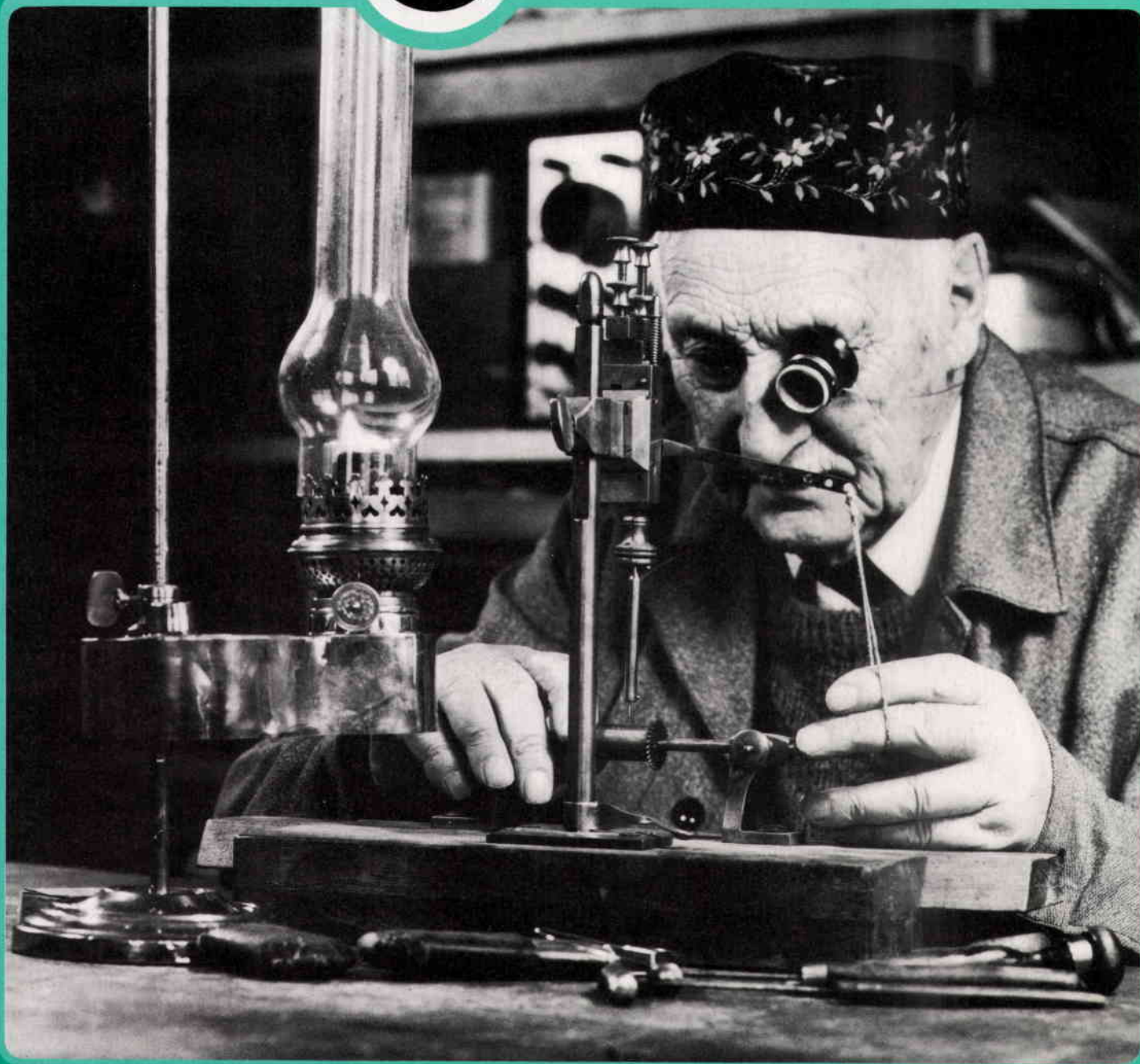


The Music Box

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 12 Number 7

Autumn/Fall 1986



Inside

How Musical Boxes were made in the middle of the 19th century
Welte Temple of Music
An early Austrian Musical Box

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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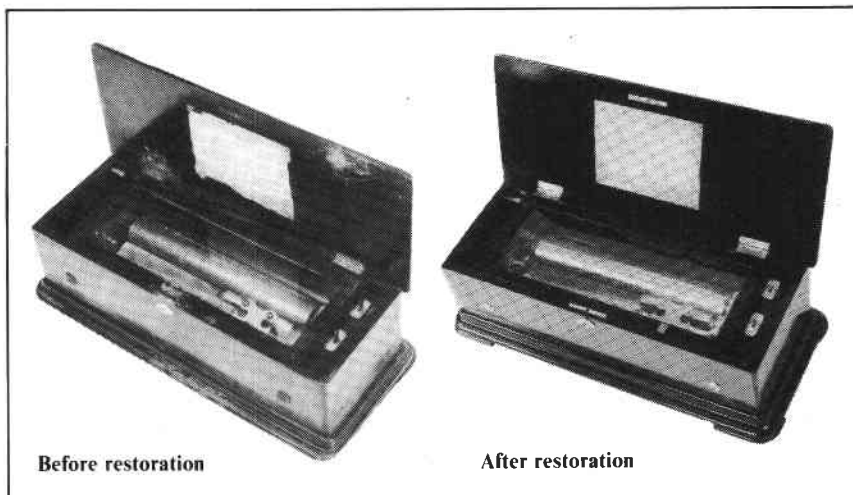
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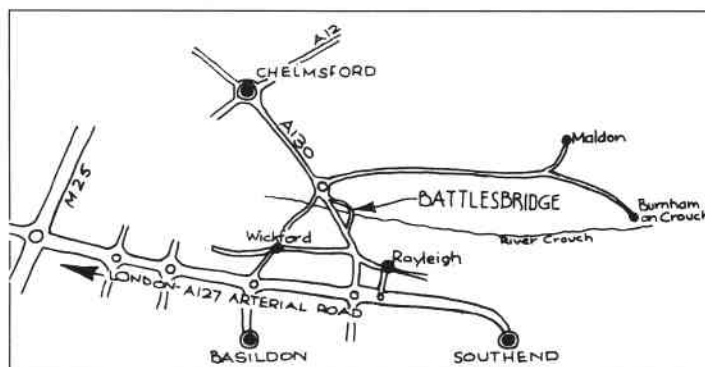
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The Music Box

An International Magazine
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the
Musical Box Society
of Great Britain.

Volume 12
Number 7
Autumn/Fall 1986

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Westwood House, North Dalton, Driffield,
North Humberside.

Vice President: Stephen Ryder
495 Springfield Avenue, Summit,
New Jersey 07901, U.S.A.

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**To whom all subscriptions and subscription
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Recording Secretary: Sue Holden,
Falconhurst, Pilgrims Way, Guildford,
Surrey GU4 8AD.

Auditor: Stephen Cockburn,
Marshalls Manor, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Editor: Graham Whitehead,
Broadgate Printing Co. Ltd.
Crandal Road, Exhall, Coventry CV7 9NH.

Archivist: Peter Howard,
9 Manor Close, Felpham, Bognor Regis PO22 7PN.
**To whom all contributions to the archives should be
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Auction Organiser & Corresponding Secretary: Roger Kempson,
32 Woodleigh Gardens, Whitchurch, Bristol BS14 9JA.
**To whom all general correspondence should be sent also
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Advertisement Manager: John Powell,
33 Birchwood Avenue, Leeds 17,
West Yorkshire LS17 8PJ.

Committee Members:
Christopher Proudfoot, c/o Christies,
South Kensington, London SW7 3JS.

Reg Mayes: 171 Barnet Wood Lane, Ashted,
Surrey K21 2LP.

Keith Harding: 93 Hornsey Road, London N7 6DJ.

John Phillips: 'Langley', Denmans Lane, Fontwell,
West Sussex.

Alison Biden: St Giles Hilltop, Northbrook Close,
Winchester, Hants SO23 8JR.

Bob Leach: 31 Perry Hill, London SE6 4LF.

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Front Cover: Justin Gouthier (uncle of the Baud brothers)
drilling the holes in small cylinders.

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Editors Notes

All collectors will be extremely sorry to learn that a member has lost several valuable Musical Boxes, stolen from well protected premises in Birkenhead. Sophisticated alarm equipment proved useless as thieves entered through one unprotected fanlight 10 ft. above ground level. Mr. Kern is sure he can identify these items, if he gets the chance to, but such vague descriptions would fit very many innocent musical boxes on the shelves of Shelagh Berryman or Keith Harding any day.

This emphasizes once again the need for collectors to have their collections properly recorded, since none of the stolen musical boxes could be positively identified from the descriptions provided.

Keith Harding had a major burglary in 1978. The big difference was that Keith was in a position to issue an illustrated catalogue in several languages which was sent all over the world, and as a result more than half the items were eventually recovered, mainly from Holland and Germany.

An adequate description must include features which are specific to the particular musical box being described. It should most certainly include the serial number, the programme if known, and a description of any unusual or decorative features, such as the design of the inlay.

Also, the value of photographic records cannot be overstressed. Photographs often show blemishes and minor damage (especially around the base) which would be impossible to document in any other way, and again provide positive identification.

As many readers know, Keith Harding has been trying to build up the completest possible record of all Nicole Frères musical boxes. Records include serial number, gamme number and list of tunes played, length and diameter of cylinder, and any unusual features. May we please ask anyone who has not already done so to let him have these details of any Nicole Frères boxes they come across? His records have incidentally led to the recovery of a number of stolen boxes by this maker, and have made Nicole Frères musical boxes much harder for the thief to dispose of and therefore less attractive to the professional criminal.

We can only hope for the capture of these criminals and the safe return of these musical boxes to their rightful owner. For the rest of us, the *very least* we should do is to buy now a UV pen and mark our goods with our postal codes!

NEWSDESK

Swiss Glockenspiel gets second touch



Within six months of its installation, London's Leicester Square Glockenspiel, installed on the facade of the Swiss Centre, is being modified. Improvements have now been completed that make this unusual attraction even more impressive.

Understandably, designing a computer operated carillon, or glockenspiel as the Swiss prefer to call it, is far from a simple task. Despite all the technology, no one really knows how it is going to sound until it has been installed and tried. Initially, the number of bells and choice of scale had been a difficult decision. Arthur Ord Hume adviser to the Swiss National Tourist Office, from the outset recommended a larger compass, but due to cost considerations the bells were limited to 25, which with the exception of lower C sharp, extended chromatically from C to C sharp.

The good news is that it has now been agreed to add 2 further bells, D and E at the top end of the scale, the extra weight of the two bells will be approximately 22 Kg.

The bells are struck by hammers operated by solenoids. This has caused another problem as it has proved impossible for the solenoid operated hammers to strike the bells with any degree of expression. With such limitations, musical arrangements have to be very carefully thought out to avoid the melody, countermelody and accompaniment, which all play at even volume, from "drowning" each other. This problem has now been overcome by installing a second set of hammers to each bell and by modifying the programmable computer so that both the loud and soft hammers can be operated independently.

The other problem concerned programming the computer's memory.

Initially, the performer would sit at the keyboard (see page 172) and play a live performance, which through an electrical connection between the keyboard and hammer solenoids, would play the bells outside. At the same time these melodies would also be committed to the computer's memory. This system proved unsatisfactory as only the closer bells were audible inside, to the performer.

In the new system a two manual keyboard is being used. The upper manual offering *piano* and the lower full power or *forte*. A synthesiser has also been connected to the keyboard and the performer is now able to use the synthesiser for practice and computer recordings. Once satisfied with the arrangement, the synthesiser is switched "off," and with the glockenspiel "on" and the "recording" listened to naturally from outside. The glockenspiel normally plays daily at 1200, 1800 and 2000 hours. ■

Mechanical Music aids Tourism



In a "Pied Piper of Hamelin" type exercise, the strains of mechanical music are being used to lure tourists to the heart of England.

Recent front page headlines of the local Evening paper read "TV bait to woo jittery Americans" this article told of the tourist industry's gloomy outlook for this summers prospects and the effect on local economies due to the cancellation of British Holidays by thousands of Americans worried about terrorism and the threat of Libyan reprisals following the US bombing raids which were backed by the Thatcher Government. Paul Allan Marketing Manager at Warwick District Council's Recreation Department set out to put the Americans minds at rest by commissioning a Television film made about the area that would hopefully counter all the negative publicity "It is a positive effort to show that we live in tranquil and peaceful surroundings" he said. "The

emphasis is on the cultural heritage of Warwick and Leamington area." The film has been backed by Warwick District Council, Warwick Castle and The Heart of England Tourist Board.

In an attempt to portray the tranquility and peacefulness of the area the television crew filmed the village of Napton and its Nickleodeon where a group of Women's Institute members were obviously well relaxed, happily dancing and singing the night away.

The film received an airing on American Cable Television at 10 pm on Sunday the 18th May, in a programme called "Touring in Britain."

The council's decision to film mechanical music at Napton was based on its general interest value and the fact that Napton Nickleodeon provides visiting groups with a venue that is primarily open during the evening at a time when most other attractions are closed. ■

STOLEN MUSICAL BOX

The Society has received information regarding a stolen "Bells in Sight" cylinder musical box. The 28mm cylinder playing 12 airs as listed on the original tune sheet (includes 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing'), accompanied by five graduated bells applicable at will. Zither attachment. Tune indicator. The walnut case is inlaid at front and lid with satinwood and mother-of-pearl, the ends being ebonised. Motor and case completely restored. 54cm wide. Maker possibly Baker Troll. Any information please to:-

John Suter, Art & Antiques Section, Davies & Co., Chartered Loss Adjusters, Tel: 0703 36933, or Det. Cons. Basson, Tel: 0703 452206.

Pierre Eich Archives uncovered

From the years around 1909 to 1939, the firm of Pierre Eich in Ghent Belgium produced a range of mechanical musical instruments. The more popular Eich instruments were the Solophone, an automatic piano accompanied by between three and six ranks of pipes, the Piano Jazz, a piano incorporating an accordion and the Super Violin, an automatic piano with mandolin attachment and violin pipes. After the closure of the firm certain records and catalogues were acquired by Mr A Baude, but more recently MBSGB member Daniel De Bie has obtained for his own archives further company records from the factory which is still standing.

Mr De Bie has forwarded some interesting information about this orchestrion builder whose instruments were rarely exported. Pierre Eich's workshop was at 29 Rue de Destelbergen, Mont, St Amand, Gand in West Belgium near to Ghent.

Pierre Eich's business reached a peak in the 20s, but by 1932 sales were falling due to competition from other sources, mainly non mechanical. Correspondence at that time shows that in an attempt to create trade, Pierre Eich was offering to buy back his earlier instruments in part exchange for his latest product the Discophone (Discofoon). This was an automatic gramophone with a coin triggered, pneumatically operated disc selection system. An early juke box.

Mr De Bie discovered the pipework for the Solophones and orchestrions were made in the Black Forest by Gustav Schonstein at Villingen. A transaction dated the 30th October 1931 shows that Schonstein supplied



Danny De Bie with files from the Pierre Eich firm.

12 ranks of violin pipes, not regulated or voiced and there was 13 pipes per rank for a total of Rm 800. At the same time Eich sold a Solophone in an oak finish with accessories probably consisting of lamps and a motor for 23,836 Belgian Francs.

Mr De Bie's earliest records of Pierre Eich go back to the 1890s and the records show these instruments were also popular in the silent cinema. There are numerous letters from cinema owners requesting service calls. Perhaps they didn't work too well in the dark.

Eich's best customer, a dealer, appears to have been Justin Van Hyste of Ghent.

Pierre Eich died around 1932 and his wife continued to run the business until the outbreak of the second world war, in 1939. ■

Extract from a Crime Prevention Bulletin

"A London resident possessed a large number of expensive oil paintings. These were all marked on the frame with an Ultra Violet Pen. Subsequently the mans car with seven paintings in the boot was stolen. The car was recovered abandoned a few days later without the paintings. Eight weeks later police in the Home Counties raided an address and recovered a quantity of paintings included in which were the above seven which were all identified by the use of a U.V. Lamp. The paintings were all restored to their owner. One man was arrested and charged."

Remember, if you have not yet post coded your collection you need your full post code and the number of your house. The soft wood base or back of a musical box is an ideal surface on which to put your code and it is impossible to remove. It is virtually invisible and it soaks into the wood without damage. A U.V. Pen costs about £1. Is your collection worth that? ■

A MUSICAL SCARECROW



This unusual picture appeared in a recent edition of the Shooting Times. Photographer Peter Loft spotted this unlikely trio at Harry Burt's farm at Sproatley, Humberside. The farmer's creation was designed to protect the crops, this musical trio known as Scarecrow Sid & Co. must also be Britain's most artistic bird scaring 'set-up'.

BURGLARY 1/2 JUNE, 1986 FROM BIRKENHEAD, MERSEYSIDE

Enclosed is a list of items from my collection which have been stolen.

Members, either collectors or dealers may be offered these boxes, may see them for sale either at auction, in shops or antique fairs or indeed may have already purchased them. Understandably they may be resold anywhere in the country or abroad.

Also the restorers themselves will be able to identify the boxes as mine.

If items fitting the general description are offered or, are seen, or indeed may already have been acquired, please contact the writer and the police.

If items offered, seen, or acquired, fit the general description, I would like also to know so that I can identify them positively as my property or not.

These items form part of my personal collection and are unfortunately not insured.

I am therefore very anxious to trace my stolen property and if possible apprehend the thieves so that others cannot suffer the same fate.

I would therefore request the kind assistance of fellow members and look forward with optimism to a successful conclusion.

