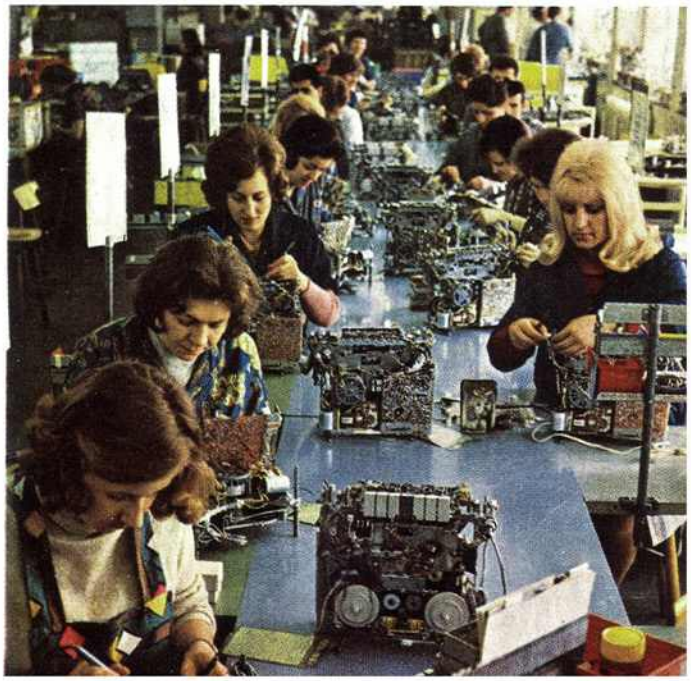
AUDIO FAIR ISSUE

Amateur Tape Recording

AUDIO-VIDEO

April 1967 Vol 8 No 9 2/6



TAPE RECORDERS IN THE MAKING—UHER—Page 10

www.americanradiohistory.com

TAPE RECORDERS IN THE MAKING UHER

ATR visits Munich, the home of Uher tape recorders and a cultural centre with world-famous theatrical and musical activity

Wolf Frhr. Von Horstein, general manager of Uher.

The history of Munich dates back to 1158 – Uher began manufacturing tape recorders sometime later – and from 1253 onwards was the residence of the Bavarian Electors. In 1806 it became the home of the Bavarian Kings and is now the seat of the Free State of Bavaria. With a population of nearly one and a half million, Munich has become the third largest industrial city of the German Federal Republic and is concerned with the manufacture of electrical apparatus, motor vehicles, optics and textiles. The *Uher Werke München* was founded in 1953 with Wolf Frhr. von Horstein as President and General Manager of the company. Today, nearly 600 people are employed at the Munich factory, with another 450 at the branch works at Buchbach. Both factories are concerned solely with the manufacture of tape recorders, accessories for tape recorders, language teaching systems and tape recorders for special applications. The daily output of tape recorders alone is more than 500, 45% of which are exported to the Common Market and EFTA countries, the USA, Canada and South Africa, involving some 120 overseas distributors with service facilities and trained technical personnel. There are 23 appointed service agents in Germany alone. The main UK distributors and service agents are Bosch Limited, 205 Great Portland Street, London W1.

The Uher factory on the outskirts of Munich.

Part of the assembly shop where the printed circuit boards are fitted with components and where the wiring of the tape recorders is completed.

