

## KUBAS (Kent Ukulele & Banjulele Appreciation Society)

### Banjulele Information

#### **What is a banjulele?** *(Sometimes spelt banjolele)*

A banjulele is a cross between a ukulele and a banjo.

It is reported that “**Alvin Keech**” invented the instrument and name in 1917.

Players of ukuleles in the music halls wanted more volume but wanted the ease of playing with an ukulele – hence the banjulele was born.

As you would expect the strings on a banjulele are exactly the same “C” tuning as a ukulele (GCEA).

Early Keech banjuleles date from 1917 to 1930 and generally were manufactured in three models, “A”, “B” and “C”. “A” was the base model and “C” was the top model. Generally Keech banjuleles have the model and serial number stamped into the heel of the neck and the last digit of the patent number on the tuning peg section denotes the year e.g. 219720/2 is 1922.

The size of the vellum (skin) on the pot/drum generally varies from 6inches (15cm) to 12inches (30cm). This has an affect on the tone and volume.

Other factors that affect the sound of a banjulele are the tension of the vellum, the angle/height of the strings (known as the “*Action*”), the material of the strings and the material of the bridge.

Some common vintage banjulele manufacturers that produced instruments around 1920 to 1950 are as below:

Abbott	Bacon
Broadcaster	Dallas
Dulcetta (John Grey & Sons)	Gibson
George Houghton & Sons (Golden Lion)	Keech (Alvin)
Jedson (John E Dallas & Sons)	John Grey & Sons
Ludwig (Wendell Hall)	Maxitone
Reliance (George Houghton & Sons)	Windsor

Many manufacturers produced their own banjuleles that were unbranded to sell to their distributors under different names. Don't be surprised to see unbranded makes that look like the originals.

Prices for vintage banjuleles vary from £100 to £1000 depending upon the manufacturer and condition.

Good luck in researching and buying a vintage banjulele!