Yours faithfully,
W. H. KERN,
Managing Director,
Salesflo Equipment Ltd.,
16-18 Colquitt Street, (off Bold Street)
Liverpool L1 4DG, England.
Telephone: 051-709 4252

Antique items stolen include:- CYLINDER MUSICAL BOXES

Triple Comb Sublime Harmony Cylinder Box - With zither bar attachment for comb - fully restored. 'Triple comb' means that the metal tooth comb is in three sections in its length, cylinder approx. 12/13", lever wound.

Theobald-Lamy Cylinder Box - Broad spacing of comb teeth. Flat lid to case simulated rosewood finish. Lever wound. Small oval Theobald-Lamy brass trade label - fully restored. Cylinder length approx. 12". The interior woodwork is in an original distinguished red stain finish.

Nicole Freres Cylinder Music Box - Early model circa 1840, key wound brass bedplate, flat plain lid. Cylinder approx. 9" long. Good working order. The lid of this box has been replaced, although carefully done and it has been stained to match the sides of the original box.

Very Large Musical Cylinder Box - Slightly domed inlaid lid, gilt metal decorative handles each end. Large brass pinned cylinder, governor requires light adjustment. Lever wound. With original tune sheet. The glass of the inner lid is cracked. The glazes inner lid has unusual cross banding perimeter decoration. A few teeth at one end of the comb require repair. These small repairs could have been carried out by the time it is resold. **Very Good Quality.** Brass cylinder approx. 16/18" in length.

3 Bell & Drum Cylinder Music Box - When the lid is opened the 3 bells and drum are fully visible, the cylinder length

is approx. 9/10" and the music box is in a fully restored condition. It includes a tune number indicator and plays extremely well and extremely loudly. This is the finest playing 3 bell and drum box I have heard.

Other cylinder music boxes, detailed description not recorded.

When the approximate length of musical box cylinders are quoted, the external box length is some 3/5" longer.

Barrel Hand Cranked Pipe Organ - (A buskers organ of a type frequently used strapped over the shoulder) - There are however no external metal strap brackets which would indicate it was operated on a table. Contained in timber rectangular cabinet approx. 20" x 10" x 16" high. The wooden pinned barrel and bellows operates a series of square wooden wind pipes of varying lengths, all contained internally; control levers visible outside the cabinet on the end panel are polished brass. Operating handle on the front face. Full and good working order. Some outer case restoration. Plays 6 or 8 tunes. Polished wood finished case, light walnut colour.

19th Century Doll Automata - Comprising bisque head girl doll approx. 12" in height, in white full length costume standing on square cloth covered plinth, containing the clockwork motor. When wound, the girl's arms move, the head turns, as the music plays. In good working order. Contained in new purpose made plywood box with front sliding cover.

Pair of Very Large Spelta (Zinc Base Metal) Figures - Approx. 3' 0" height of a man and woman, peasant farm workers, standing upright. Both are in continental costume and one worker carries a stack of hay and small scythe. The colour of these figures is grey alloy. They are far larger and heavier than the ordinary Spelta figures and weigh some 50/60 lbs per figure. Very good quality.

Oil Painting on Metal Panel (Copper or Zinc ?) - of young child. Good condition. In gilt frame.

Other watercolours and prints, including some on Liverpool/Local history.

Boxes and Packages of Unlisted Items - If the whereabouts of these items is known, or information concerning them, please contact immediately Birkenhead Police, **telephone: 709-6010** D. S. Evens or D. S. McMahon.

*** Please Note:** All sizes given are approximate and are based on memory of the objects described.

Completion of major restoration

Andrew Pilmer the well-known fair organ restorer has now completely rebuilt this once dilapidated Gavioli.

The organ was built in 1886 as an 84 key barrel organ for Sedgwick's travelling menagerie. It was also featured in a Gondolas and Mountain Pony ride at some time in its life. It was originally supplied through Chiappa in London. It later became one of the fleet of organs operated by the well-known Lancashire showmen, Silcock Bros. of Warrington. They sold it to the late W. J. Barlow of Cleobury Mortimer near Kidderminster, where it formed part of his organ museum. In 1974 ownership transferred to Peter Arnett of Portsmouth and in 1982 to Tom Fisher, who brought it to Yorkshire. Mr. Pilmer acquired it in 1983.

Since then it has been rebuilt to 98 key book operation on a brand-new scale extended from the original Gavioli 89 no. 4 scale. The missing brass clarinets were replaced with new, and all the brass resonators for the trumpets and trombones were replaced with new. The pipework has been extended with new ranks of baritones, piccolos, violins including 8 new cellos to reinforce the bass. A glockenspiel has also been added, on register.

The organ carries Gavioli s/no. 7630. The front was completely redecorated, including the re-making from photographs of the entire top carvings, which were missing. The organ is now mounted in a special display vehicle. The new owners are Reg Saunders and family of Stotfold, Bedfordshire. The organ now contains over 500 pipes. ■

Almost a new organ! The completely rebuilt instrument was formerly a 89 Key Gavioli. It now has extra pipework and a brand new 98 Key scale.



A Visit to the West German Organ Festivals 1986

Report by "The Happy Wanderer" Leslie Brown

Wednesday 30th April. Arrived in Hannover and was greeted by Peter Schuhknect, the Organiser, in his superb Video and Record Store, where there were already many Organ Grinder friends from Holland, Switzerland, France, and of course Germany.

Peter entertained us in his office (which contains a collection of Organs, Music Boxes and many other Mechanical Musical Instruments) with a lively English Ragtime medley on the Piano.

Later the same evening we all gathered at the "Wiener Sofie" Beer Keller for the Welcome Supper, accompanied by a typical German small orchestra, and of course, Barrel Organs!

Thursday Morning 1st May. A Holiday in Hannover, and we were taken to the "Steurndieb" Garden Restaurant in the woods on the outskirts of Hannover, already there were some of the larger Organs, including Peter Schuhknect's and Wilf Hommerich's "Ruth" Organs and a new "Van Den Broek" from Holland, also many of the smaller "Raffin", "Hofbauer" and "Bacigalupo" Organs. Other entertainment was provided by the Folk Singers "The Kitchen Maids".

Among the visitors and Organ Grinders from all over the World, were Harvey and Marion Roehl of the Vestal Press of America. We played the Organs in glorious weather until late afternoon, and then I was invited with Harvey and Marion to Peter Schuhknect's lovely house for coffee and champagne! Harvey played the Piano, while Marion and I inspected Peter's home collection of Musical Boxes and, Mechanical Musical Instruments.

Later in the evening we were invited to the Organ Grinders Church Service (of course, with Barrel Organ accompaniment!) and then on to the Moonlight Serenade in the City Centre with the Organs playing around the Clock Tower near the "Movenpick" and the Kitchen Maids singing old German lullabies.

The evening concluded with another Welcome party at the "Bavarium" Beer Keller, of course, with the Organs, and a presentation to Peter Schuhknect.

Friday May 2nd. Gathering of all the Organs in the Bahnhofplatz (Station Square) for T.V., Radio and Press interviews, and then we all marched to the Hannover City Bank with the Organs playing for the official reception by the Oberbürgermeister (Lord



Leslie Brown at the Spandau Organ Festival 1986.

Mayor) and each of the Organs played a selection including the lady with the Donkey Organ! Certainly it seemed to be appreciated by all, including the Banks staff and customers, (can you imagine this in a British Bank!).

In the Bank there was also an excellent exhibition of all types of old Mechanical Musical Instruments, and we were invited to inspect the Coin Collection and Safe Deposits in the Bank Vaults.

Later in the afternoon all the Organs played, again in glorious weather in the City Centre, and I enjoyed a session with some of the visiting Organ Grinders, playing a "Pell" from Switzerland and a "Silver Jubilee" Raffin.

In the evening a large party of the Organ Grinders visited Jens Carlson's superb Mechanical Music Museum in Brunswick. The Hannover Festival continued on Saturday and Sunday.

As I had been invited to the Spandau Festival in Berlin, I left Hannover by air early on the Saturday morning, to be greeted at Berlin Airport by Christa Mademann of "the Club Deutscher Drehorgel" with a bouquet of flowers! I was whisked away to her lovely home for breakfast and met Dorothy Robinson, the only other Musical Box Society of G.B. visitor.

Afterwards we went on to the Festival of Old Time Organs at Spandau (near Berlin) where Christa's lovely daughters Steffi and Nicole in old time costumes were waiting with my Organ, they never tired of playing the Organs, singing and dancing and we played to happy crowds in glorious weather all day.

Apart from the Organs there were Oompah and Military Bands, and much Folk Singing, and an Old Time and Modern Motor Show in the streets.

An amusing highlight was arranged by the Video crew for visitors arriving at Spandau by Underground. I played the Organ at the top of the moving pavement, while the Video crew rode up filming the crowds.

The day concluded with a Restaurant reception and the menus all had a colour picture of each Organ Grinder playing during the afternoon!

Sunday Morning at Spandau. A great gathering of all the Organs in Spandau Market place, and much more happy Organ playing, singing, and dancing, while Dorothy Robinson, Kurt, and Roland Wolfe played other Organs round the outskirts of Spandau. This was followed by an excellent Barbecue farewell lunch.

Later on the Sunday evening, we visited an Antique Fair in Berlin, where among the other very good Antiques there were many old Mechanical Musical Instruments for sale. And finally through the Berlin Arcades to supper at a small Pavement Cafe, (entertained of course, with an Organ). And then back to Christa's to view the Video of all the weekend events. A presentation to Kurt of a special Old Time Motor Car (in the famous Toymaker George Carrette style) and to Christa a Musical Box of an Isle of Skye Croft, playing "The Skye Boat Song" and fitted with a bottle of "Drambuie" the Isle of Skye Liqueur to add to her collection.

Monday Morning. A tour round Kurt's Organ workshops, where there were many Organs in the course of construction, and several old Organs being restored - later we went back to the centre of Berlin and Kurt very kindly lent me another Organ and I played in the "Kur-Dam" for the rest of Berlin's splendid Super Stores.

I must congratulate Peter Schuhknect for the excellent arrangements in Hannover, and Mr Klaus Krug for the splendid Spandau Festival. Also Christa and Kurt of Berlin for solving all the Organ and transport problems, and for their wonderful hospitality, and of course, lovely Steffi and Nicole for their happy Organ playing, singing and dancing on Saturday and Sunday - it was all very great fun!

And many thanks for the splendid Souvenir Presentation Spandau Festival Organ, Festival Tankards and the super Souvenir Plate of Giovanni Bacigalupo. ■

Street Organ Festival in Lichtensteig



The Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde Mechanischer Musik (The Swiss Society for the Friends of Mechanical Music) were delighted when a representative from the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, your Editor, made a surprise visit to their annual general meeting and dinner at a hotel in Ebnat-Kappel in the extreme eastern corner of Switzerland on Friday, May 24th.

With the help of the master of ceremonies, Chairman Freddy Kunzle declared an official welcome, commenting with obvious pleasure, that this was the first time an Englishman had attended their annual meeting.

Your Editor gave greetings from the M.B.S.G.B. and said that he had discovered quite by accident, details of that meeting only hours before whilst on a photographic mission for future editions of the Journal.

The Swiss hospitality was delightful and I was persuaded to stay the night and attend their eighth annual organ grind in Lichtensteig the following day.

Lichtensteig is one of those pretty village sized towns so characteristic of Switzerland. The main street had wisely been closed to traffic for the day while the sixty street musicians took up their positions in a circular route around the town.

Their period costumes and delightful surroundings formed picturesque settings for the many snap-happy photographers including myself.



Trailer mounted Alfred Bruder organ.



1896 or 1986? Period costume against 'old world' surroundings at the Swiss Society's 8th Annual street organ meeting at Lichtensteig.





Above: Wolfgang Schindele of Überlingen-Bodensee. Top Right: One of the many trailer mounted organs. This one being by Wilhelm Bruder Söhne and owned by Frau Wieser. 2nd down: Frau Blohmeyer from Berlin takes children rides on her donkey and organ cart. Right: An unusually slim reed organ by J. Kamenik of Praha. Below: Frau Regula Wieser from Berg-Dägerlen, chats with Swiss Society Chairman Fredy Künzle, whilst Right: Frau Künzle looks on disapprovingly.



SOCIETY TOPICS

Dates for your diary page 258

Spring Meeting

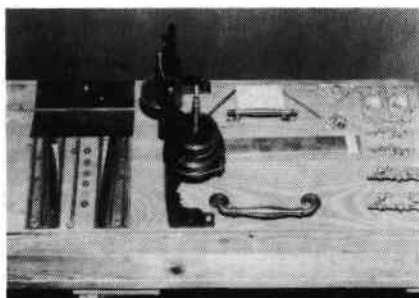
The Spring meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain took place at the Calvert Hotel Newport Isle of Wight on 25th - 27th April 1986.

The venue, owned by MBSGB member Mr Malcolm Calvert, provided a cheaper accommodation package than normal. Unfortunately the benefit of this was largely cancelled out by the high cost of transporting one's car across the two miles of Solent separating the Island from the mainland.

Friday evening dinner was followed by the usual informal get-together in the hotel's bar and lounges.

Saturday morning provided members attending with an opportunity to see restoration techniques in action. Meeting Secretary, Alan Wyatt had persuaded speakers to bring their workshops with them and actually demonstrate their working methods.

Firstly, your Editor, without tools, but with the recently completed barrel piano keyframe featured in the last edition of the Music Box, described why it was not necessary to make a new keyframe from scratch. Also shown was the original keyframe in a rather dilapidated condition showing evidence of previous 'patch-up' restoration which had failed.



Brian Clegg's range of parts for disc musical boxes.

Brian Clegg explained how he manufactured components for musical boxes. In fact such a large range of disc box components are manufactured by Brian that he is able to assemble these into a complete disc musical box.

John Powell had brought along his equipment and machine for copying an Eroica disc.

Jim Hall demonstrated the art of felt dampering using vellum, the sort of material intended for tambourine skins. Both John Powell and Jim Hall's demonstrations were so fascinating and detailed that in order to record a worthy report, both Jim and John have prepared short articles which are reproduced separately from this report.



Jim Hall

Peter Howard gave us the benefit of his experience in the design and construction of organ pipes for a small street organ that he is in the process of making. It would certainly be interesting to reproduce a paper that Peter Howard is producing on his project, but due to the fact that in this issue we are reporting on two society meetings there is insufficient space to include this at the moment.

The afternoon was taken up by a coach trip with a sight-seeing tour of the island and a visit to Osborne House.

After the Society dinner in the evening, Ron Benton presented a video of the land speed record. Thrust II was built on the island and Ron was a member of the successful team.

During this pleasant weekend even the weather had been quite kind, somewhat uncharacteristic of Spring in England this year. The meeting was wound up by a Sunday morning visit to the Freshwater clock museum.



Peter Howard

London Meeting 6th June 1986

Report by Reg Mayes

Barely two weeks before this meeting was due to take place, our usual venue, the Press Club closed. With a lot of last minute rearranging by our meeting secretary Alan Wyatt, and the help of our subscriptions secretary, Ted Brown, we were accommodated in a conference room in Wood Street Police Station, just off London Wall/Cheapside. Liquid refreshments were at modest prices, a very good buffet lunch was available at £2. Well done and our thanks to Ted.



David Tallis

Our further education in our hobby on this occasion was initiated by David Tallis (author of Musical Boxes). His title was 'The Story of the Musical Box'. He opened by pointing out that our new venue was a very appropriate place for such a talk, as it was built on the site of a Roman amphitheatre. He went on to tell us that the first recorded evidence of the musical box was in a contribution on 15th February 1796 by Anton Favre to the Society of Arts and Sciences in Geneva. We then saw a map of Switzerland/France which showed the location of the centres for the manufacture of cylinder boxes. We were shown what David said was the oldest box he had seen, which was late 18th century. It had a fusee drive for the cylinder and it was built into a tea-caddy, which itself was made in Mauchline, Ayrshire, Scotland. Next we were shown a radial mechanism fitted into a snuff box. David continued by demonstrating about another dozen snuff boxes, by using the microphone we heard these little 'gems' as well as anecdotes of their history.

Our next instructor was the regular contributor to our Journal Anthony Bulleid. His title was 'More on Musical Boxes, Technical and Practical'.

Anthony pointed out that anyone is in difficulty to be certain about a particular development of a musical box because so few examples exist of the total produced and again there is evidence of random sub-contracting of the various components. Tune sheets are notoriously unreliable as to the maker. He mentioned the progress being made in drawing up a list of Langdorff serial numbers as they occur on other 'makers' boxes. This was a discovery made by another member Patrick McCrossan.



Anthony Bulleid

Those of us who apply modifications to boxes were appealed to, that we should apply them in such a way that a subsequent owner could easily remove them, so restoring boxes to their original condition. An example of this would be the fitting of a rubber silencer for the safety device on Baker Troll boxes.



Ralph Heintz

In the afternoon an American member Ralph Heintz entertained us with a talk entitled 'Mechanical Music in Art and Politics.' We were shown slides of numerous prints, cuttings, pages from books etc; which all depicted some form of mechanical musical instrument. They were all very interesting, we all joined in helping to provide some of the cross references. A French member Philippe Rouillé was able to translate a caption into English of a political cartoon. "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" to "The more the change, the more it's the same thing."

All our speakers answered questions either during or after their talk, so nobody should have gone away with any doubt in their minds. Our President expressed our thanks separately after each talk. Our thanks go to Alan and Daphne Wyatt, who were not at the meeting due to ill health, for organising everything, and we wish Alan a speedy recovery.

During the meeting our President canvassed members opinions of the desirability of having the Annual General Meeting on the same day as the Summer Meeting. The outcome, from a show of hands, indicated that the vast majority of members would prefer to have the A.G.M. held immediately following the end of the Summer Meeting.

Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, held on Friday 6th June 1986, at The Guildhall, Gresham Street, London EC1.

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 31st May 1985 were adopted.

The President reported that no amendments to the Constitution or bye-laws of the Society had been proposed by any member.