Milestones in Uher History

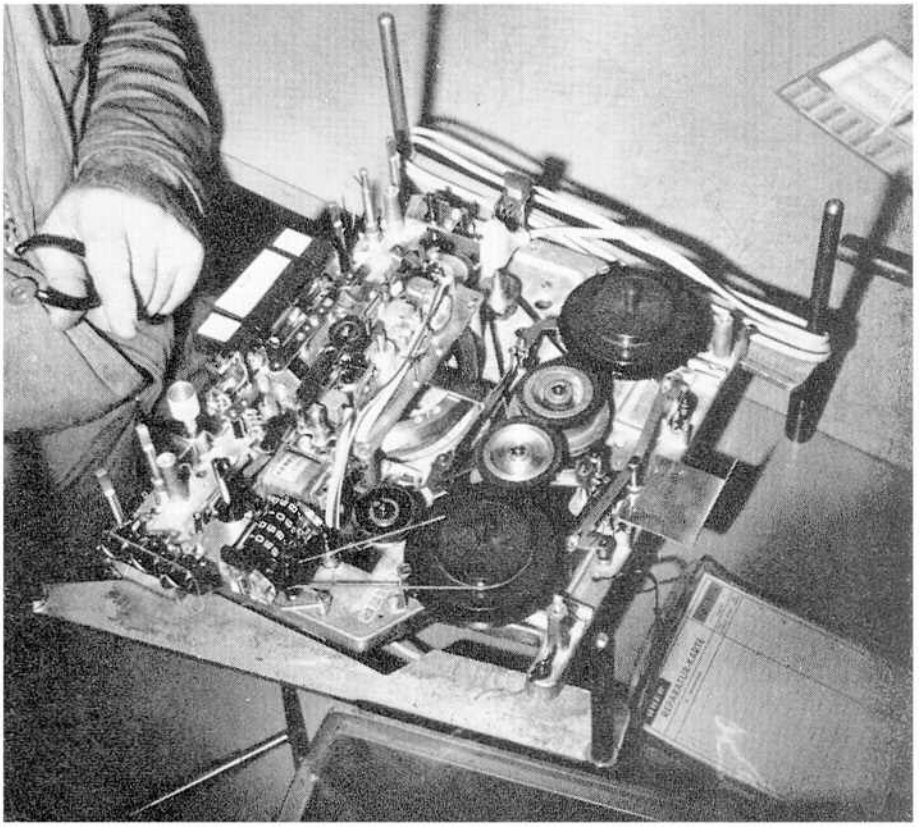
In 1956 Uher produced the first of their type 95 tape recorders, a somewhat large but otherwise successful series. In 1958 came the *Universal Series*, one of which was reviewed in *ATR*, although at this time Uher was little known in the UK. Then followed the *Stereo Record 3* which was the first Uher machine to make real impact on the export markets. By 1961 the first of the *4000 Report* series became a pioneering achievement in the field of portable tape recorders, being adopted, as it is now, for professional purposes. Among the most recent tape recorders from the Uher factory are the *Royal Stereo*, which is a home studio recorder, and the *22 Hi-Fi Special*, one of the first tape recorders specially designed for use in hi-fi systems (also favourably reviewed in *ATR*). Last, but not least, is the *Uher 1000 Report Pilot* which was developed for linkage with a film camera to achieve synchronized sound tracks. It employs a pilot tone system and many are already in use by German and foreign broadcasting stations.

Uher Recorders are Popular

One of the best known of the Uher tape recorders in the UK is the current *4000 Report L* portable favoured by amateurs and professionals alike. They are used by our own BBC as well as overseas organizations such as NASA, the American Federal

www.americanradiohistory.com

Police, the German Weather Service, the Canadian Broadcasting System, the National Broadcasting Company, the American Broadcasting Company, Radio Hong Kong and many other professional studios throughout the world. Uher estimate that 50% of the world's journalists and radio reporters use the *4000 Report L.* Among the famous who use Uher tape recorders are Ella Fitzgerald, Stirling Moss, Dizzy Gillespie, and King Hassan of Morocco, to mention just a few.



At every stage close inspection is carried out and the results recorded on a production card attached to the tape recorder.

Uher Werke München

I think one of the most surprised people to ever visit a tape recorder factory was radio reporter and *ATR* contributor Bob Danvers-Walker who came with me to visit Uher (he writes elsewhere in this issue on our recording activity in Munich). Within ten minutes of being in the factory his own *Uher 4000 Report L* was, to his utter amazement, completely stripped down to its various sub-assemblies. The Uher engineers just wanted to show him that, after six months of continuous use, both the mechanical and electrical performance were still absolutely to within specification. We more or less followed the bits and pieces right through the factory until the re-assembled recorder was handed back to him completely with frequency response certificate! I thought at the time that Uher were pretty confident of the performance of their products.

The factory is located in the outskirts of Munich not far from the site of the Munich Oktoberfest. It is an extremely modern factory with up-to-date machine tools, a plating shop and plastic moulding plant, etc., and Uher manufacture many of the components for their tape recorders, most of which employ printed circuit electronics. We toured the entire factory from the machine shops through the assembly and testing bays right to the production control and design laboratories.

