

The Three Row Diatonic Melodeon A Comprehensive Guide

Part 7 – Faults, Repairs and Tuning

Sometimes things don't sound right and you may have a fault with your instrument.

Examples:-

Buttons don't produce notes.

Notes sound out of tune.

Notes sound gurgly or distorted.

More than one note is heard when only one should be.

Clacking noises – pallets need refacing or button movement needs restricting if they are disappearing down the holes.

Rattling noises – something loose inside.

Air button stops working – broken spring.

Loss of compression – Leaky bellows – Bellows need retaping or new bellows gaskets need to be fitted.

There are, unfortunately, quite a lot of things that can go wrong with your box. Thankfully, as long as you look after it, your melodeon is a pretty robust bit of kit that should give you a reasonable period of trouble-free service.

Unless you really know what you're doing and you're good with your hands, get your local fettler to sort it out.

A fettler is an expert repairer and tuner who will probably do this job for a living. Again, www.melodeon.net will point you to all the best

ones in the UK, the US, Canada and a few other places.

There are only a few talented fettlers around so you have to pay for their skills!! Believe me, it's money well spent. A beautifully prepared, tuned melodeon is a real joy to play.

Tuning, especially, is a very skilled task and not to be undertaken lightly as are several other jobs on this instrument.

Melodeons need to be re-tuned routinely. This might range from a quick touch up on a few notes to a full re-tune. You can have the amount of wetness altered. This can be expensive as it takes a long time.

Sometimes you can ask your fettler to completely re-tune certain buttons to give you more useful notes – especially up the high-pitched end. I did this on my Hohner Erica DG to help me play the D major section in The Bluebell Polka.

It's definitely worth having a look inside the box to see how things work - being careful to remove bellows pins without scratching the instrument and laying out all the screws in a sensible way for replacing after your investigation. Use somewhere that's not going to damage your box - lay a blanket down on your table?