The President thanked members of the Committee for their hard work, all members who had assisted in the running of the Society and all members for their support.

The Officers gave their reports to the Meeting. The Treasurer recommended an increase in the subscriptions from 1st January 1987, due to the exceptional expenditure incurred during the year for the publication of the emergency newsheet and rising costs in producing The Journal.

Other factors contributing to the necessity for an increase were given as a fall in the number of memberships and the exchange rate for the dollar going against us.

The Subscription Secretary reported that there were always complications with collecting the right amount following a subscription increase. It was therefore preferable to make a substantial increase which could be held static for possibly a three year period, rather than having to review subscriptions again in the near future.

The following subscriptions were passed from 1st January 1987, with the previous figure shown in brackets:-

		1987	(Previous)
United Kingdom		£12.00	£8.00
Europe and Near East		£12.00	£8.00 (plus £1.00 if paid in foreign currency)
Australia, New Zealand and Far East	Air Mail	£22.00	£16.00
	Surface Mail	£14.00	£8.00 (plus £1.00 if not in sterling)
United States	Air Mail	\$35	\$34 US Currency
United States	Surface Mail	\$25	\$17 US Currency
Canada	Air Mail	\$48	\$41 Can. Currency
Canada	Surface Mail	\$35	\$20 Can. Currency

Joining or re-joining fee is Annual Subscription plus £1.00 or \$3.

The Meeting was informed that the last increased to the subscriptions was on 1st January 1984.

The Meetings Secretary reported that the sudden closure of the Press Club in London creates a problem for a suitable venue for our future London Meetings. Alan Wyatt would be pleased to hear from any member who is able to assist in this matter.

The new Editor was complimented on his efforts in producing such excellent quality in his first and second Journals by The President.

Nominations

No nominations having been received from members of the Society, the following nominations were made by the Committee at their Meeting on 6th May 1986 and were carried unanimously.

- President: *Jon Gresham*
- Vice-President: *Steve Ryder*
- Treasurer: *Bob Holden*
- Editor: *Graham Whitehead*
- Archivist: *Peter Howard*
- Membership Secretary: *Reg Waylett*
- Subscriptions Secretary: *Ted Brown*
- Meetings Secretary: *Alan Wyatt*
- Correspondence Secretary: *Roger Kempson*
- Recording Secretary: *Sue Holden*
- Auction Organiser: *Roger Kempson*
- Committee Members:- *Keith Harding, Reg Mayes, Christopher Proudfoot*
- Co-opted Committee Members:- *Alison Biden, Bob Leach, John Powell*

It was decided to raise the issue of having the Annual General Meeting on the same day as the Summer Meeting with the membership at the Summer meeting due to take place on Saturday 7th June.

Sue Holden, Recording Secretary

Pictured below: Doug Pell (centre) questions speakers – Brian Clegg and Jim Hall at the Spring Meeting.



Dampering Musical Boxes with Vellum

by J. P. Hall

Many people fight shy of dampering the treble teeth of a musical box, where the feather dampers are missing or faulty with wear over the years. Small movements such as the so called "snuff" box and musical album movements, also some disc machines have feather dampers which sometimes need replacing. I have tried the chicken feather method with shellac, not always with success.

In 1965, I attended a cocktail party at Mr. Cyril de Vere Green's house, and in conversation Cyril remarked that the dampering of small movements had always intrigued him.

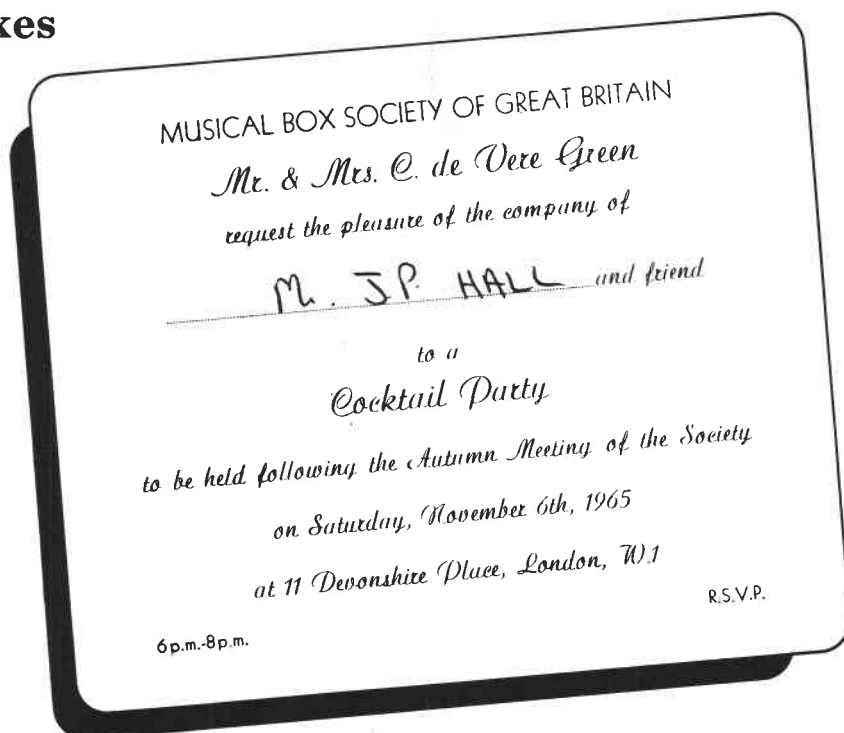
For the last few years I have been using vellum, (calf skin) after all vellum hinges were used in piano actions, and had to put up with a lot of bending backwards and forwards movement, without breaking, and last for years:-

Detach the comb you are going to work on from its movement, and screw the comb upside down on a flat piece of wood, with two screws through the existing comb screw holes, and clean off the remains of the faulty dampers and shellac.

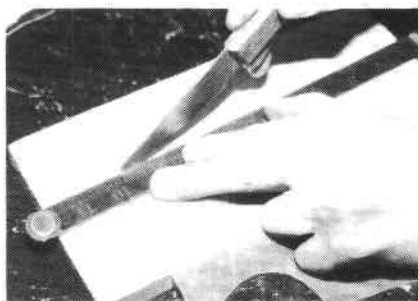
Vellum comes in different thicknesses, 2 thou. to more than 20 thou. 2 to 10 thousands of an inch is what is required for most combs. The vellum can be bought from a supply house, or one can acquire an old tambourine from a jumble sale or flea market for a few pence. Some shops who sell drums may stock it. The smaller the drum the thinner the skin, so you do not want a vellum skin to fit a bass drum for it to be 20 thou. or more, and too thick. Some modern drums have plastic skins.



Even the ladies seem intrigued as Jim Hall cuts the vellum into damper strips.



My method is to place a thin piece of vellum on a wooden cutting board on the work bench, and have a steel straightedge and a very sharp cutting knife. Cut very thin strips of vellum (cut along the grain of the wood, not across it). The material does not want to be wider than the tooth point of the musical box comb. You will tend to cut the first strip too wide until you get the hang of cutting the thinnest of thin strips. Cut the strips into small lengths about three eighths of an inch long.



Trimming the vellum in order to make the dampers.

Obtain a piece of glass, tweezers, sharp razor blade, a tube of 'Loctite' instant glue, and if your eyesight is not good, a pair of headband magnifiers.

Squeeze one drop of instant glue on the glass, at a time, and with the tweezers pick up a piece of vellum and slide it along the glass and dip one end into the glue, and loctite the damper on the end of the tooth, so that it is central on the tooth and overhangs the tip slightly. Get it into place quickly, and keep the tweezers clean, else the material will want to stick to the tweezers and not the tooth. If you get the glue too far on the vellum it will stiffen up and will not be pliable enough, and the cylinder pins will use the damper for lifting the tooth.

Give the glue a little time to harden up, and then with the sharpened end of a matchstick apply a little more glue on to the end of the damper where it is glued to the tooth. As a test flick the overhanging piece gently with the end of your knife, to see if any of the dampers are not properly fixed, as an odd one may have to be done again. After you are satisfied that all dampers are firmly fixed, unscrew the comb from the wood, and turn it over, placing the comb tips on the wood. With a sharp razor blade, cut the vellum level with the tips of the comb. Set up the comb in the musical movement and play.

I am not claiming that this method is the best, other members may have their own ideas, but I get results from it. Perhaps Messrs Reuge and other musical box manufacturers could give us a few tips? ■

Player piano rolls from musical box cylinders and reproducing discs for the Eroica

At the Isle of Wight meeting, John Powell brought two machines along which he demonstrated, the first being his arrangement of a press for reproducing sets of discs for the Symphonion 3 disc Eroica whilst the second he suggested, bore some resemblance to a Roland Emmett creation. This was a means of transferring the pin positions of the tune from a Musical Box cylinder onto a roll of paper and subsequently reversing this and transferring these positions onto a new cylinder to produce a copy.

The disc machine was made to provide discs for his Symphonion Eroica by copying directly from borrowed originals. The perforations it produced were the original two piece ones made by Symphonion. The perforations being small meant that the press size was not over large. He explained that the first operation pressed out the two prongs of the perforation and having completed that for one disc, the next operation was to reset the machine for turning over one of the prongs in each pair to support the other as it was in the original arrangement. The original disc and the new blank were mounted on a common spindle which could be moved in and out on guides. This assembly was located at each of the required radii by a peg in a drilled guide bar. Apologies were made for not being able to properly demonstrate the machine having left the discs in his car on the mainland!

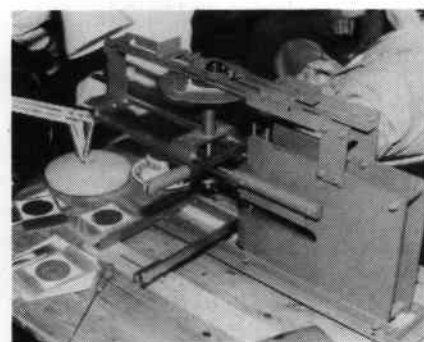
A later modification to this machine allowed for discs to be copied from a photograph which meant that it was not necessary to take away originals to copy. The original was photographed in a closed box with a light behind the disc clearly identifying the perforations. This enprint size film was mounted on a plate and replaced the original disc on the spindle with the blank disc still at the bottom of it. The film was viewed with a ten times magnifier and the perforation image aligned with a VEE slot. The accuracy of this arrangement appears to give a perfectly adequate result. The machine was built primarily as a means of providing some discs for one machine and was not intended to produce discs on a commercial basis. It was, therefore, a relatively time consuming operation which could be improved if necessary.

The blank discs were purchased cut to size and drive and location holes put in later. The material thickness is 0.015" against an original thickness of approximately 0.0135" which does not appear to affect the operation whilst playing. The material itself is a soft iron as used in a metal to metal gasket and being soft allows the

perforations to be bent sharply without cracking. This softness does not appear to affect the ability of the perforation to stand up to the star wheel punishment.

The second machine was a development of one produced to transfer the pin positions of a musical box cylinder into a paper roll to play on an 88 note player piano. The present form consisted of four parallel axles mounted in a wooden frame. Two wooden rollers on two axles carry a length of perforated computer paper over a drive sprocket on the third axle. The fourth axle carries the musical box cylinder and is geared by a 15 to 1 gear ratio to the drive sprocket. This means that the circumference of the cylinder is expanded to approximately 8 feet onto the paper. Counterweights were hung from the axles to keep the paper and the gear train in tension.

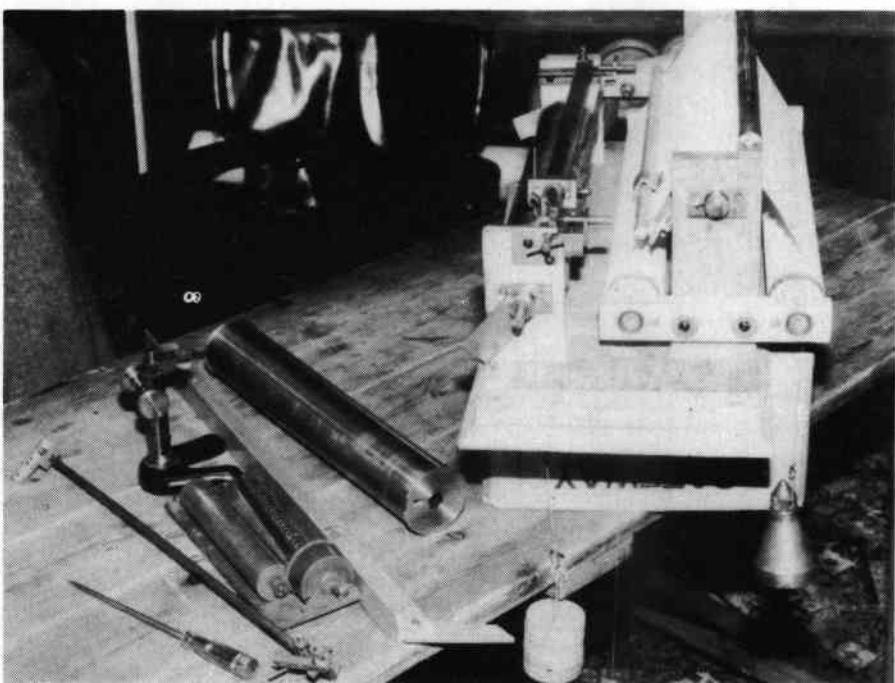
The procedure for transferring the pin positions onto the paper is to mark a zero line onto one end of the paper and line this up to the cylinder datum. A pointer and magnifier is used to pick up the point on the cylinder and a register used to mark the line on the paper. Starting with both datums lined up, the cylinder is rotated and as each pin position lines up with the pointer under the magnifier, the position is marked on the paper until one revolution of the cylinder has been completed and the cylinder datum marked at the other end of the paper. This is repeated for each circle of pins for the one tune over the full length of the cylinder ending up with one full tune only on the length of paper.



John Powell's disc press.

This procedure is reversed to mark the pin positions on the new cylinder. The new cylinder, having had the circumferential and longitudinal datums established during the machining operations, is put in place of the original one. A small pointed punch is set up in place of the pointer and magnifier and the punch lined up with the cylinder datum and the register on the paper. As the cylinder is rotated, when each mark on the paper comes into line with the register, the position is "pricked" onto the cylinder.

After a significant length of time, it was reported that four six-tune cylinders had been copied, these being to make up a set for a Paillard sublime harmony interchangeable machine. The success or otherwise of this procedure had not yet been proven as the cylinders and combs were still incomplete. ■



Machine used for cylinder marking.

How Musical Boxes were made in the middle of the 19th century

by Hank Waelti, Utzigen, Switzerland



Justin Gouthier (87) uncle of the Baud Brothers in l'Auberson, Switzerland installs the dampers.

The Swiss region of Ste. Croix and L'Auberson is an excellent place to study the history of the musical box. Two museums with large and very interesting displays of tools and machinery are at hand and people, still working in this field, like Frédy Baud are a very precious source of information.

Looking over the old tools and machines in his superb museum in L'Auberson and also in Ste. Croix at the "CIMA," Frédy explained with great enthusiasm how and by what sort of people the cylinder musical boxes were made in the 19th century.

Until the end of the 18th century the people of Ste. Croix and the little villages in the neighbourhood were farmers, lumberjacks and makers of charcoal. Some minerals found in those Jura mountains led to a small industry operating a few furnaces. Then lacemaking was another occupation of about a thousand of those vivid and inventive people in this region.

The big depression in this lacemaking industry, caused by the introduction of machines was fought by changing over to watchmaking, and finally the manufacture of

snuffboxes (*tabatières*) with musical mechanisms and later, in 1833 the larger musical boxes (*cartels*).

Most of the people worked at home, often having a small farm of their own to attend to in their spare time.

A musical box is quite an elaborate mechanical music instrument, consisting of many different parts. Quite a few specialists of various professions were involved in the process.

The manufacturer, or so called "établissement" ordered "l'ébauche" or "le blanc" at the foundry. It consisted of the base plate – brass, formed in a sand mould – on which was already mounted the spring barrel with the winding mechanism (the ratchet, without the spring), the cylinder with its arbor, the change snail and the governor assembly "la cage."

The comb came from a different source: "le fabricant de claviers." It was delivered with its brass mount, the steel hardened and tempered – the tips not finished but with soldered weights of lead on the bass teeth, the holes for the dampers were already drilled.

When it was decided which melodies to play, the notes (piano or others) were given to the "transpositeur" who made the plans for marking and drilling the holes in the cylinder, and also the tuning of the comb.

Very important and quite difficult for the transpositeur was the determination of measures for a certain tune – according to the circumference of the cylinder. He had to provide an empty space between the end and the beginning of each tune, in order to make room for shifting the cylinder to change melodies. This empty space, often marked with lines or drill marks, was called "ligne d'accord." Shifting of the cylinder is done by the snail "la limasse," the space on the cylinder between the tunes is given by the height of the steps on this snail.

The transpositeur usually was a musician, a specialist working at home – he was the artist, shaping a tune in length to the possibilities of the musical box (diameter of the cylinder, number of teeth, number of tunes to play). The plan for marking the cylinders went with two plain ones to the "piqueuse." There were two cylinders made the same. To the plan for marking belonged also a layout of the comb with the distances marked between the teeth.

On a lathe, specially constructed for this purpose, so called "tour à piquer" two cylinders were firmly fixed at both ends. By a train of gears a pointer was moved on a circular scale whenever the cylinders were turned a fraction of their circumference. On the scale the measures and fractions were clearly marked in accordance to the space available on the cylinders. If the piqueuse moved the pointer on the dial one measure, the cylinders revolved just so much as a measure represented on their circumference.

In front of the cylinders two drills, revolving at a fast speed were mounted on a holder which was moveable horizontally in steps, according to the distance between the teeth of the comb. With a lever the piqueuse pressed the drills lightly against the cylinders wherever a pin had to be set. Since the walls of a cylinder were of a thickness of $\frac{1}{2}$ mm only, it could not be marked by simply punching with a centre point. (Today the holes in the cylinders are drilled directly without marking first).