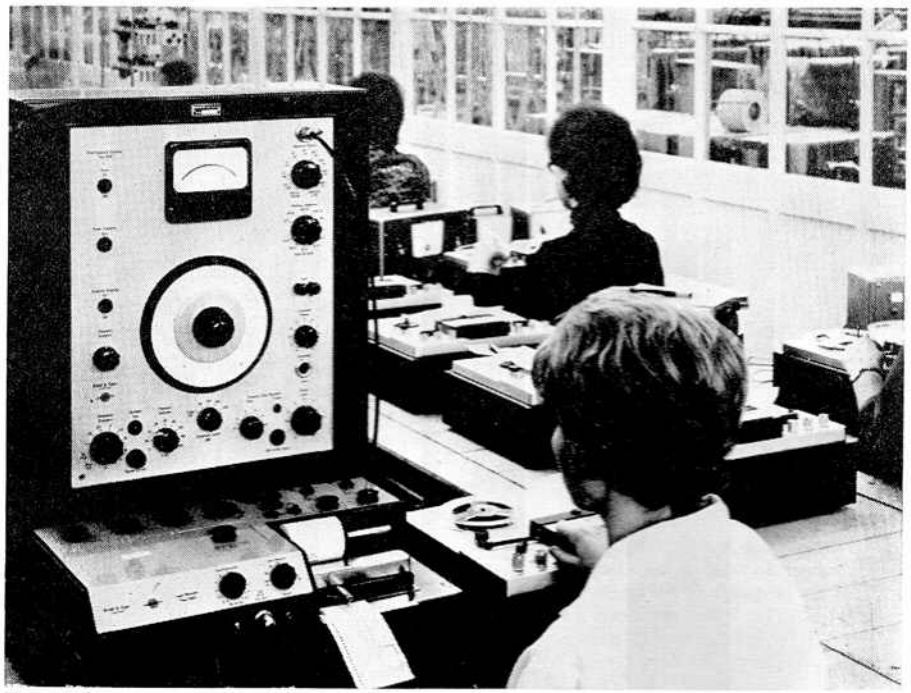
Uher have a saying '*Your dreams are our tasks*' and I must say they listened most attentively to what Bob and I had to say on the technicalities of tape and tape recorders. The fact that Uher specialize has led to some

Final testing stages where circuits and mechanical functions are checked and recording heads aligned.

www.americanradiohistory.com

TAPE RECORDERS IN THE MAKING UHER

Continued

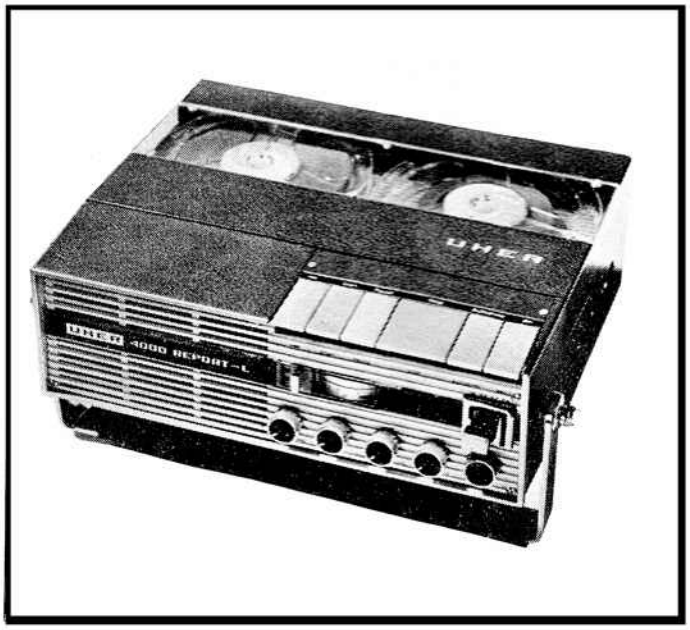


Every Uher tape recorder undergoes a frequency response test with this special pen-recording response test equipment.

quite outstanding advances in development, especially in portable tape recorders. They were the first manufacturers to use printed circuits and among the first to employ transistors. Models such as the *Royal Stereo* and the *22 Hi-Fi Special* introduced new high standards for domestic recorders and such achievements have only become possible because the entire staff have a single obsession – the production of tape recorders for all purposes, capable of meeting all requirements. It is interesting to note that many of the Uher employees are themselves tape recording enthusiasts. The current Uher catalogue shows ten different tape recorders at present in production, as well as dozens of accessories such as microphones, mixers, cables, slide projector synchronizers, headphones, remote control units and special accessories for individual recorders. Uher is truly devoted to tape recording.

