	18/6/1896
60343	30/9/1896
61166	23/12/1896
61796	10/2/1897
62242	15/6/1897
62711	29/9/1897
63808	7/12/1897
64301	29/3/1898
64779	29/6/1898
65525	24/8/1898
65747	17/12/1898
65748	11/3/1899

Boosey & Hawkes also produced the following list, which gives approximate dates for Besson brass instruments excluding trombones for the period 1870-1931:

LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER	YEAR
10800	1870
17600	1875
28815	1883
35500	1886
45000	1890
55000	1895
63000	1898
76000	1903
90000	1909
93000	1911

100200	1914
101500	1917
111500	1921
124350	1931

From October 1954, instruments stamped with the "Besson" name were given serial numbers in the main Boosey & Hawkes brass instrument sequence.

BESSON TROMBONES WITH SERIAL NUMBERS BELOW 124350

The British arm of the Besson Company was bought by Boosey & Hawkes in the 1940s. As part of the purchase, a number of stock books were acquired relating to the activities of the London Besson factory in the 19th century. These have been examined in some detail by Arnold Myers and Niles Eldredge, who include the following list (and introductory paragraph) as an appendix to their article 'The Brasswind Production of Marthe Besson's London Factory' (*The Galpin Society Journal* vol. LIX, May 2006 pp. 43-75).

'Since the stock books record when instruments were sold, the dates when they were entered into stock can only be estimated. Their serial numbers were apparently allocated when instruments were ordered from the workshop, and no records survive of these dates, which would represent the dates the design of an instrument was current. The dates given here are the latest possible date, assuming strict chronological numbering, when the serial numbers were allocated. It can be assumed that any slide stampings (serial numbers etc.) and the bell stampings (such as the number of medals of honour) were determined at a date of dates no later than when instruments were entered into stock.

SERIAL NUMBER LATEST POSSIBLE DATE

677	6/6/1874
698	6/7/1874
721	23/12/1874
751	25/3/1875
757	6/4/1875
801	23/9/1875
804	8/12/1875
849	28/3/1876
878	16/6/1876
893	19/9/1876
924	29/12/1876
948	28/2/1877
973	11/6/1877
999	5/9/1877
1017	14/12/1877
1038	22/2/1878
1042	28/6/1878
1063	28/9/1878
1083	23/12/1878
1091	1/3/1879

1108	10/6/1879
1130	29/9/1879
1133	25/11/1879
1144	6/3/1880
1191	27/6/1880
1201	30/8/1880
1239	24/12/1880
1284	31/3/1881
1309	19/5/1881
1336	27/9/1881
1359	29/10/1881
1374	2/3/1882
1416	7/6/1882
1442	9/9/1882
1478	5/12/1882
1516	22/3/1883
1536	29/6/1883
1572	28/9/1883
1621	21/12/1883
1657	4/3/1884
1704	30/3/1884
1763	30/9/1884
1804	16/12/1884
1848	23/3/1885
1881	25/6/1885
1931	24/9/1885
1989	21/12/1885
2052	30/3/1886
2112	19/6/1886
2193	30/9/1886
2238	4/12/1886
2293	18/3/1887
1271	24/6/1887
2433	30/9/1887
2473	12/12/1887
2527	27/3/1888
2599	21/6/1888
2641	20/9/1888
2690	21/12/1888

2752	27/3/1889
2835	21/6/1889
2918	20/9/1889
3014	12/12/1889
3106	28/3/1890
3165	17/6/1890
3235	29/9/1890
3312	19/12/1890
3373	26/3/1891
3451	25/6/1891
3512	26/9/1891
3584	19/12/1891
3681	30/3/1892
3782	28/6/1892
3833	20/9/1892
3875	30/12/1892
3941	25/3/1893
4021	23/6/1893
4105	28/9/1893
4166	22/12/1893
4234	24/3/1894
4294	28/6/1894
4347	20/9/1894
4426	17/12/1894
4463	31/1/1895
4502	20/3/1895
4514	22/4/1895

The following list of pre-Boosey & Hawkes Besson trombone serial numbers is taken from the article 'Brass Instrument Dating by Serial Numbers' compiled by Gordon Cherry (*The Historic Brass Society Newsletter* no. 6 Summer 1994). Although they are not described as such, these dates should be treated as approximations. Comparison with the previous list shows that the 3070 serial number linked to 1905 is erroneous.

LOWEST SERIAL NUMBER	YEAR
3070	1905
9000	1908
9950	1912

10800	1916
11600	1919
13950	1935

From October 1954, instruments stamped with the "Besson" name were given serial numbers in the main Boosey & Hawkes brass instrument sequence.

DISTIN/BOOSEY & CO./BOOSEY & HAWKES BRASS SERIAL NUMBERS
BELOW 560000

Much of the information presented here is taken from 'Brasswind Innovation and Output of Boosey & Co. in the Blaikley Era' (Myers, A. *Historic Brass Society Journal* vol. 14 2002 pp. 391-423) and 'Brasswind Manufacturing at Boosey & Hawkes, 1930-1959' (Myers, A. *Historic Brass Society Journal* vol. 15 2003 pp. 55-72). Additional research was undertaken by Gavin Dixon, Neil Raj and Bradley Strauchen.