By moving the drill holder horizontally by the given steps, all the notes playing at the same time were marked and then, measure by measure, the cylinder was turned until all the notes of a melody were marked.

The cylinder was then shifted by a step of a snail, similar to the one which was to change the tunes later in the box – and the same procedure started for the second tune – and so on until both cylinders were marked with all the tunes the transpositeur provided on the documents.

All this was done at the home of the piqueuse. She delivered the marked cylinders back to the établisseur who noted in her book the numbers of cylinders processed, with the numbers of melodies – and also the amount of teeth – later she was payed accordingly.

The "goupilleuse" who got the cylinders next, had to prepare the pins (goupilles) first. On a special lathe she cut them with a file, shaping the ends at the same time so they could be inserted in the holes without difficulties.

With a fairly simple drill and a V shaped wooden support the goupilleuse drilled the holes within 1/100 of a mm to fit the pins. For a cylinder of 2" diameter and 10" long, the goupilleuse had to drill a number of between 4000 to 6000 holes, dependent on the melodies provided.

With a pair of tweezers and a special tool, the "pin punch" (poussette) she pushed the pins into the holes,



Balancing the wheels of the governor assembly on a special machine.

one by one. The pin punch allowed with an internal stop to set the pins uniformly to protrude 1.2mm on the outside and 1.2mm on the inside of the cylinder. With a thickness of the cylinder walls of 0.5 to 0.6mm the pins had a total length of about 3mm. The thickness of the pins was usually 0.26 to 0.32mm.

The goupilleuse was paid according to the length and diameter of the cylinder.

During all this time spent on the cylinders, the établisseur sent the combs to the "accordeur" who also had his own workshop at home. With the combs the accordeur (or tuner) also got the scales to which the combs were to be tuned. By filing at the rear or at the tip of the teeth he lowered or raised the pitch of them. At the bass end of the comb he made a coarse adjustment first by cutting off some of the lead.

The accordeur was paid by the number of teeth he had to tune.

In the meantime the mainspring was installed in the spring barrel and some adjustments made to the governor assembly. This work was done at the établisseurs place.

Finally the whole works (baseplate with spring mechanism and governor, the cylinder and the comb) were delivered to the "poseur."

The cylinder had to be partially filled with a melted mixture of a "cement," quite similar to sealing wax. On a lathe the cylinder was revolved at a fairly high speed until the mixture was fully hardened, covering the protruding pins inside and leaving a hole lengthwise to leave room for the arbor.

On another lathe, "le tour à friser" the pins on the revolving cylinder were shaved by means of a file passing at a certain distance above the cylinder, closing in on it until all the pins were touched. This was to assure later on an even distance of all the pins against the teeth of the comb.

Then the poseur turned his attention to the comb. Its base had to be filed in order to set the comb at a certain angle to the base plate (and therefore, of course, to the centre of the cylinder). During tempering and tuning, the teeth may have become slightly distorted, out of alignment – this had to be corrected by the poseur. Now the holes were drilled and threaded in the base plate for screwing the comb down on to it. The dowel pins for securing the position of the comb were also set by the poseur.

By way of the *établisser* the whole assembly was then passed to the “*termineur*.” He installed the dampers and checked for wrong or bent pins, cleaned and polished the whole “*musique*.” He also determined whether the comb would have to go to the *accordeur* again, since installing the dampers may have changed the tuning of the comb too much.

Now “*la musique*” was ready to be put into the box. Boxes usually were made locally by specialists in the field of cabinet making and marquetry (french polishing was also done by experts). The last job before packing the finished musical boxes was done by the “*emboiteur*” – he installed the assembly in the box and made a last visual and audio check.

As said before, all those many different stages of manufacture (or most of them) were done at the homes of those people involved. The manufacturer or “*établisser*” did not have a big factory. He was a manager of a widespread organisation and had to see to it that the coordination between the many different specialists, suppliers and contractors ran smoothly.

The different professions were learnt by apprenticeship of one to two years, and often the trade was passed on from father to son or mother to daughter.

We have followed the process of making an ordinary musical box, a so called “*cartel*.” But there were boxes with chimes, bells, drums, “*castagnettes*,” pipes and reeds needing an air supply by bellows, boxes with dancing dolls etc. All these elaborate boxes and automates called for even more specialists of the trade.

A lot of know-how, time and patience was needed in the process – and the earnings were rather small.

I keep wondering about the quality and precision of those products, manufactured with rather coarse and, by our standards, primitive tools and machinery – produced and assembled by people whose hands were used to milking cows and working in the fields. ■

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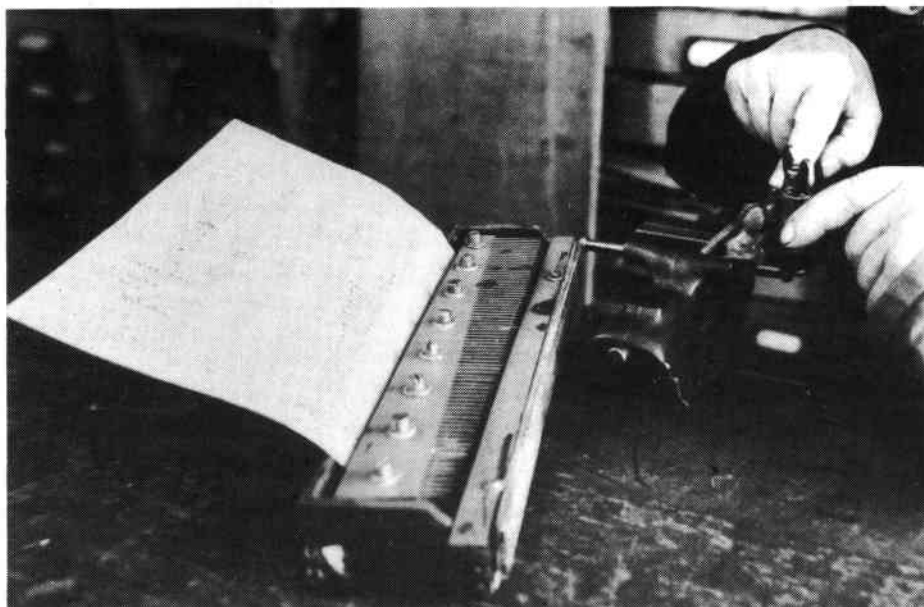
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Dates for your Diary

- 6th September:-** The annual Cambridge Organ Grind in aid of Muscular Dystrophy. All organ owners very welcome to join us for this happy occasion. Please telephone meetings secretary.
- 19th - 21st September:-** Autumn Meeting, Harte & Garter Hotel, Windsor, Berks.
'Organ Grind', a tour of Windsor and Eton which will take in Madame Tussauds Waxworks, the older part Windsor town and parts of Eton College and the Castle itself. An alternative will be a two hour trip on a river steamer on the Thames. Sunday morning we shall visit Frank Hollands Museum of Mechanical Music.
- 6th December:-** Christmas Meeting, venue to be announced.
Christopher Proudfoot will give an illustrated talk on some of the more interesting items sold in Christies London, saleroom.
Nicholas Simons to give an illustrated talk 'Playing with the Piano.'
Doreen and Michael Muskett will give us a rare opportunity to hear and see the 'vielle a roue' (wheel fiddle) or Hurdy-Gurdy. This is the real 17th century instrument not the street piano commonly called the Hurdy-Gurdy.
- 31st December - 1st January 1987:-** Chichester Lodge Hotel, Chichester, W. Sussex.
New Years Eve Dinner Party. £15.00 per person.
Bed & Breakfast. £15.00 per person.
New Years Day - Musical Extravaganza at the invitation of Clive & Enid Jones, The Mechanical Music Museum, Chichester.
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Rebuilt after six years

by Edward Rogers

I had always considered Geoff a good friend, but was not so sure after a weekends visit to assist him in rebuilding his 46 note player organ. Prior to that weekend he would phone early evenings and describe what work he had carried out on the organ and would carefully, I later realised, lead me into thinking we only had a few problems to overcome and that two days would be ample for the work required. By the end of each evening spent on the phone he would have given me full details and I would inanely say things like, 'Geoff, don't worry, it'll all be OK., we can even go for a pint mid-day Sunday when we finish it.'

I arrived Friday evening and was met at the door by Linda, Geoff's charming young wife, who took my case and said, 'It's in there.' I wasn't sure if she was speaking of the organ or her obeying husband, as it was obvious there had been some friction caused by the non operative organ standing mutely in the lounge. That evening he had planned for us to replace all the flap valves on the exhausters. I will not describe the dubious method he suggested for replacing the internal ones, although I did agree with the idea. The original valves had been removed and replaced with strips of brown vinyl easy chair covering.

Well I think I should now explain the reason for the title at the head of this epistle. This organ had been earlier rebuilt/restored using a quantity of modern or non original materials, much of which had been fixed in place with Evo-Stik type adhesives. Contact adhesives are excellent but I can see little use for them in organ repair work.

But back to the plot. We decided no devious methods were to be used in fitting the new leather valves, we would recover the exhausters at the same time as it was apparent there were a few troubles with the gussets on the inside of the cloth. One good mark, and probably the only one, to the previous restorer, he had used proper bellows cloth held with good old smelly hot animal glue. So what was wrong with the gussets? They were coming unstuck. They are fitted inside large exhausters to keep the bellows cloth stiff and prevent its blowing outwards when pumping vigorously. They should be cut from a good piece of card and stuck on securely, surely there is no more disheartening job than ripping off your own newly fitted cloth because your gussets have fallen off!

Here I should point out to all that Linda had wisely decided to spend the weekend with her parents, as they had arranged a trip to see the autumn beauties of Sheffield Park in Sussex.

Thus we had no worries about spreading the bowels of the organ over the floor. We removed the old cloth and were in for a shock. I've not seen gusset's made from waxed breakfast cereal boxes before, I hope I never see it again. I'm pleased to be able to say Geoff and I made a good job of completely recovering those exhausters, but it was Saturday evening before we had finished. Oh well, maybe the pint could wait till Sunday evening. Now, as we had a good wind supply, first thing Sunday we could start curing the cyphers with which the organ had abounded since bought.

These early player organs were like large organettes of the Celestina or Seraphone style, with pneumatic motors to lift the pallets which uncover the reeds to sound the note. In this case there were two rows of motors, 46 in each. They had been recovered with a thin plastic/polythene material, I'm tempted to put a name to it but without verification from someone in the know I will not say. The motors had been refixed and resealed with a cork gasket and an Evo-Stik type adhesive. They leaked like sieves around the glue joints, and worse still, the plastic covering had cracked on the corners and had been holed by moth grubs. Make sure you clean out and replace all old felt, and also remove the moth droppings, fluff, etc., otherwise your work will be eaten through in six years.

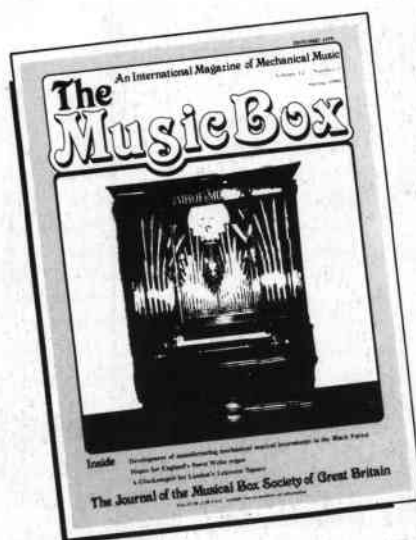
Well, Sunday evening arrived and Geoff went towards the door, no, not to go for that pint but to greet his returned everloving. I don't like to hear women swear and I'm pleased to say the lady held firm on the mess we had still not cleared up. Equally Geoff and I had not used the expletives we could have done, we felt more utter disgust for the

completely unnecessary work we had had to carry out.

A further weekend was arranged. Linda again wisely went away for the duration but this time left us with the strict instructions that it was to be going on her return Sunday, or she would get it going herself – out the front door! Another full weekends work followed putting right bad workmanship. Because of the poor state of the row of large pneumatic motors, – I don't think hardboard or plastic wood are good replacement or repair materials for long narrow motors, – Geoff had made up an entire new set and covered them with zephyr skin. We fixed them in with leather gaskets and hot glue, and they worked a treat. Much further adjustment of springs, replacing of bleeds, etc., etc., followed until we got it playing as good as when it left the works over 95 years ago.

Came the knock at the door and there stood her ladyship, home again. No hello or anything, just a crisp, 'Have you done it?' We ushered her in, sat her down, and proceeded with a short recital. Slowly she warmed to the sound as "Morning papers" wound its way through. Everyone was brought back to ground though, when she broke the spell by uttering that terrible hackneyed expression, 'It's bootiful!', and she doesn't even come from Norfolk!

The moral. If you are repairing player organs, player pianos, or even organettes, please think twice about using modern materials or glues unnecessarily and have consideration for the fellow who may have to replace it all in six years time. This organ was restored about six years ago, it carried the date of restoration and also the signature of the restorer. ■



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The 37th Annual M.B.S.I. Convention packet, which you can pick up at the convention desk at the Hyatt Hotel in Sarasota, will contain additional information of pre-convention and post-convention things to see and do plus restaurants in the area. A Short Preliminary list for now: The John and Mabel Ringling Mansion, The Ringling Circus Museum, The Ringling Art Museum, Sarasota Jungle Gardens, The Asolo Theatre, Sishops Planaterium, Selby Gardens, The Gamble Mansion, Sarasota Beaches on Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico: daytime and evening cruises, deep sea fishing, golf tennis, shopping centres and St. Armands, and miles and miles of sandy beaches.

Correction to report on MBSI 36th Annual Meeting in our last issue.

Gloria and Ralph Schack have written from California pointing out that it was not them, but Dick Rigg that headed the organising committee for the highly successful meeting at Longbeach last year.

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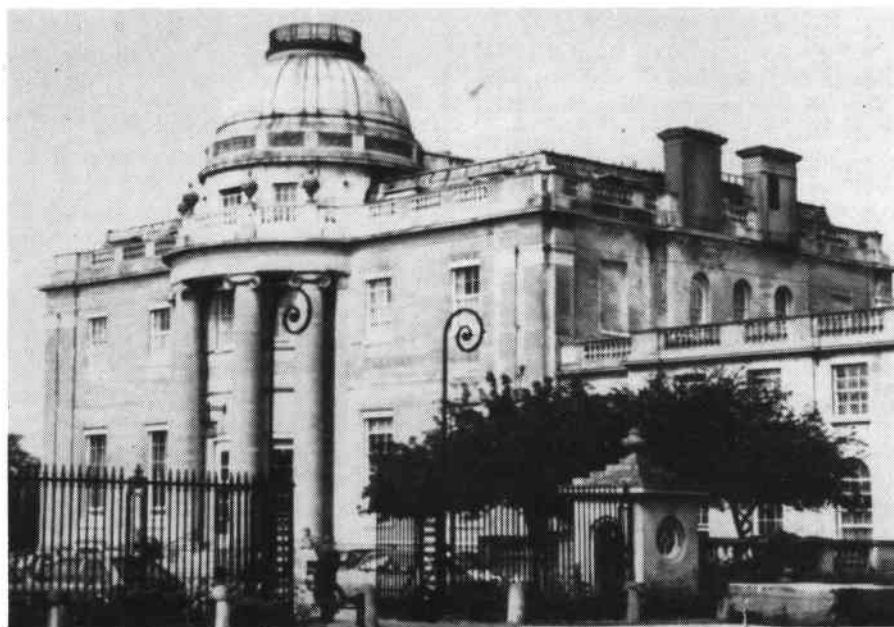
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Temple of music

Ted Crampton



Tyingham Hall.

ONE of the great joys of our heritage is the countryside, with its rivers and fields, its hedgerows and trees. But much of this would not be ours to enjoy without the thought and planning of our forefathers, generations ago. This is typified in the gently rolling countryside around Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire.

Standing beside the road to Northampton are twin lodges, plain but sturdy and joined by an arch through which passes the entrance drive to the park and over a handsome and tree-lined avenue, when Tyingham Hall comes into view. A most elegant mansion, it is enhanced by its central portico of slim columns that soar from ground to roof level. The roof itself is capped by a huge, copper-covered dome.

Tyingham Hall was completed in 1797 by a wealthy banker, William Praed to the designs of one of the most distinguished 18th century architects, Sir John Soane (1753-1837). He chose to site the house wisely, on a rise in a 100 acre parkland which gently slopes down to the River Ouse. In 1906, the estate was bought by another wealthy banker, American-born Frederick Adolphus Konig and his French wife Gerda. Wishing to give his mansion a more impressive appearance, he instructed a German architect to re-arrange the interior and crown the building with a massive dome — which houses only the water tanks which are supplied from a well in the garden. Alas, this spoiled the beautiful symmetry of Soane's design, but no doubt satisfied the ego of a wealthy man.

During World War I, most of the building housed an army hospital and during this period a second floor was added to the servants' wing and stylish walling built in front of the mansion. In 1926 Konig engaged perhaps the most famous architect of his time, Sir Edward Lutyens to design the formal gardens, which were overlooked by the social rooms at the rear of the house. Running down the centre of the sunken gardens, lawns, hedgerows and trees was the bathing pool and at the far end he built two impressive pavilions — each the size of a small church. Lutyens had spent the previous ten years busily engaged in designing and building of the Raj's most magnificent set of buildings — the Government of India Parliamentary Buildings and The Viceroy's Palace in New Delhi and this influence was reflected in his pavilions at Tyingham. The massive stone buildings topped with their Hindu-style domes are truly amazing. Both externally and internally they are similar, with the roofs supported by black and green scagolia columns and the floors of white, grey and black patterned marble. The bathing pavilion houses four changing rooms hidden behind the columns, but the other pavilion — The Temple of Music — is a 'church' in all but fact, with its small choir stalls and 'altar', complete with candlesticks.