The individual manufacturing stages of Uher tape recorders and accessories are of course too numerous to relate in detail, and I hope that the photographs will give some idea of the factory and its products. Bob Danvers-Walker was impressed, and so was I, with the thoroughness and precision that goes into the design and manufacture of Uher products. Our visit to Munich will not quickly be forgotten mainly because of the very warm Bavarian welcome extended to us by Helmut Grill (Uher publicity officer) and his wife, who made quite sure that we experienced some of the delightful 'tourist' attractions of Munich before we left. I returned with some very fine recordings of the sounds of Munich, made, of course, with my *Uher 4000 Report L.* FCJ

The Uher 22 Hi-Fi Special designed for use with hi-fi systems and available for half or quarter-track, mono or stereo operation.



The now-well-known Uher 4000 Report L portable is used all over the world by radio reporters, journalists and amateur enthusiasts alike. Function is half-track with four operating speeds, 7½, 3¾, 1⅞ and 15/16 ips.

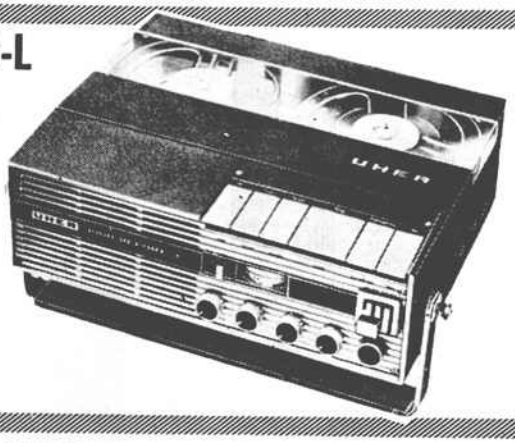
www.americanradiohistory.com

QUALITY
the simple, single aim

behind the manufacture of these and every UHER Tape Recorder. The production of tape recorders for every amateur and professional need is the sole pre-occupation of the UHER Company, whose specialisation has led to many outstanding developments, including the first application of printed-circuit techniques in tape recorder manufacture.

4000 Report-L

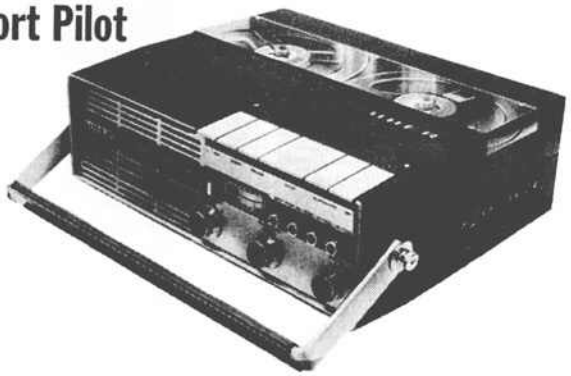
UHER



An extremely versatile battery portable that gives virtually every facility of a mains-operated recorder—with many exceptional new features. Four tape speeds provide an infinite variety of recordings. Collectorless motor. Weighs only 6 lbs. Price, including microphone and tape, 103 gns.

1000 Report Pilot

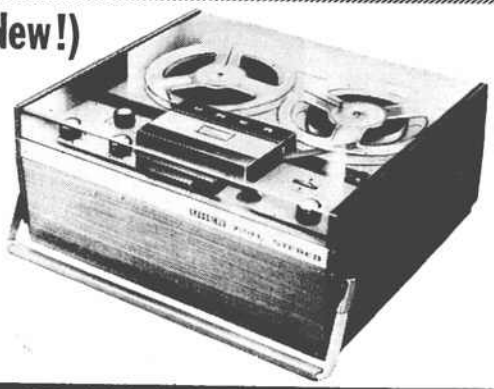
UHER



A tape recorder of the highest standard, specially manufactured for professional use. Ideal size, weight, performance and exceptional quality reception. Can be used to synchronise sound with film as well as reporting under professional conditions, on a wide range of voltages. Remote control stop/start. Full track. Collectorless motor. Automatic volume control. Price on application

724L Stereo (New!)

UHER



The latest, full stereo four track, all mains recorder, specially designed to meet the strong demand for an instrument particularly easy to understand and operate. Monophonic and stereophonic recording and playback. Suitable for use with 'hi-fi' equipment. Fully transistorised. High impedance output. Takes 7" spools. Now built in to a smart teak cabinet with a smoke-tinted perspex lid. Priced at only 75 gns.

SEE US AT THE AUDIO FAIR—BOOTH No. 47 IN DEMONSTRATION ROOM 122.