Boosey & Co. Instruments Produced Under the Distin Name

In June 1868, Boosey & Co. bought the brass instrument factory belonging to the Distin Company. This marks the starting point of large-scale brass production at Boosey, and is the earliest period recorded in the Boosey & Hawkes production records. Boosey continued to produce instruments under the Distin name until 1874. They also maintained the Distin serial numbering, which separated the cornets from the other brass instruments as a parallel sequence. The first volume of the workshop order books is lost, so the instruments produced in the years 1868-1870 can only be ascertained from the stock books relating to the initial audit of June 1868 and a subsequent one in January 1870. The extant production records begin in June 1870 and continue, almost without interruption, until 2002. The 'Date Given Out' in the records from 1870 onwards refers to the date instruments were ordered from the factory, and in these early records it is safe to assume that the instruments themselves were produced within a few months of the date given.

NUMBER	DATE ADDED TO STOCK
10052	1868 June 15 (cornets)
20100	1868 June 15 (other brass instruments)
10616	1870 January (cornets)
21439	1870 January (other brass instruments)

NUMBER	DATE GIVEN OUT
10814	1870 June 1 (cornets)
21855	1870 June 1 (other brass instruments)
11054	1871 January (cornets)
22635	1871 January (other brass instruments)
11536	1872 January (cornets)
24160	1872 January (other brass instruments)
12005	1873 January (cornets)
25479	1873 January (other brass instruments)
12611-12801	1874 January - April (cornets)
26571-26960	1874 January - April (other brass instruments)

Boosey & Co./ Boosey & Hawkes Serial Numbers 14345-560000

In 1874, Boosey & Co. abandoned the Distin name and merged the serial number sequences. The new combined sequence begins at 14345 and therefore overlaps the earlier sequence for brass instruments other than cornets. However, individual instruments can be linked to one or other sequence based on whether they carry the name of Distin & Co. or Boosey & Co. In 1930, Boosey & Co. merged with Hawkes & Son to form Boosey & Hawkes. The new company continued Boosey's serial number sequence, and the Boosey & Co. stamp also continued to appear on instruments up until early 1932. As with the later Distin numbers, the dates given here are the dates the instruments were ordered and their actual production may have taken place sometime after the date given.

NUMBER	DATE GIVEN OUT
14345	1874 May (all brass instruments)
15488	1875 January
17081	1876 January
17815	1876 June
18745	1877 January
20532	1878 January
22246	1879 January
24069	1880 January
25654	1881 January
26893	1882 January
28197	1883 January
29674	1884 January
30974	1885 January
32103	1886 January
33156	1887 January
34373	1888 January
35886	1889 January
37813	1890 January
39632	1891 January
41507	1892 January
43393	1893 January
45080	1894 January
46572	1895 January
47880	1896 January
49539	1897 January
51590	1898 January
53893	1899 January
56377	1900 January
59198	1901 January
61677	1902 January
64179	1903 January
66495	1904 January

68978	1905 January
71718	1906 January
73814	1907 January
75600	1908 January
77423	1909 January
79257	1910 January
81723	1911 January
83688	1912 January
85996	1913 January
88523	1914 January
93415	1915 January
98316	1916 January
100679	1917 January
102990	1918 January
104183	1919 January
10745	1920 January
111174	1921 January
114201	1922 January
116945	1923 January
119411	1924 January
121910	1925 January
125285	1926 January
128009	1927 January
131460	1928 January
134299	1929 January
136685	1930 January
138565	1931 January
140164	1932 January
141820	1933 January
143643	1934 January
145199	1935 January
146673	1936 January
148811	1937 January
151140	1938 January
153435	1939 January
155743	1940 January
157769	1941 January
159290	1942 January
159917	1943 January
160568	1944 January
161408	1945 January
162943	1946 January
165575	1947 January
169451	1948 January
172247	1949 January
174903	1950 January

177608	1951 January
180519	1952 January
182842	1953 January
185201	1954 January
192569	1955 January
211560	1956 January
239221	1957 January
269345	1958 January
288450	1959 January
303448	1960 January
319805	1961 January
336763	1962 January
360417	1963 January
380601	1964 January
400825	1965 January
414064	1966 January
430724	1967 January
446028	1968 January
464796	1969 January
481845	1970 January

BESSON/BOOSEY & HAWKES BRASS SERIAL NUMBERS ABOVE 560000

Compiled by Gavin Dixon based on research by Gavin Dixon and Neil Raj.

The following graph gives production dates for Boosey & Hawkes brass instruments with serial numbers above 560000. Serial numbers are given on the vertical axis, and the bar or bars that appear in the corresponding horizontal position give the range of possible years in which the instrument was made. The production records for the period covered by this graph (1974-2002) vary widely in terms of the amount of information recorded. I have assumed that the serial numbers were attributed chronologically, although there may be a few minor fluctuations. At the start of the period covered, the serial numbers were recorded when the order was placed with the factory, which was often some time before the instruments themselves were completed. However, this date is rarely recorded, and so no strictly chronological dating system can be linked to the serial number sequence. Instead I have used the 'finished' date that is given for each instrument. This date is usually recorded with information about the instrument's surface, i.e. whether it is plated or lacquered, so I am assuming that this date is linked to the final stage of the instrument's production. However, these 'finished' dates are only recorded up to instrument 737750 in 1985. After this, three volumes of records are missing and when they resume, the finished dates are no longer present. So instead I have turned to the dispatch dates for the instruments with serial numbers 760000-809008 as these are the only dates given. The relationship between the serial number sequence and the dispatch date sequence is much closer in this period than in the earlier records, suggesting that from 1988 onwards serial numbers were attributed after the instruments had been completed rather than when they were first ordered from the factory.