However, it was not used for formal religious purposes but, rather "consecrated to the appreciation of Divine Truth, not through religion, but through music and architecture". Frederick Konig received the inspiration for this amazing project while attending a Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's Cathedral, London on the occasion of the Coronation of King George V in 1911. Sitting under the dome and surrounded by representatives of The Empire he was struck by the impossibility of Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and other religions joining in a Church of England service. This led to the conception of The Temple in which anyone, of whatever race or religion, could join in thanksgiving through the medium of music.

He commissioned the leading painters and wood-carvers to adorn The Temple and installed a set of four bells hanging from the roof. They were inscribed "Harmony", "Happiness", "Beauty" and "Peace" and were rung for the first time on the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1928.

The area immediately behind the 'altar' forms a well, suddenly dropping to basement level. Here, out of sight, could be assembled the musicians and singers and here was sited the organ console with its back to the organ chamber, which was built about 20ft. directly below the 'auditorium' and spoke through an ornate circular grille installed in the marble floor. The organ was made by the German firm of M. Welte & Sohne of Freiburg.

It is easy to imagine the Konig's house guests strolling after dinner from the house to the Temple of Music, sitting down in the marbled hall, soaking up the music provided by the hidden musicians.

Even if no organist was present, the orchestral tones of the Welte organ could be heard for there was a plentiful supply of music rolls for the automatic player fitted to the console. It would seem that Gerda Konig was an accomplished organist for her music manuscripts have her pencilled notes for suitable registrations. She and her husband had a cultured taste in music for the player rolls included many by Bach, Handel, Wagner, Rheinberger and other classical composers, with little of the sugary music so popular at that time. Looking at the specification of the organ, modern interpretations of Bach are hard to visualise, for the Welte had the following:

PEDAL: Bourdon 16', Sub Bass 16', Violone 16'

LOWER MANUAL: Cello 8', Voix Celestes 8', Viol D'Orchestre 8', Flute Traverse 8', Gamba 8', Diapason 8', Bassoon 8', Flute 4', Harp (Glockenspiel)

UPPER MANUAL: Aeoline 8', Vienna Flute 8', Bourdon 8', Cor 8', Viola 8', Oboe 8', Trumpet 8', Vox Humana 8', Vox Humana Echo, Clarinet 16', Tremulo.

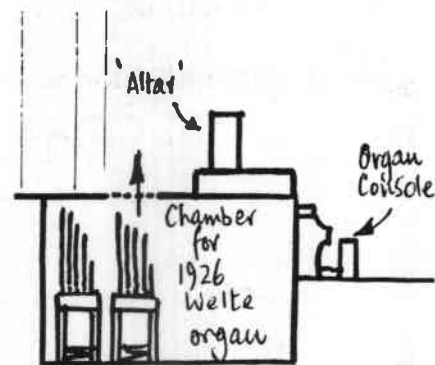
COUPLERS: (Manual) 2 Super Octave, 2 Sub 1, 2 Super 1, 2-1 (Swell to Great) (Lower) 1 Super, (Upper) 2 to Pedal, (Lower) 1 to Pedal.

There was a row of pistons under the Lower manual: pp, p, MF, F, Tutti, Free Con, Swell Stops, A.

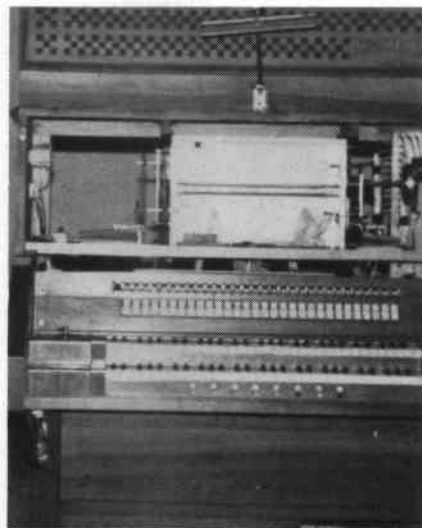
Above the upper manual is a row of switches which actuate the combination pistons. There were also two controls for use with the automatic player. One gave a choice of automatic or hand registration for the stops and the second controlled the speed of the automatic player. The console had two 60 note manuals and a 30 note pedalboard controlling the 16 ranks of pipes. The action was pneumatic with miles of lead tubing between console and chests.

The Konigs left Tyingham Hall in 1936 and it was sold to The Australian and New Zealand Bank, who moved their documents from London for safe keeping during the war, when part of the mansion was also used as a maternity home. In the mid-1960s it became the headquarters of the company constructing the M1 Motorway and in 1966 it was sold again to be converted into a luxury health clinic. And an impressive one it is, too, as the Rolls Royces, Mercedes and BMWs glide up the avenue driven by their wealthy owners, returning some days later, lighter in pounds — both weight and currency!

The Welte organ fell into disuse and in mid-1985 was purchased by Alan Whytock, an accomplished restorer of mechanical musical instruments and Graham Cantrill, organ builder and restorer of all kinds of keyboards who lives in Castle Donington. The Welte was built to the highest standards of organ building and everything was constructed on a substantial scale. To lift the console, chests and bellows up out of the chamber well was a feat of brute strength. It will require considerable time and effort to repair the ravages of damp, but one day it will sing out once more in Alan's music room in his home, The Old Brewery in Church Street, Melbourne, Derbyshire. A day worth looking forward to! ●



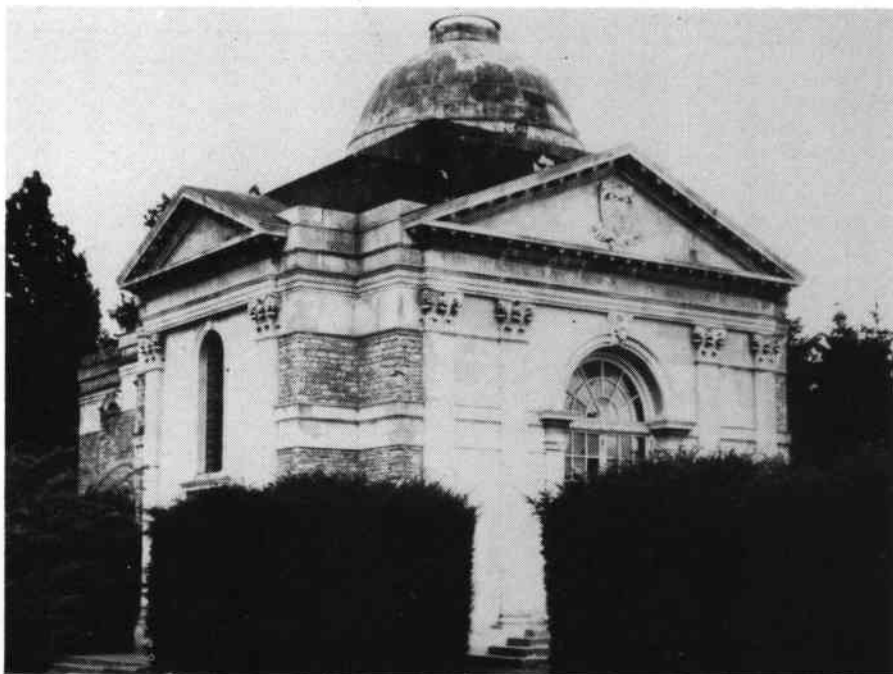
A sketch showing the placing of the organ and its console.



The console and player.



Inside the temple of Music, Tyingham Hall, with the "altar" and the black and green scagolia columns supporting the domed roof. In the foreground is the grille in the marble floor with the organ chamber beneath.



Temple of Music at Tyingham Hall, built in 1926 to the design of Sir Edward Lutyens.

I wish to acknowledge the considerable help given by friends in the preparation of this article. Alan Whytock and Graham Cantrill, the owners of the organ, Alan Clayton, an authority on Sir John Soane and Tyingham Hall and who has wonderfully restored the gateway lodges at Tyingham where he now lives, Iris and Ray Tunnicliffe of the Rutland Cottage Museum of Mechanical Music at Whapload, St. Catherine's, Lincolnshire, Frank Holland of The British Piano Museum, Tony Bernard Smith for providing material by David Bowers, Lloyd Davey and Douglas Hickling. Finally, to John D. Sharp for photographic help.
The article originally appeared in "Cinema Organ," the journal of the Cinema Organ Society, and is reprinted by permission of its editor, Mr. Tony Bernard Smith.

□ □ □ □

Recent articles include the history of the Aeolian Orchestrrelle, mechanical music in the American home, a detailed description of a rare musical spinning wheel, a first-ever published transcription of a newly-discovered piece of music by Haydn taken from an organ barrel, a description of a rare prototype organ-playing cylinder musical box, a history of the musical clock in America, and a survey of Charles Clay's musical clocks for which Handel wrote music.



□ □ □ □

262

An early Austrian Musical Box

by E. M. J. Blyelle-Horngacher

Translation by Dr. Robert Burnett

Hitherto all the boxes which have come to light signed RZEBITSCHKEK IN PRAG ⁽¹⁾ or A. OLBRICH IN WIEN were thought to have been from the second half of the last century, as indicated by the tunes played and the details of construction. Now a box has turned up with a sectional comb and other features indicating an early date of construction, but differing in many respects from early boxes made in Geneva. Furthermore this item is the integral base of a clock and not a separable clock-base and it has an oval porcelain panel in the front referring to FRANZ DEN KAISER (Emperor of Austria) who died in 1835, Fig. 1.

We know from Graham Webb's book that Frantizek Rzebitschek started at Josefov⁽²⁾ in 1813, so that this piece was presumably made between 1813 and 1835. Comparing this piece with a dozen or more pieces made in Geneva, we would narrow the likely date of manufacture to 1820 - 1830, mainly because there are lead weights under the base teeth and only three wheels in the governor cage, Fig. 2.

Reading again what Graham Webb says on pages 171-2 ⁽³⁾ one thing surprises me: he says that movements by Rzebitschek are made in the style of Oldbrich. But Oldbrich is the more recent and it seems to me that he copied Rzebitschek's model rather than the other way round. I even think that Oldbrich must have obtained his blanks from Prague because the similarities are so striking. The only thing that is different is the quality of the combs - they are not as good. And the musical arrangements are also less subtle, being better adapted to the simpler tastes of the public in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

G. Webb says on P. 169 "fine quality" but he does not give a date.

Another feature indicating an early date is the thin bedplate - only $\frac{5}{32}$ inch thick. This has no hole cut in it to take the spring barrel, but there is a hole for the cylinder itself. In early pieces from Geneva the position is reversed - see Fig. 3, top. At the bottom of Fig. 3 is a "classical" movement by Rzebitschek and in the middle is the base of the movement now described. There is no wax in the cylinder of this movement.

The fact that this item has the

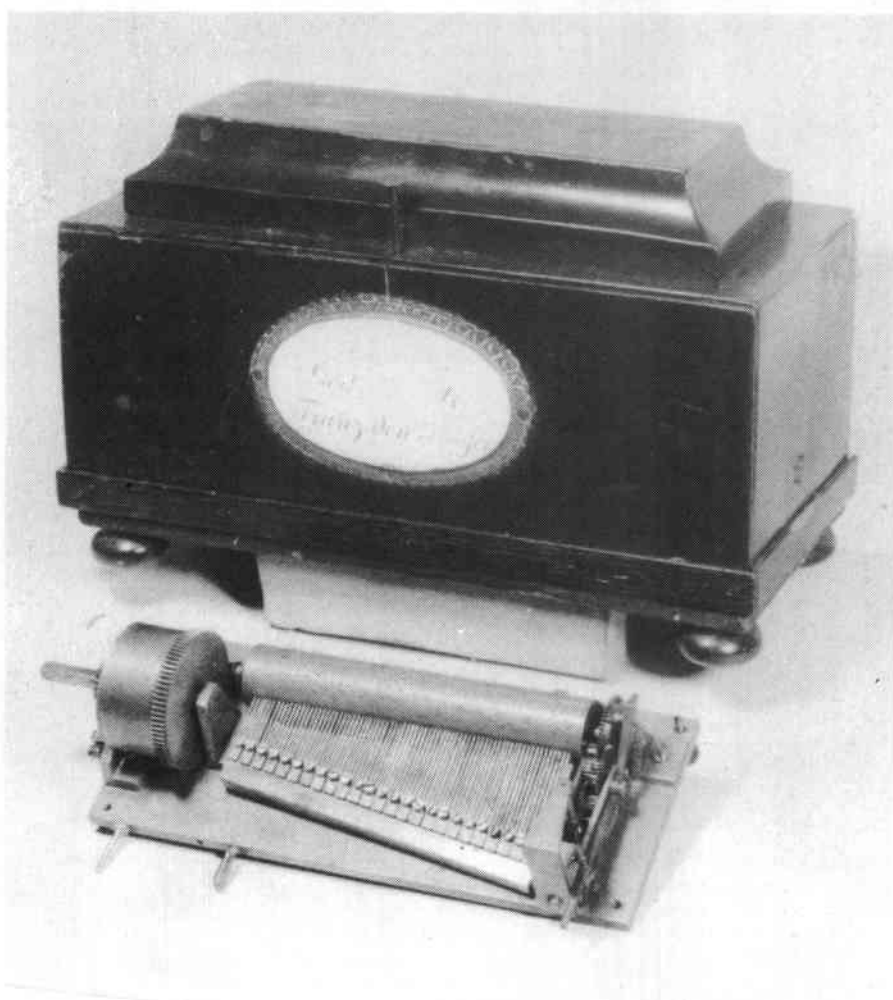


Fig. 1: Base of a clock, probably of bronze with a plaque in front unhappily broken. We think this would have read "God Bless Franz the Emperor". There would have been a line before this.

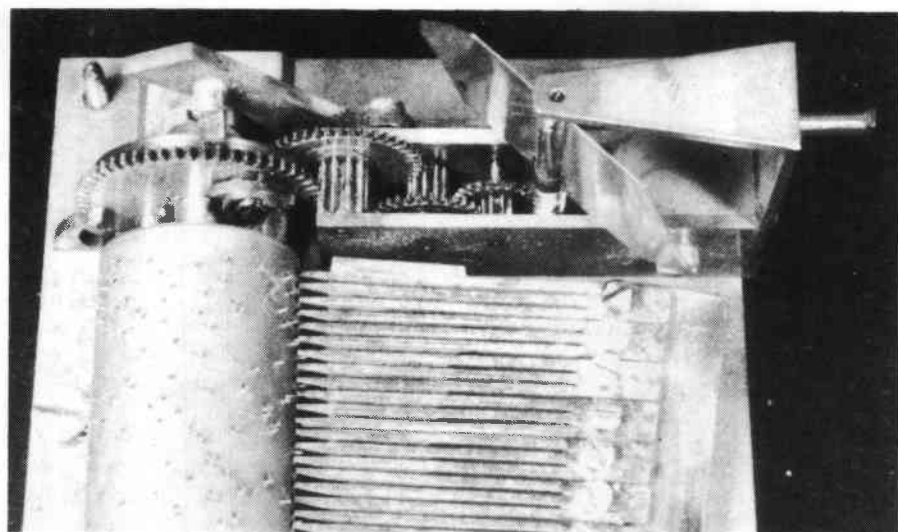


Fig. 2: Gear train of three wheels and a two-winged endless screw.

base teeth on the right does not show that it was made in Austria, since many early pieces from Geneva are the same, e.g. pieces by Custot and Ducommun. Features which do indicate Austrian origin are the shape of the stop lever and pawl

springs, the large ratio between the spring barrel and cylinder with only 14 leaves on the cylinder pinion and the fixed fan with no adjustable blades on the endless screw. Finally, one of the two tunes is an Austrian anthem.

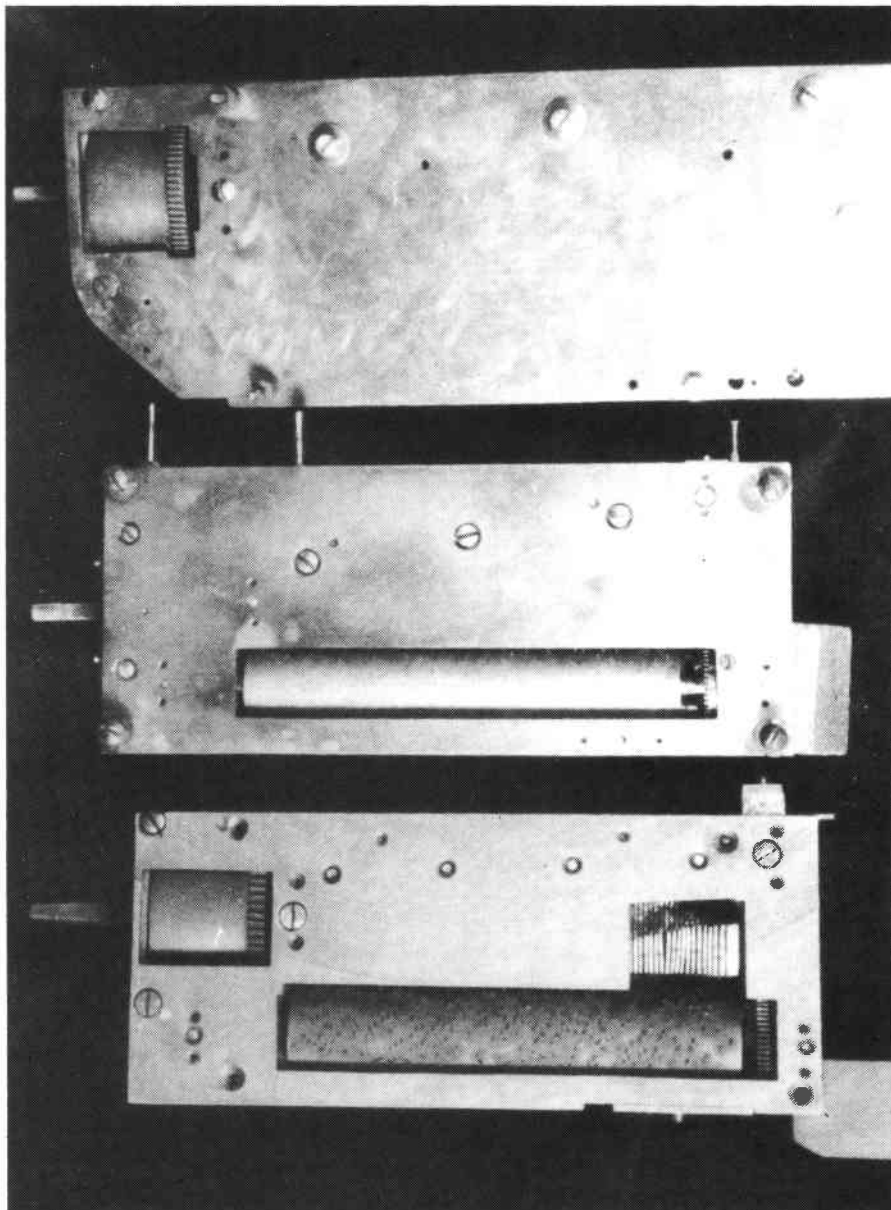


Fig. 3: Underside of our movement between two others: top a 4-tune movement by a Geneva maker, probably Custot & Ducommun, 1830: bottom a classical movement by Oldbrich similar to a Rzebitschek.