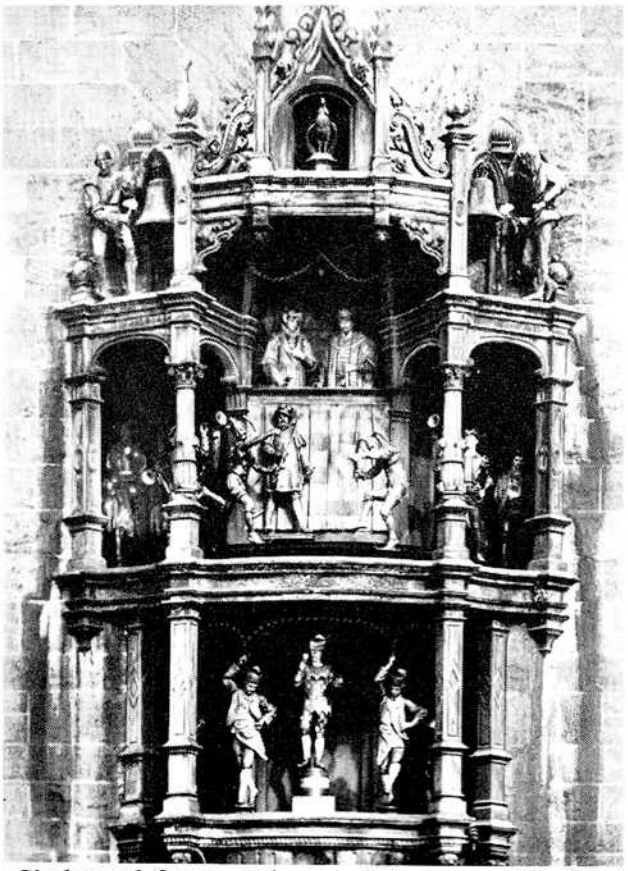
BOSCH BOSCH LIMITED. 205 Great Portland Street, London, W1. Telephone: LANgham 2672-5 **UHER**

www.americanradiohistory.com

SWITCHED ON IN MUNICH

A sequel to ATR's visit to the Uher factory in Munich

by Bob Danvers-Walker



The Glockenspiel figures at the top of the tower of the Munich Rathaus (*Town Hall*).

I was wandering through the streets of Munich with my Uher 4000 picking up sounds and my mind was picking up memories too. Here I was in the capital of Bavaria, guest of the directors of the Uher factory, seeing for myself evidence – both in their impressive factory and in this rebuilt third largest city in the Federal Republic – of that dynamic Germanic characteristic called 'thoroughness'. Even their hospitality is painstakingly efficient and meticulous in detail. It was Sunday and people were making their way to church. A drizzly rain dampened the roadways and pavements to reflect the white and blue trams and traffic signals in the busy, bustling Marienplatz.

I recorded the Glockenspiel sounding its regular 11 am carillon of bells from the tower of the *Rathaus*, that enormously impressive Town Hall which dominates the City centre. The bells are interesting, if not melodious, but the many moving figures provide an entertainment which draws every eye to the Gothic tower for the best part of a quarter of an hour. At the eleventh stroke two knights and their squires come out and move slowly round. At their next appearance one of them unhorses the other with his lance. This tournament by the larger-than-life-sized gaily painted copper figures is in honour of Duke William V and his wife on their wedding day in 1568. A group of red-coated coopers then dance to their traditional melody. This custom extends back to the plague years of 1515-17 when coopers announced the end of the epidemic to the citizens with music and dancing. When that is over a rooster flaps his wings three times, crowing shrilly above the noise of the traffic.

I found the best place to record this was at the base of the *Queen of Heaven* statue immediately facing the Rathaus. At the base of this are the figures of four genii symbolizing the fight against War, Famine, Plague and Heresy.

At the end of the performance I enquired my way to the *Hofbrauhaus* of a stumpy little man obviously interested in what I was doing. He spoke very good English (which helped) and offered to guide me around and show me the sights. In the 1914-18 war he was a prisoner of war on the Isle of Man, he told me. A retired pensioner now, he used to work on the railways. 'Look over there', he said, 'that's the hotel where your Mr Chamberlain, Mons. Daladier, Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini met in 1939.' Ah yes, of

Bob Danvers-Walker records the Glockenspiel bell chimes and melodies associated with the figures that move around the tower of the Rathaus.

www.americanradiohistory.com

course, 'Peace in our time' is what Mr C said as he waved the piece of paper in the air upon his return from the drawing up of the Munich Agreement. 'And over there,' continued the little man with obvious pride in his voice, 'is the new National Theatre.' The original one was reconstructed in 1823 out of funds gathered by a special tax on beer. Allied bombs totally destroyed it during the last war. At the mention of beer we turned off the Maximilianstrasse in search of a stein or two (or three).

