

Selmer Musical Instruments Ltd

London, England

- 1919 Ben Davis (photo 1) returns from the war and learns to play jazz saxophone professionally.
- 1923 Brother Lew Davis (1903-1986) (photo 2) joins the Jack Hylton band playing trombone.
- 1929 Ben establishes the Selmer company in London at 106 Charing Cross Rd, first floor, becoming the agent for Selmer saxophones.
- 1930 Lew leaves Hylton for the Ray Fox band.
- 1932 Lew is now with Ray Noble's New Mayfair Dance Orchestra.
- 1934 Lew changes to the Ambrose Orchestra.
- c1935 Davis moves to a larger store on Moor St, London.
- 1937 The Selmer store moves to 114-116 Charing Cross Rd (photo 3).
- c1939 Lew Davis opens his store at 134 Charing Cross Rd (photo 4 from 2023) and called Lew Davis Products Ltd. This was also owned by Selmer.
- 1941 A Lew Davis price sheet shows they are selling Premier, Manhattan, Dearman, Rolls, Conn, Blessing, New Yorker, King, and Olds trumpets. They also sell Lew Davis, Lafleur, Hawkes, King, Martin, and Olds trombones.
- 1953 Musical & Plastics Industries is formed as the holding company for Selmer UK and Selcol, a plastic toy manufacturer.
- 1950s The Selmer business changes to a focus on electronic guitars and amplifiers.
- 1964 The Davis brothers sell the majority of stock to an umbrella company, and they retire to the South of France.
- 1965 The new owners don't do well, and the banks appoint John Cochrane (photo 1 next page) as chairman who runs the business until 1972.
- 1967 The Lew Davis store closes.
- 1970 The Selmer store is remodeled.
- 1972 John Cochrane retires.
- 1974 The Selmer store is sold to Chicago Musical Instrument Co as a UK outlet for their sales.
- c1976 The store is sold to REW; a hi-fi electronics business.



c1980 The store is sold to Thorn EMI; a musical instrument business.

1984 The music store is closed and becomes a computer store.

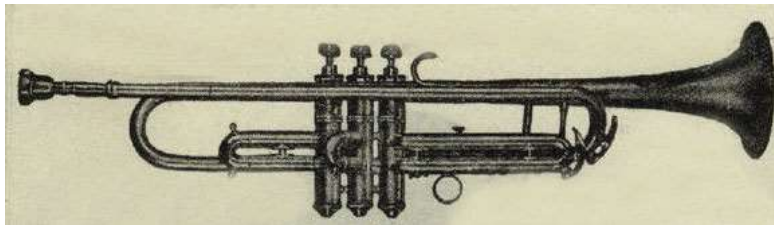
2023 The site is now a Chipotle Mexican Grill (photo 2).

Brass Instrument sold by Selmer UK:

Manhattan: This trumpet is shown in the 1941 price list for Lew Davis. These were also sold by H&A Selmer in the US in the 1930s to early 1940s. The earlier examples are sometimes marked "Czechoslovakia" and were likely made by Bohland & Fuchs in Graslitz. After Germany took over in 1938, these change to stencils made by Windsor, a student-grade horn made by Buescher in Elkhart.



New Yorker: This was another low-cost student model trumpet on the Lew Davis price sheet from 1941. These were also sold by Gretsch in the US in the 1930s and were made by B&F in Graslitz.



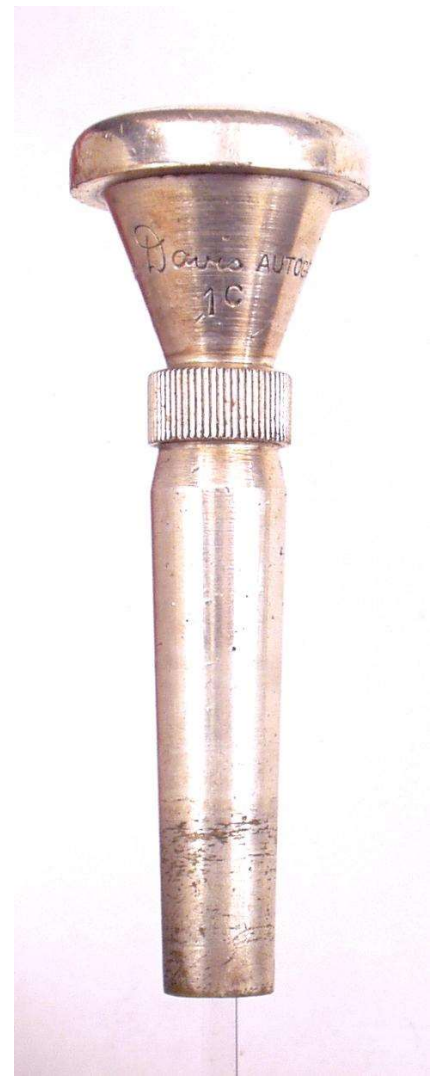
Lew Davis: This was first a trombone offered by Davis as shown in the 1941 price list. He later adds a trumpet (photo 4), which is quite rare. Also made were mouthpieces and mutes (photo 3). There are not enough examples out there to really determine their origins, but the brass are likely German made. Davis used the "Autograph" name.



This trumpet below is marked “Lew Davis Autograph / Foreign / Patent 485347 / The King Inst. Co. LTD / London W1”.



The mouthpiece at right appears to be a very early design.



Invicta: These appear to be from the 1950s and 1960s and are said to be made by Huttli in Germany based on the designs. They are marked “Foreign” on instruments sold in the UK.

A very early example is marked “Italy”.



Melody Maker: This is another brass line found that's marked "Foreign" but without the Selmer name. It's possible these were sold at the Selmer UK store. (photos 1 & 2 at right and below from Horn-u-copia.net)



Dearman Master: Another trumpet on the 1941 list made by B&F in Czechoslovakia before WWII (photo 3).

Rolls Diplomat: Mentioned on the 1941 Lew Davis list and a foreign-made offering from Selmer. Another German or Czech made design and came in the Diplomat or Super Diplomat model. This probably has the record largest pinky ring ever made!

Super Diplomat #566 (auction photos)