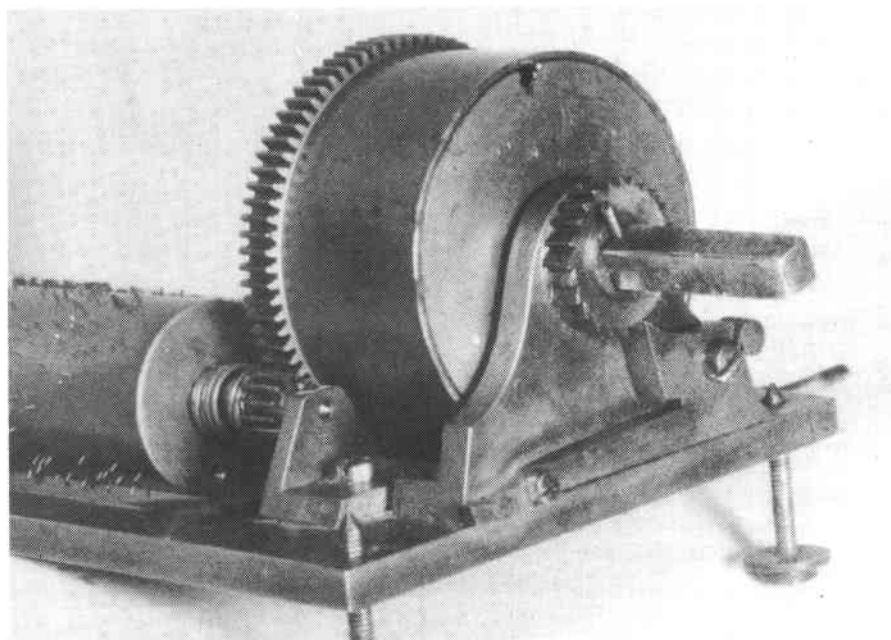


Fig. 4: Very small cylinder pinion and curiously shaped pawl and his typical spring.

It would seem that the maker had seen Geneva pieces and been influenced by them as shown by the change/repeat lever, Fig. 5. Similarly, there is an unusually shaped stop lever with a large curved part acted on by the press-button seen on the front of the case. Behind the cylinder bridge there is a thin spring acting directly on the stop-lever finger to hold it up as soon as it is lifted. During rotation of the cylinder a pin on the cylinder wheel disengages this spring so that the movement stops at the end of the tune.

It is difficult to judge how good the music was, because severe rusting of the comb has spoilt the tuning. The cylinder is very narrow—only $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter and each tune lasts only 30 seconds. Later boxes by Rzebitschek have cylinders one inch in diameter and each tune lasts a full minute. They are notable for a full tone and precise setting of the music. They are the smallest mass produced “cartel” boxes ever made with cylinders just under 4 inches long. The cylinder of the present box is 4.01 inches long

Fig. 6 allows five Austrian movements to be compared. The earliest one, top left, has 25 sections of three teeth each. The second—one down on the left—has 81 teeth and is signed RZEBITSCHKEK IN PRAG. The third on the left is signed A. OLBRICH IN WIEN as are the two on the right. The upper of these has a cast iron bedplate end play 3 tune. The second has brass bedplates and plays four tunes, two per turn. This is a considerable rarity and I have never seen another like it.

Thus we are left with various questions such as “Were other types of movement made in Austria and what is the largest movement they made?” (I might add that I have seen one Austrian box with interchangeable cylinders).

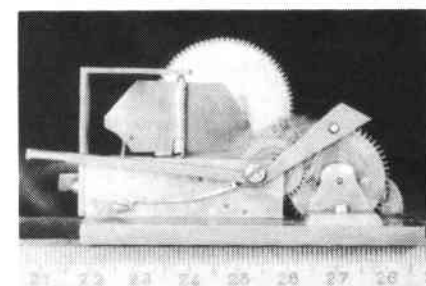


Fig. 5: Typical Austrian spring for stop-lever and Swiss pattern change-repeat lever prior to the original (and better) shifting finger fixed to the edge of the bedplate.

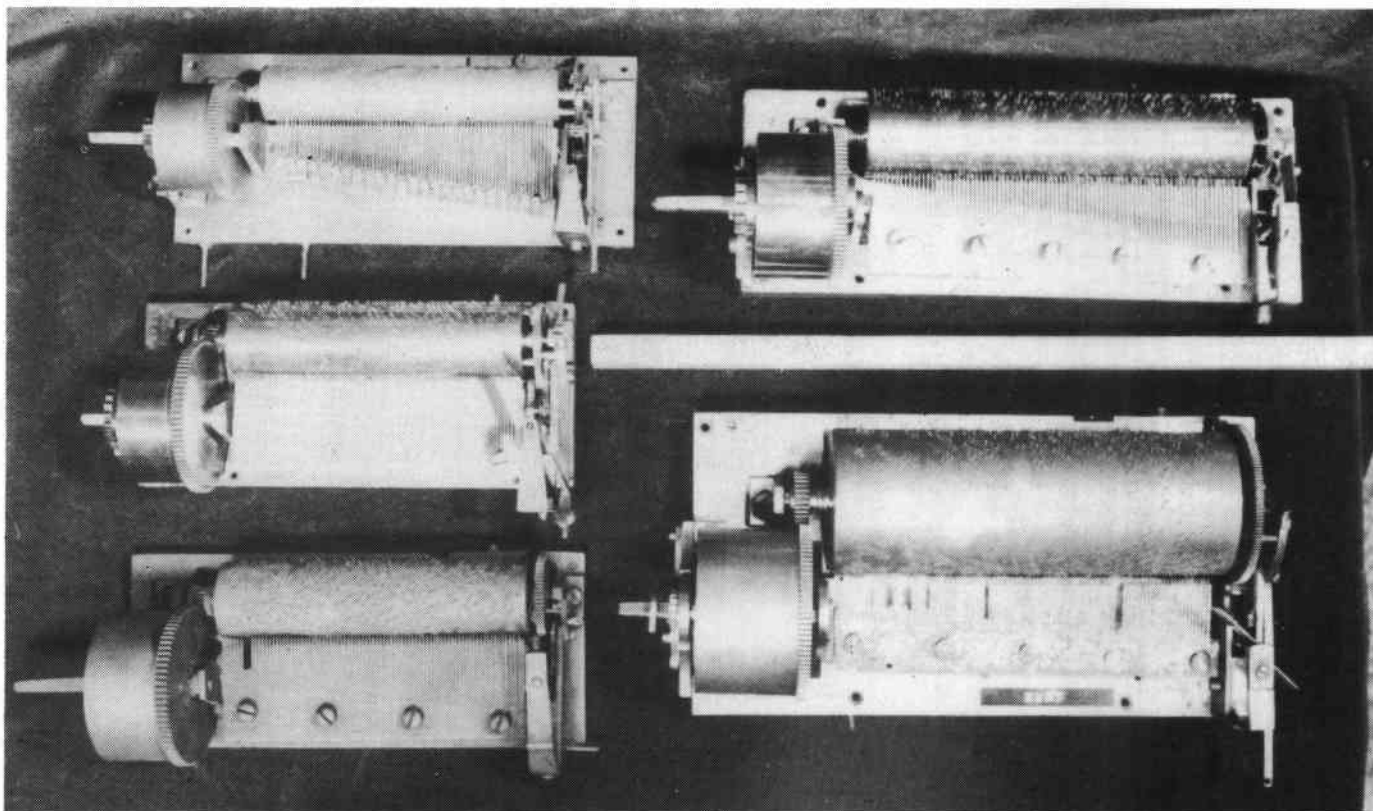


Fig. 6: Comparison of five Austrian movements. Top left the early piece described now, below it a Rzebitschek and an Oldbrich movement, right a 3-tune and a 4-tune two-per-turn movement both by Oldbrich.

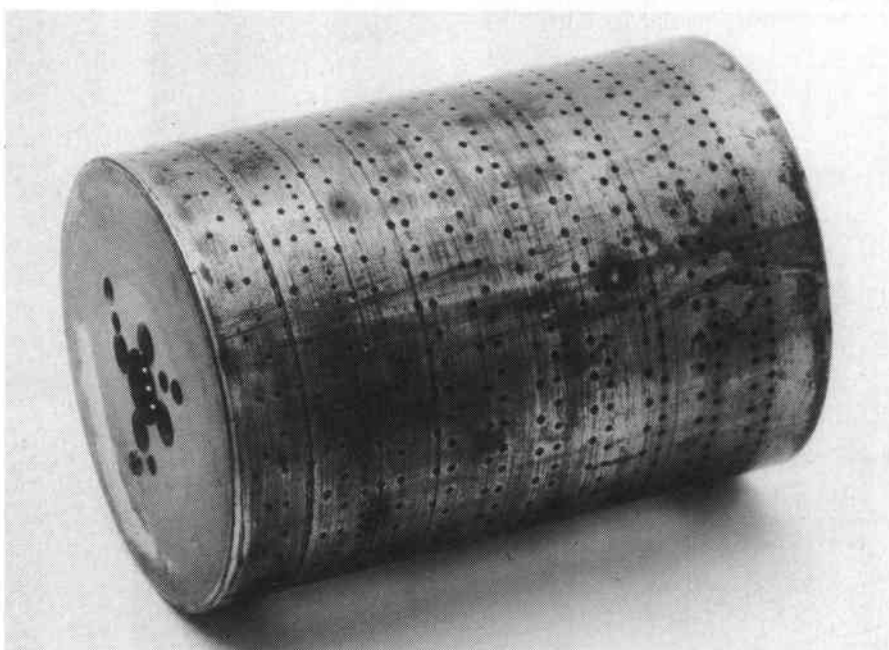
All pieces from the Conservatoire Autonome, Geneva.

NOTES

(1) Although Prague is now in Czechoslovakia, we have regarded it as Austrian because, in the last century, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

(2) Stieler's large atlas of 1905 shows three places named Josefov. One is part of Prague, the second a small town some thirty miles to the east and the third is a small town in Poland (now in Russia). We think the second location is the place where Frantizek Rzebitschek worked and where this earliest known Austrian musical box was made. Later Rzebitschek moved to a large city and changed from being an artisan to industrial manufacture. It would be interesting to know the date when he did so.

(3) Graham Webb: The Cylinder Musical Box handbook, 1968. Pages 171-172.



The timing cylinder used on the "Roller Machine" shown in the February 1926 issue of The New Era Illustrated. A reprint of this article appears on the following two pages.

Music Rolls were then being made by The Up-to-Date Music Roll Co., Wescombe Works, King Street, Hammersmith, London, W. Roll labels were marked: Actual Manufacturers. Two other addresses on rolls were: 4 Leysfield Road, Shepherds Bush, London, W.12., and 1 Netherwood Place, Netherwood Road, Kensington, W.14. David Bowers has tried one of these cut for the Hupfeld 'Helios' orchestrion, and suggests that while they play well, the arrangement is rather uninteresting, the register changes few, and themes repeated.

Photograph and copy of New Era Illustrated loaned by Frank Holland.

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MUSIC BY THE YARD

ALTHOUGH the piano is probably the most widely known and generally used musical instrument in the world, there are many devout lovers of music who are not able, and never will be able, to play it—or, for that matter, any other instrument; but this peculiar inability to produce music, while appreciating all its appeal, is a matter for psychologists' attention, and our wonder at it is immaterial. After all, the piano is very plainly made, the sounds of it being produced by striking a key acting as a lever to a hammer, which in turn strikes the strings; and barring, one supposes, the drum, there can be no simpler instrument in existence. It is indeed in its modern form a perfected state of all those ancient instruments consisting of strings struck by hammers. At one time the strings were placed in a small box, which was carried about by the player; accompanying it were two little mallets, and these were used to strike the strings in the manner seen with the child's toy called the dulcimer. In this early shape the instrument can be traced in nearly every part of the globe, and it now survives almost in its original form in parts of Europe and Asia. It developed into an instrument called a clavichord, introduced in the sixteenth century, to be followed rapidly by the clavichord and the spinet, and so on until the present wonderful products of to-day were evolved. Players have extracted exquisite sound from all these instruments, and millions have deeply appreciated them, among whom were many who would have given anything to be able to hear the music over and over again in their own homes.

Thus piano manufacturing became an industry with a big demand. But those interested in it who had the true spirit of enterprise noticed that the demand was not so much for an instrument to play as for music to hear; and as a result of their activities the first automatic Orchestrion appeared in England in 1852. This was the Orchestrion which



MR. LEOPOLD MUCKLE
(From an old photograph)
He introduced the Orchestrion into England in 1852

Leopold Muckle, a gifted musician, brought here; but in the same way that film producers to-day desecrate the stories of great authors, so did subsequent manufacturers become careless over making the instruments, which eventually were more noted for noise than for music. And we remember the famous tale of some unfortunate burglars in this connection. About five years ago they broke into a country house, and having forced their way into the drawing-room, found that their lantern had given out. Noticing that the house was lighted by electricity, they felt for a switch, and coming across one they depressed it. Immediately the whole house was filled with a roar of sound like unto the voice of the celebrated Bull of Bashan. For

by mistake they had started an electrical orchestrion, and to the tune of "The Maiden's Wish" the robbers were captured.

But long before this happened, the invention of the Abbe Volger had been generally superseded by the electric piano and the pianolo, which are played by means of perforated rolls of paper.

The fact that these rolls have to be so cut that air in passing through them causes a tune to be played, proves that making them is at once a science and an art, some of the details of which we saw at the premises of the Up-To-Date Music Roll Co., Wescombe Works, King Street, Hammersmith, London, W.

One of the principals of this firm is a son of the man who introduced the orchestrion into England. And we are able to give most interesting illustrations of father and son at work—the father preparing music for the old-fashioned orchestrion, and the son for the very modern and efficient electric piano. For this work they had, as it were, to learn a special language, a new code of music, for no note in the music roll is similar either in appearance or position to those on the music manuscript. Mr. F. G. Muckle, the son, is, like his father, an absolute master of this, and we watched him work upon a roll. It is placed in a roller machine turned by hand as the notes are written, and over this is placed the music to be reproduced; the deftness and accuracy with which Mr. Muckle "translated" the notes in pencil on to the plain paper was wonderful.

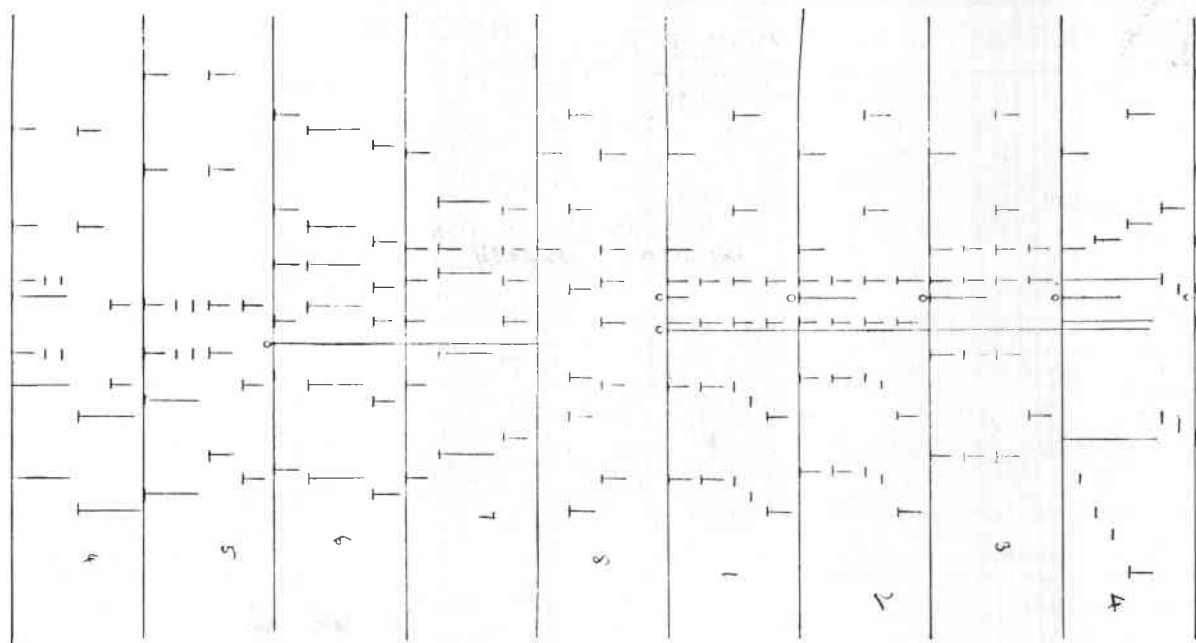
The appearance of a roll is rather interesting. It is divided into numbered sections with a line down the middle, and each side are the perforations, which are made according to the length, quality and pitch of the note.