Sunday is the traditional day for 'Weisswurst', a special Bavarian sausage which is not so much a mid-day snack but more a kind of blow-out. What with pigs' trotters, brisket, sides of ham and pork pies, no wonder the food-loving Bavarians refer to that massive beerhall, the Hofbrauhaus, as the *Schwemme* – literally *the trough*. It was also the birthplace of Nazidom. Fill one of those big earthenware mugs with the native brew and you're drinking a beer backed by a purity law dating back to 1516 which ensured that *There shall be taken and used only barley, hops and water.* Come Sunday afternoon and whole families flock to the beer halls and wine taverns for zither music, folk singing and the traditional ump-pa-pa bands. On occasions the big political drums are also banged in these public forums where fervent feelings for the Fatherland find expression.

Talking of bands, right round the corner of the Kaufingerstrasse there came one of those heaven-sent moments which always cause me to leap into action with my tape recorder like a rocket taking off from a launching pad. I had heard it coming, that's why there was scant time to say 'Auf Wiedersehn' to my friendly little man as I whipped the Uher microphone from its shoulder holster. On went the controls of my recorder and, diving through the traffic, I sprinted into the centre of the road to tape the most gloriously costumed German band I have ever seen. Garbed in seventeenth-century uniforms, tricorn hats, scarlet and gold jackets, gaiters and with a periwigged bannerbearer at their head, the musicians were blasting off as resounding a piece of martial music as ever came out of polished brass. Walking backwards in front of them I automatically recorded the occasion with that presumptuousness which comes with many years of tape recording and news gathering. And right alongside me was someone else (looking remarkably like a tape recording enthusiast to me) with an identical Uher 4000 over his shoulder. We exchanged grins and walked backwards together.

I wonder what became of my friendly little man. During lulls in our conversation I think we were both a bit conscious of all our yesterdays. I looked for him, but somehow I think he was secretly wanting to tangle with a Weisswurst and was glad to be shot of me. This business of belting around like the proverbial blue-tailed fly has become so much a part of my life that I find I tend to leave people trailing behind wondering just what to make of me. Take Helmud and Gertrude Grill for instance. He is the Public Relations Officer of Uher and his very charming wife also works with the firm. Fred Judd and I found them most excellent company and kindness itself in seeing that everything was to our liking.

An extensive tour of the Uher factory rounded off our schedule and the Editor of *ATR* reports on this elsewhere but I just want to tell you one last little story. There are eighteen churches in Munich and Helmud Grill knew a lot about them. The twin onion-domed Church of Our Lady is most impressive. It was when he drew my attention to the Church of the Holy Trinity – the *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* – and remarked that it was the only church in the downtown area to survive the war undamaged, that an incident came to mind which struck me as being extraordinarily apposite. I forget exactly how many years ago it would be, but I recall being in Coventry not long after the end of the war. It was still very much a ruin – perhaps less so than Munich after the Allied saturation raids, but still a ruin. Overnight hotel accommodation was literally reduced to one old inn and a boarding house or two. I arrived there to be told that the last room had just been taken . . . by an ex-Luftwaffe bomber pilot who had come to see the damage he had done. I recorded the bells of the *Frauenkirche* (Church of Our Lady) to file alongside the bells of Coventry Cathedral. Not a bad theme for a tape recording club documentary . . . on the futility of war. Or maybe a suggestion for an interchange of taped sounds and opinions between Munich recordists and their opposite numbers in Coventry.

The last thing I did before leaving Munich was to enquire into the strength of tape recording clubs in Germany. It would appear that, relatively speaking, England has far more clubs, not only than Germany, but of all the other countries in Europe. The question is how active are they, here and over there. One lively club is worth a dozen lethargic groups who do little more than sit around, chat and drink tea . . . or pilsner . . . or cognac . . . or vino . . . or *chocolaté con-leche.*

A stein or two of beer in the Hofbrauhaus *with the appropriate music from the ump-pa-pa band all duly recorded on a Uher 4000 Report L portable recorder.*

Typical Bavarian entertainers at the Platzl beerhall where permission to film, photograph and record was freely given.

The Oktoberfest provides colourful background and an infinite variety of sounds and music.

www.americanradiohistory.com