

What Can You Tell Me About My Dolmetsch Recorder?

Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd. was founded in 1936 to continue, in a formal way, the work begun by Arnold Dolmetsch in the early 1880s. In March 1978 the Dolmetsch family (Dr. Carl Dolmetsch and his twin-daughters Jeanne and Marguerite Dolmetsch) was forced out of the company and decided to set up a new family firm J & M Dolmetsch which started making instruments in September 1978. The original company, Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd., weakened by poor management, collapsed in October 1981. J & M Dolmetsch purchased the assets of Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd. from their liquidators and it is that reunited business that continued the family's work under the name Dolmetsch Musical Instruments.

No matter when they were manufactured, all Dolmetsch wooden recorders bear one of the following logos

1. Dolmetsch set out in a semi-circle, containing the letters J & M, marked made in England have been made by J & M Dolmetsch or Dolmetsch Musical Instruments and will be marked with an unique serial number identifying that they are handmade and have been designed and voiced by Jeanne and Marguerite Dolmetsch.
2. Dolmetsch set out in a semi-circle, without any internal letters, sometimes, but not always, marked made in England or England alone, have been made either
 - a. by Arnold Dolmetsch Limited, in which case they will bear a unique serial number (see the table below to identify year of manufacture); or
 - b. by Dolmetsch Musical Instruments, in which case they bear no unique serial number and are from our mid-priced ranges.
3. Dolmetsch set out as a circle, sometimes including the words made in England have been made by Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd. and, in the majority of cases, have been voiced and tuned by Dr. Carl Dolmetsch or by other members of the Dolmetsch family. They will bear a unique serial number (see the table below to identify the probable year of manufacture).
4. Arnold Dolmetsch set out as a circle, sometimes including the words made in England have been made by Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd. and, in the majority of cases, have been voiced and tuned by Dr. Carl Dolmetsch or by other members of the Dolmetsch family. They will bear a unique serial number (see the table below to identify the probable year of manufacture).
5. the letters JMD set vertically as in a cartouche have been made by J & M Dolmetsch, will be marked with an unique serial number, identifying that they are handmade and designed and voiced by Jeanne and Marguerite Dolmetsch.

The number 3499 after the letters B.S. set out as a B lying on its side over a triangle containing the letter S (also called the 'kite' mark), sometimes including the words Part 2A, refers to the now discontinued British Standard for recorders. Reference to this British Standard appears on

Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd recorders made during the 50s, 60s and early 70s.

Arnold Dolmetsch Serial Numbers

We set out below the approximate date of manufacture associated with the serial numbers used by Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd. They should be taken as approximate to the extent that any particular number may have been made from two years earlier to two years later than the date given in the table.

Start Ser. No.	Year	Start Ser. No.	Year	Start Ser. No.	Year	Start Ser. No.	Year	Start Ser. No.	Year	Start Ser. No.	Year
1	1919										
50	1920	550	1930		1940	3400	1950	8800	1960	16200	1970
100	1921	600	1931		1941	3900	1951	9400	1961	17000	1971
150	1922	650	1932		1942	4400	1952	10000	1962	17800	1972
200	1923	700	1933		1943	4900	1953	10600	1963	18600	1973
250	1924	800	1934		1944	5400	1954	11400	1964	19400	1974
300	1925	900	1935		1945	5900	1955	12200	1965	20200	1975
350	1926	1000	1936	1800	1946	6400	1956	13000	1966	21000	1976
400	1927	1200	1937	2200	1947	7000	1957	13800	1967	22000	1977
450	1928	1400	1938	2600	1948	7600	1958	14600	1968	23000	1978
500	1929	1600	1939	3000	1949	8200	1959	15400	1969	24000	1979
										25000+	1980/81

Only a few recorders were made between 1939 and 1946.

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<http://www.dolmetsch.com/handmaderecorders.htm#serialnumbers>

(The table has been re-organised.)