It will be admitted that a man who can perform work of this sort with such efficiency is worthy of note, but we saw an even more remarkable feat performed by him. While he is either translating or composing music upon the roll, he can at the same time listen to another



MR. F. G. MUCKLE, preparing a "roll" for a modern electric piano

MUSIC BY THE YARD—concluded



Section of a "roll" marked out ready for punching

finished roll being tested and can detect the slightest fault in the sound, which as an example of mental agility is hard to beat. After the perforations have been traced on the roll, it is punched on another machine.

Having seen over the works, we had the pleasure of listening to some of the products of the firm, and it would be difficult to tell whether they were being played by human being or by mechanism. There was none of that dull rhythm or

metallic tone about it, and the whole performance was conspicuous by the absence of those obviously machine-made sounds which jar so much upon anyone with the slightest musical ear.

When one comes to consider it, this industry has accomplished a most remarkable service, because it has enabled those who have never been able to play a note to enjoy all the works of the masters, such as Chopin, Beethoven, Debussy, John Ireland and other

great geniuses, without the presence of a pianist.

Up-To-Date Music Rolls, Ltd., fully justify their name, for their products represent the highest pitch of development yet reached in mechanical music production, and this fact is not only of significance to the firm under review and to music lovers, but also is a national triumph, since the firm is entirely British, having been established here since 1852.



Making the perforations

Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 30



Fig. 1. Typical "with-cherubs" tune sheet of the 1885-1900 period, size 9 by 6 inches, coloured litho by Elsener, Zurich, for serial 5941.

Here is one of the later style tune sheets, probably a bit before 1885, from an unknown maker but well decorated with musical cherubs, then in fashion. It has the serial number 5941 written in the top margin and again among the cherubs just below the composers' names, and tunes from *La Mascotte* (1880) and *Patience* (1881) which Gilbert furnished with the alternative title *Bunthorne's Bride*.

The composer Emmett (1815-1904) is rare on cylinder boxes. Born Daniel Decatur Emmett in Ohio, he was a composer and performer of Negro Minstrel music and visited England in 1843. His other compositions include *I wish I was in Dixie's Land* (1860) and *Turkey in de straw* (1861).

Unknown maker

These boxes of unknown make almost always conform rigidly to the conventional designs, which now helps restorers and then helped the numerous parts makers. But unfortunately they occasionally succumb to somebody's bright idea, as illustrated herewith. Instead

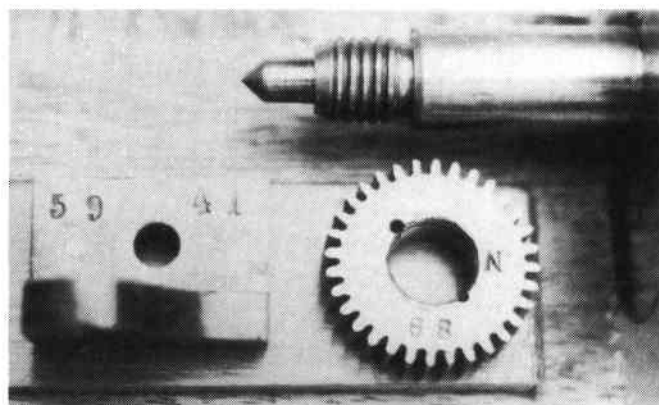


Fig. 2. Screwed cylinder gear of 5941, maker unknown.

of the cylinder driving gear sliding on to a square on the arbor it is screwed on, using a left-hand thread to keep it hard up against a shoulder. I suppose it may have been slightly cheaper to make, avoiding the square and the fitting of pin, whereas the internal and external threads were all done on the lathe; but the end result is apt to be hard on a restorer because after a hundred years of being

tightened up every time the box played, and with rusting along these two closely-mating wrought iron threads, they are extremely difficult to unscrew. The operation is not helped by the cylinder and the return spring being in the way. I tried a 24-hour soaking in penetrating oil; then some local heating; and finally a special tool engaging two holes drilled axially into the gear, before I persuaded the two to part. Of course, re-assembly is nice and easy.

Harpe Harmonique Piccolo

All manner of fancy names were applied to cylinder musical boxes after about 1880, and most of them had no technical or musical significance, being merely the names of various makers' current models.

An exception to this is the Harpe Harmonique, and more particularly the Harpe Harmonique Piccolo which emerged as a recognisable standard type. The date of their first appearance, probably about 1880, is confused by the fact that most of them give no indication of their makers. Some by Baker Troll and Ami Revenc are known, but most of the others have unidentifiable general-purpose tune sheets and usually also have their serial numbers stamped on the bass end cylinder bearing bracket; this was done by Paillard and Conchon and an unknown number of unknown makers and is no clue to identity.

In addition to the description given as a heading on the tune sheet, all these boxes have two distinctive features: a zither is applied to most teeth of the main comb, which gives the optional "harp" effect when correctly adjusted; and there is a so-called Piccolo comb. This is better described as a treble comb because in practice it seldom carries more than about five teeth tuned to higher pitches than are found on most good single-comb boxes. It is also usual for these Harpe Harmonique movements to have the larger type of case with separate feet and, often, a plinth. Baker Troll made some with interchangeable cylinders and mounted on matching tables. I think it is true to say that all these boxes are lever-wound.

Harpe Harmonique Piccolo movements come with various comb arrangements, but by far the most common type has a 13 in. cylinder playing eight airs. The main comb usually has 61 teeth and the treble comb 32. A typical example is Ami Rivenc serial number 44136 and they must have been pleased with it because an exact copy of the mechanism and tune sheet (but with different case) appeared with serial number 44292. Teeth 59 and 60 of the main comb are tuned to the same pitch as tooth 1 of the treble comb, and tooth 61 the same pitch as tooth 2. Exactly the same 2-note overlap is often noted, for example on another unknown maker's serial number 5044 with 11 in. cylinder and combs of 51 and 26 teeth.

Another box with the 61 plus 32 combs and 13 in. cylinder playing eight airs is no. 5941, again of unknown make. Here the comb teeth overlap further than usual, thus . . .

Main comb teeth	51,52	54, 55	56, 57, 58	59, 60	61
Treble comb teeth of the same pitch	1, 2, 3	4, 5	6, 7	8, 9, 10	11

The comb tooth dimensions on these later boxes tend to be rather casual. Teeth on no. 5941 fluctuate in width by up to 0.005" from tooth to tooth, and in thickness by up to 0.002". There is also some variation in the position of the thinnest part. Stiffness calculations are therefore rather suspect, but I have done them for all the above mentioned teeth, noting that the treble comb teeth are

narrower than those on the main comb, as is usual with these movements. Despite this, all teeth of the same pitch are of approximately the same stiffness – as you would expect. So the only logical motive in placing them on separate combs (with the knowledge available in 1880) would be to achieve the sublime harmony effect. Yet no such attempt was made by the tune arranger for serial 5941; the tracks of teeth 51 to 61 on the main comb are very lightly pinned and in fact three of these eleven teeth are almost unused. Also, the occasions of corresponding teeth on the two combs being sounded together are exceedingly few. So the motive of this overlap remains a puzzle, and in any case I think that an overlap as big as eleven teeth on this type of box is rare.

It is also a puzzle why all these boxes have two combs. Perhaps it was a help in production, and especially in getting uniform hardening and tempering. But more likely it was just a sales gimmick – “Superior model, two combs.” Some Conchon boxes had their tune sheets inscribed “Deux Claviers.” Many single-comb boxes had a good piccolo effect.

The 13 in. cylinder of Harpe Harmonique Piccolo no. 5941 has 6139 pins, of which 4310 play the 61 teeth of the main comb and 1829 play the 32 treble teeth. So the main comb averages 70 pins per tooth and the treble comb 57, which only indicates that the piccolo effect is not overdone.

Another example of the casual attitude to tooth dimensions occurs in Ami Rivenc 44292, where for some reason tooth 61 of the main comb and tooth 1 of the treble comb have both been added (undoubtedly by the maker) as separate pieces of steel. Both are wider than their neighbours but of the same stiffness and they are indistinguishable in tone and volume.

It is sometimes stated that the teeth in Piccolo combs are harder than in main combs. I have never seen an example of this, and in all the boxes here mentioned both combs are of the same hardness – that is to say, their teeth have been hardened and tempered in the usual way so that the tips are still comparatively brittle but the tempering has been carried far enough to make the steel malleable for about a quarter of its length from the root. It is quite common to see, in this region, the punch marks made when the teeth were originally corrected for alignment, during manufacture.

All these boxes are decidedly noisier than their predecessors of the 1860s, for three reasons: the comb teeth are slightly stiffer; the sound radiation efficiency is improved by the larger cases having larger sound-boards; and the tune arrangers generally employ heavier chords preference to the quieter and more subtle musical decorations of earlier years. This permitted loud and soft passages, a less subtle form of forte-piano. The style must have proved popular because there were numerous variants on what I have called the standard Harpe Harmonique Piccolo, some illustrating once again the makers’ casual attitude to descriptive titles. Tune sheets with inscriptions such as Mandoline Piccolo are found on ordinary Harpe Harmonique Piccolo boxes. Conversely, one finds Harpe Harmonique Zither and Harpe Tremolo tune sheets on boxes which are fundamentally different.

An example of the first is illustrated in Vol. 11 no. 3 page 107. It has a 16 in. cylinder playing ten airs with combs of 60 and 32 teeth with the usual 2-note overlap. What is meant by Mandoline Piccolo, one might well ask. There is just one set of four teeth tuned to the same pitch in the treble comb, and never more than three to the same pitch in the main comb. But they are quite cleverly arranged to give many near-mandolin effects.



Fig. 3. Harpe Harmonique Zither (sic) serial 1598, with printed tune sheet 7½ by 5½ inches, litho by Valluet, Besançon. (Ste. Croix is nearer to Besançon than to Zurich and speaks the same language.)

An example of the second type is illustrated herewith. This box of unknown make, serial 1598, has a 13 in. cylinder playing six tunes. The main comb of 70 teeth at the bass end plays the tunes straight. The second comb with optional zither, has 53 teeth of reduced stiffness. They cover the same range of notes as teeth 16 to 44 of the main comb but with several groups of three and four teeth tuned to the same pitch. It therefore plays a softer, part mandolin version of parts of the tunes. This musical decoration from the second comb is effective both with and without the zither. It puts the movement into the same general type as the Harpe Eolienne.

A similar arrangement occurs in Conchon 7481 with Harpe Tremolo tune sheet, except that the mandolin comb is at the bass end and has teeth rather stiffer than the main comb. This reduces the volume contrast but improves the “harp” effect when the zither is applied to the stiffer comb. The main comb has 50 teeth of which nos. 24 to 50 cover the same range as the 51 teeth in the mandolin comb; this limited range permits groups of five teeth giving a more satisfactory mandolin effect.

Despite their sometimes wayward descriptions, all these boxes have an above-average performance, and one looks forward to discovering further different types, and possibly also the thinking behind them . . . even if they nullify some of the opinions expressed above.

Epée

The Epée factory at Sainte-Suzanne, in the South of France near the Swiss border, started up in 1839 and was well established by 1845. It was very much on its own compared with the Swiss makers who had a network of component suppliers; and L'Epée decided to be self-sufficient from the start, though he wisely kept close to the traditional Swiss design.

The main distinctive features of L'Epée movements are their U-shaped steel click springs; wooden handles on iron winding levers; and polished, tin plated cast iron bedplates. These bedplates were finished by a common and cheap process of the period known as “whitening,” and consisting of tin plating over a flash of copper, giving a neat, polished, silver-white surface. Not surprisingly after a hundred years the tin gets attacked in places exposing patches of copper and sometimes patches of rust on the iron; these defects have provoked several inaccurate descriptions of the original process. The bedplates can be restored either by polishing down to the iron surface or by having them commercially re-plated . . . still over copper but nowadays the tin is deposited by electro-plating.

L'Epée cases also generally have three distinctive features – the glass of the glass lid slides into its frame; the control lever platform is screwed to the upright; and often the mechanism is secured by bolts screwed into the bedplate legs through the bottom of the case.

Movements in these cases were sold by agents including A. Woog and S. Woog, whose initials were sometimes stamped in an oval beside the serial number on the bedplate. The tune sheets were often plain and headed “Musique de Geneve,” a title which was the recognised description of this unique type of music but was naturally considered unnecessary by the Swiss makers.

L'Epée also sold movements with and without cases as the main supplier to Thibouville-Lamy of Paris, who did not manufacture musical boxes despite the suggestion on their tune sheets that they did. In France and in Switzerland it was usual to add **Fabrique** or **Fabricants** (namely that you had a factory or were a manufacturer) despite never making the item so labelled.

In giving these guidelines to L'Epée characteristics it must be admitted that the total number of boxes seen is far, far less than an adequate statistical sample. Also, some details may have been established only after L'Epée had been in operation for several years. For example Dr. J. E. Roesch in the 1974 Silver Anniversary collection of the MBSI describes details of eight L'Epée boxes, unfortunately without giving their serial numbers, and *inter alia* reports . . .

1. In all eight boxes the male Geneva peg was a steel pin fixed axially into the spring arbor. (I have seen this on only one L'Epée box, serial 1216, 1880, but I have also seen it on a late Ami Rivenc.)
2. Only one of the eight had the wooden winding knob.
3. Four had tune indicators of a distinctive type with a curved pointer having very wide arrow-head.
4. Six had steel damper pins, one had brass dampers.

All eight movements and cases also conformed to the details given at the start of these notes. I think the damper pins were iron rather than steel, and it seems probable that most L'Epée movements originally had brass dampers, – not a good idea as they wore out along the track of their contact with the cylinder pins as can clearly be seen on any survivors. Dr. Roesch also made the excellent point that the U-shaped click springs were a standard type for French clocks.

All these features except the tune indicator and the pin type of Geneva stop are found on L'Epée serial no. 26925 with 16¼ in. cylinder and 74 tooth comb playing twelve tunes. It still has a few brass dampers (with iron pins) but of course they may not be the originals. They are from 0.013" to 0.015" wide. The tune spacing is 0.018", compared with the general Swiss standard of 0.017" which explains why there are only 74 teeth for a 16¼ in. 12-air cylinder. For these L'Epée movements the comb teeth formula has accordingly to be altered from 60 times to 56 times the cylinder length in inches divided by the number of tunes.

The twelve tunes on L'Epée 26925 are a good selection of mainly operatic airs but the arrangements are rather pedestrian and some have stereotyped **finale** or make-length chords at their ends. All have excellent bass support, helped by good sound radiation from the 12½ in. by 7½ in. case whose sound board has a periphery of 60 in. Rigid fixing of bedplate directly to soundboard probably also helps. Ardit's **Il Bacio** is very well done though it suggest rather a heavyweight kiss. **Wiener**

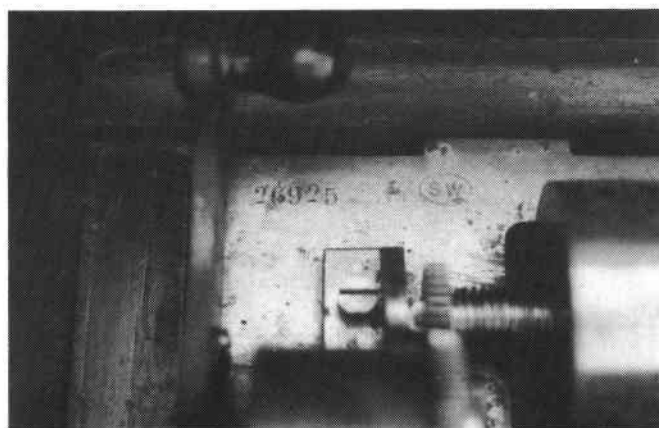


Fig. 4. The S. Woog trade-mark stamped on bedplate of L'Epée serial number 26925.

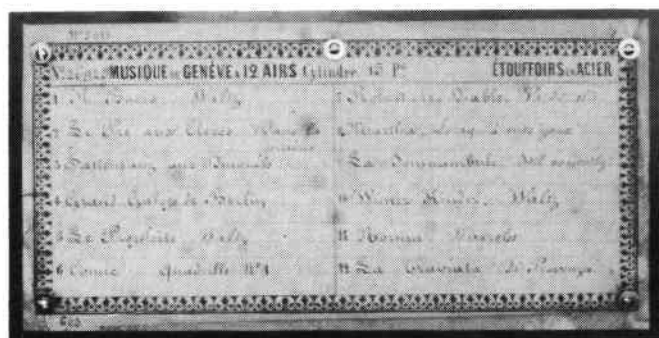


Fig. 5. Plain tune sheet, 8 by 4 inches, for L'Epée 26925.

Kinder is by Joseph Strauss, opus 61, 1858.

All the L'Epée features (again excepting the tune indicator and Geneva pin but still with most of the iron damper pins) are also to be found on serial 40804, 9¼ in. cylinder playing six tunes with seven bells. The 73-tooth music comb and 7-tooth bell comb occupy about 8¼ in. of the cylinder which has wider than usual margins. The bedplate has no legs but a small semi-circular extension each end to take a screw into a wood block in the case, which is extremely ornate with extensive marquetry and brass stringing on the front, sides and domed lid and was undoubtedly made by L'Epée. This no. 40804 has a green Thibouville-Lamy tune sheet.

Several L'Epée movements have been found with **NICOLE FRERES** stamped on the bedplate. At one time this was thought to have been a fraud, cashing in on a well-known name; but it now seems far more likely that they were supplied by L'Epée to Nicole, probably to alleviate a temporary shortage. They have not (so far) been widely enough reported to confirm this or to sort out the origin of their serial numbers, though these are almost certain to be L'Epée's, those seen including 10349, 16295 and 17101, all lever wound.

Amazing

Three small single-tune musical boxes, with movements and cases manufactured by convicts in Dartmoor prison, were featured in the film **Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Code** (USA title **Dressed to Kill**). This was one of the later Rathbone/Bruce films directed by R. W. Neill for Universal in 1946. Its story was not from Conan Doyle, though it included a comic version of the bogus fire-alarm incident in **A Scandal in Bohemia**. The plot depended on different wrong notes in the same tune on the three musical boxes adding up to a clue which would locate a criminal's loot. Holmes got there first, of course, but one had to admire the Dartmoor tune arrangers. ■

The Passing of Winter

by Arthur W. G. J. Ord-Hume

They buried Freddie Winter at the end of March. And his funeral procession was preceded by the Havenstreet Queen – his magnificently-restored traction engine.

Fred Winter was one of those characters of the Isle of Wight. Not that he was old by any means – he was just 66 years old. But he was surely one of the nicest chaps you could wish to meet. Born in Havenstreet, apprenticed to a garage in near-by Wooton and in charge of his own business in a converted blacksmith's forge since demob from the RAF in 1947, Fred was known from one end of the Isle of Wight to the other and every year it was his traction engine which took part in the annual carnivals and raised money for charity.

My involvement with him began unexpectedly during the late afternoon of July 13th 1962. About 5.30pm to be strictly precise.

You see, at that time my place of work was in Newport, main town of the Island, where I shared an attic office with a secretary, three wooden filing cabinets and a two-legged table whose other end was of necessity screwed to the window sill. On a clear day, you could just about see out of the window, but a lot of the time it was better to work hard, finish early, and head off out into the fresh air and thence home.

The day in question was very hot and, being high summer, the Island's narrow roads were a-swim with holidaymakers in the cars, coaches, summer-service buses and a welter of other generally slow-moving traffic. This did not worry me because I knew the back roads, the lanes and the off-the-beaten track ways.

And so it was that I came to be driving down a particularly narrow and very quiet lane towards the tiny village of Havenstreet. Havenstreet is virtually one road on a hillside with a cluster of houses, a pub and a general stores in amidst the open country. Being short of petrol and knowing there was a garage half way up the hill, I decided to stop. And that's how I met Fred Winter.

Garage proprietor, ace mechanic, local sage and traction-engine enthusiast, Fred had apparently seen me only the previous week taking part in an antiques programme on local television and discussing musical boxes. At once we began chatting enthusiastically about musical boxes. No, he didn't collect them, but he appreciated them. His love was steam and traction engines in particular (later he was to be a staunch supporter of the local steam railway as well). Anyway, he said, if I was interested in musical boxes, he'd got one he didn't want.

He led me across the road to the main building and there, standing at the back of the almost bare room, was a 19½-inch Polyphon complete with pediment and a stack of not-too-rusty discs. "Took it in

settlement of a bad debt," he confided. "Didn't really want it but it was all the chap had to offer."

The polyphon responded eagerly to a penny and played a disc. "How much do you want for it?" I asked, aware that the going price for a Poly this size was between £10 and £20 and that I had exactly £13 on me with which to buy petrol and, presumably, the music box.

"Stands me in £15," he replied, "but I'd be glad to get shot of the thing."

I offered £12.10/- (£12.50p in today's money) and he at once accepted. After he'd put four gallons of petrol in the car, I paid him the £13 and he handed over the few coppers change. Together we put the Polyphon into the front seat having removed the seat and wedged that into the boot.

That Polyphon was a beauty as regards the case. It was magnificent. However, the combs were very badly worn. The discovery of a similar Polyphon on the Council rubbish tip at Sandown a few weeks later afforded an elegant solution since that one had a bad case but a perfect, well-oiled and greased movement. In a short while the movements were changed around and the residue made into a perfect machine which I sold to a local antique dealer named Spearing who lived in a big but isolated house on the Wooton road out of Newport. He gave me £8.

The Polyphon took up position behind the front door in the hallway of my Island home near Sandown and, to my surprise, everybody who came to the door would put money into it. Once a quarter, I'd empty it and usually there was a good couple of pounds in it to be bagged up and used for buying newspapers or bus fares. The old case gleamed and the marriage with the fine once-discarded musical movement made an excellent pair.

And some years later, that worn-out movement and its patched-up case which I sold to Mr Spearing (who always wore white cotton gloves when handling antiques) turned up in a London saleroom and made some staggering figure. C'est la vie!

Freddie Winter remained a good if but occasional friend for when I moved from the Island, our chances to meet were few indeed. He later bought a replica fairground organ and used that, too, in his tireless support of charities.

His Polyphon, or rather most of it, still lives with me, now an incomparable specimen of that fine breed of Leipzig disc machines. Its actual cost, after all the dealing, was £5.10/- (£5.50) but, of course, that was a long time back.

And so, as Fred Winter was buried in the little churchyard off Havenstreet's main street, the Havenstreet Queen paid its traditional showman's last respect to its old owner – three long farewell blasts on her whistle. ■

Letters to the Editor



Geoff Alford's letter on page 236 of the last edition of the Music Box has prompted comment from Brian Oram. Although I feel that Geoff Alford was probably referring to F.O.P.S., Brian Oram, Hon. Sec. of the Mechanical Organ Owners' Society has assumed the reference was to his Society and has answered as follows.

I refer to Geoff Alford's letter in Vol. 12 No. 6 page 236 in which he makes certain remarks about organ festivals but there are historical reasons why this should be.

Firstly, and probably the most important, is that for very many decades the Statutory Authorities have considered busking using the medium of music to be an illegal practice. This is generally categorised as giving 'alms to the poor,' but the fact is that many Councils ban the use of music in a Public Place, and although we hear many pedestrians with wireless sets making a noise which some would call 'a God Almighty din' can and, on occasions, does put such people before the local Magistrates.

Many Councils have banned the use of music which can be heard on a public highway (this term is a little vague as footpaths are also included) and therefore there are people in this country who could be fined for using their television set within their own homes, if it could be heard outside.

Before the 'greater Councils' came into being many authorities allowed busking by licence, as in London, but since the individual Acts of Parliament came into being by the new Councils many have written a specific ban into their Acts. One such Council, Wycombe District Council, with which M.O.O.S. was actively engaged, was persuaded not to include this Clause in their new Constitution. Unfortunately in London it is the Police who now decide whether music can be played in Public and because this Body is against anything which might cause additional problems, the normal course of action is to ban the use of music in public. This has happened to me on numerous occasions where I used often to become involved in small street carnivals. The Police accept music at such events as the London Marathon and in certain confined areas such as parks.

Secondly, the resurrection of the mechanical organ in this Country came about by the sale of traction engines to private individuals (in which incidentally, I was heavily involved in effectively negotiating the Order in Council of 1916 on boiler inspection), and later the purchasing of fair organs from Showmen who quite frankly have little wish to cart a large and cumbersome music making machine which often has far more tantrums than Theodora of Byzantium, wife of Justinian, and were thankful to offload a useless piece of equipment which took up a great deal of space and, more often than not, was fanatical in its insistence on being permanently out of tune and its action stuck up with verdigris. The Showmen in those days thought themselves lucky to find some fool who would part with £100, who would not only cart it away at his own expense but lavish a vast amount of care rebuilding the thing. Mechanical organs therefore became part of the Traction Engine Rally, and at which a great number not only of Traction Engines but also mechanical organs of all sizes, description, ability and country of origin could be seen throughout the Summer. Some have as many as sixty such instruments, of varying musical ability, on display and mostly playing for the edification of the Public at large. But the English are best described musically by the words of Sir Thomas

Beecham, who said: "The English do not understand music but they like the noise it makes," which in many people's view is still very true today. Handel also made similar comments.

Thus, far from having no mechanical music available for people to listen to there are something like eighty Traction Engine Rallies throughout the Country each year covered by the National Traction Engine Club's Rules and a great many more that are not, together with an array of events which generally are unpublicised for a variety of reasons.

It might also be worth a comment on the cost of running mechanical organs away from one's home. Agreed there are a great number of small very portable instruments and M.O.O.S. will be publishing a resumé of all those now being built and which can with ease be placed into the boot of a car. The larger instruments cannot be carried in such a manner, and due to the various Transport Acts it is not now possible to haul a load of say 10 tons with a Land Rover so more powerful and heavy equipment is required by Law. Such transport is extremely expensive to maintain, insure and licence before one starts to put it on the road and this is before the maintenance of the organ can be considered. It is therefore not unreasonable for such owners to require anything from £60 to £500 a day and more for the appearance of one of these larger instruments. For instance if I go to a two day event it means that I also have to take with me an ancient Showman's caravan which in itself is a piece of archaic equipment and justifies some financial acknowledgement by organisers. It also requires a day hauling there and another back besides perhaps two or three days ensuring that all is in order before I leave. Thus, for a two day appearance, I could well spend a week involved with my personal organisation, and those who have very large instruments have also to cover the costs of their assistants particularly if the organ is expected to play non-stop from 10 a.m. until well after midnight. Traction engine owners can and do leave their engines for long periods or park the machine alongside the beer tent which no organ owner is able to do unless he happens to be the only lucky individual.

I must now, sir, comment upon your remarks about M.O.O.S.

This Society was formed some years ago and after about three or four years I resigned from another mechanical organ society. I was at one time a Vice President of that other Society with the particular job of looking into all matters which related to the organ owners, because at that time the owners objected strongly to the manner in which that Society placed its emphasis upon those with tape recorders and cameras, all perfectly in order so long as the emphasis of the Society was towards the owners. I was unable to be at an A.G.M. when the general Membership decided to scrap the owners' section and the owners, being much in the minority, were powerless to support their own claims. It should be stated that some years previous to this decision a powerful lobby of organ owners forced the starting of an owners' section at an A.G.M. at Leicester.

Because of what we considered to be unfair treatment, some owners decided to form a small Society dedicated to the power of the owners so that the Voting Rights in any decisions are made only by the organ owners of M.O.O.S., although we take note of those other than owners who put forward what we consider to be proper propositions.

Because of M.O.O.S.' insistence that the owners are the most important Members, a number of categories of Membership have evolved and all by various means allow up to three times the membership of actual owners, but due to other matters this figure will never be reached. M.O.O.S. has therefore made it its business to ensure that its Members are

properly informed about Copyright, road transport and a considerable amount of space in our "organ," which is published four times a year, technical matters which can and do beset the owner when he is away from home. Thus for a long time we have had an article on simple cooking.

I am informed, but I have not been approached as Secretary, that the other society wishes for an amalgamation but until the other Society amends its views to make the owners all-important, this cannot be considered by M.O.O.S.

M.O.O.S. Membership is composed of a great variety of people, many of whom are professionally involved, and although the balance of Membership at the moment is towards the private individual this has not been so in the past, when the Professionals outnumbered the Amateurs.

Before I close, it is the Law that anyone who wishes to play a musical instrument in Public, whether on private or public land, shall be in possession of a Copyright Licence, and before long M.O.O.S. will again be involved with the proposals for the new Copyright Act, in which the Society was heavily involved with the Green Paper of 1981.

Thank you Brian for your interesting and pertinent points. Your view does not appear to support Geoff's in his comment that some councils are taking a more enlightened view concerning the use of mechanical music in town-centres. I personally have witnessed this transition as many councils are now becoming aware of the benefits of tourism. For instance, Leamington Spa, a town which has seen and reaped the benefits of tourism in recent years, is actually contributing to the costs of Napton Nickelodeon's Organ Grind on 30th August. They believe that the publicity from this event will bring more people to shop in Leamington to the benefit of the local traders. Again at Christmas, Leamington Spa Chamber of Commerce actually pay buskers (and myself as the towns official organ grinder), to liven up the streets for late night shopping.

When one is contemplating arranging a town centre organ grind, the first approach should be to the Marketing or Tourism officer. With him on your side other departments or the Police will rarely raise any objections.

Your comment on the extortionate costs of transporting large instruments, again councils wishing to encourage these activities will often contribute towards these costs. But Geoff Alfrod's letter to which Brian is replying was really referring to the much smaller instruments that will generally fit into the boot of a car, costing nothing extra in transport. These instruments are far more suited for town centre festivals due to the limited space they occupy on pavement sites, or under shop canopies in case of inclement weather.

Brian's final paragraph is particularly relevant to organ grinds arranged by the Society. Whilst Brian is correct in saying that anyone who plays a musical instrument in public needs a copyright licence, this may not be strictly the case in our situation. The regular rally enthusiasts can obtain a yearly licence from the Performing Right Society, 29-33, Berners Street, London W1P 4AA for the sum of £9.00. This will entitle the holder to play copyright music on his instruments publicly and as often as he wishes, but permission to do this will still be needed from the Rally Organisers, landowner or local council. Local councils may not be so co-operative if the collection is for personal gain, but in the case of our Society grinds, money is being collected for a specific charity. With Society events there is no need for each individual organiser to obtain a P.R.S. licence as it is the organiser's responsibility to notify the Performing Right Society of the event, and providing that the money is collected for a charity dedicated to the "relief of human suffering," a free licence can be applied for and no royalty would be levied. Ed.

Mr. Brian Robertson writes from Buckinghamshire:- I would respectfully first like to introduce myself as a non-member of the MBS who over the past 10 years has been fortunate enough to have gained friends who are themselves members of the Society.

Due to a continuing health problem I had to retire from my job two years ago at the relatively early age of 50 and now have to content myself with a rather restricted range of activities which needless to say include a very modest though keen interest in mechanical organs.

I am pleased to say that about 4 or 5 years ago I acquired a small (20 key no less) pipe organ which had been very skillfully constructed for me by one of my MBS friends and which I still at that time regarded as 'magical' in every respect. The member in question would I know be very embarrassed if I named him, so suffice to say that I have named the organ a 'BALCHINI' which I hope establishes credit as is appropriate, for the sake of posterity.

During my ownership I have decorated the organ and added a number of moving figures which I hoped would enhance the device, however my wife who has been good enough to let me keep it in our lounge is beginning to say that she thinks I may have gone too far and regularly mutters 'when will it stop?'.

I think the 'last straw' could well be my slightly acrobatic monkey and his mates, one being decked out in red white and blue; another eating peanuts and yet another beating the second over the head for his troubles.

Such activities, on my part, may well sound juvenile but give me immense pleasure and satisfaction during construction and of course if ever completed and working.

Not wishing to push my luck too far with my ever-patient wife I have sensibly decided to forget my idea for a descending archangel blowing a real bugle (you think I am joking I know) and remove the bunting after the Royal Wedding, a concession that has been long, painfully and I am pleased to report successfully negotiated. Not I would add without concessions on my part, one I am sorry to say being the re-decoration of our kitchen although like the best pay settlements this will be allowed to be 'phased' over a suitable period to fit in with other commitments and available effort.

About 3 years ago I was fortunate enough to be able to accept an invitation to go to stay with friends in Frankfurt for a few days and whilst there was hoping to be able to realize a long cherished ambition which was to visit Mr. Raffin at Überlingen, see his range of organs and perhaps acquire a second roll of "musik" for my Balchini as after about a year it was difficult for everyone to feel really enthusiastic about the single roll acquired with the organ and as a consequence, played incessantly.

Needless to say as a surprise one day my friends drove me from Stuttgart where we also stayed for a few days, to Überlingen in about 2 hours or so it seemed (the next best thing to flying believe me) where we visited Mr. Raffin, The Bodensee and churches etc. (in reverse order) and still "flew" home in time for tea!

Although feeling somewhat shell-shocked the visit to Mr. Raffin's establishment was quite fantastic even though he had no idea that we were coming and did not know us. He showed us around the factory, gave us refreshments and a sample tape of "20 key" organ music to each of the three of us.

The visit was not easy for any of us (we were there for three hours) as apart from not speaking a word of German and being partially deaf I also have a speech impediment which causes me to converse in a faint whisper only, not easy whilst organs are playing! Anyway you can perhaps picture the

scene. My friends drinking Cognac ready for the 'flight' home. Mr. Raffin and one of his beautiful daughters doing their very best to help me select rolls of music. Myself becoming very exhausted (part of my trouble under such circumstances). Mr. Raffin's staff waiting to go home for their tea. The daylight fading fast (I'm not too keen on night flights!).

Not really ideal circumstances in which to attempt to try to select music which I might like from approximately 50 German titles or so. The cost of rolls certainly precludes taking too much of a chance and to most non-Germans most of the titles mean little although just a few are identifiable.

Has anyone, perhaps Mr. Raffin, thought of taping the lot? A formidable task I know, but potential customers could pay a deposit to borrow the tape!

Better still, how about some real English Rolls like Cruising Down The River, one I've always thought should sound good.

Anyway, suffice to say that we left long after the factory had closed with Mr. Raffin and his daughter waving us goodbye and myself gleefully clutching three new rolls of music of the Mylar I think it is called, almost indestructible material.

One of these, namely roll No. 5 is still my firm favourite although the tune titles eg. Unter dem Doppeladler and Schneewalzer mean nothing to me until I can hear the fairground type music actually playing.

In conclusion I would like if possible through your journal to wish Mr. 'Balchini' who is not enjoying the best of health at the moment, a speedy recovery back to good health again.

ARTHUR W J G ORD-HUME writes from London:- Sincere congratulations on a very fine first issue of the new MUSIC BOX. I received this with high expectations. My expectations were surpassed. You have made a first-rate job of it and clearly demonstrated the initiation of a new and positive plan to put THE MUSIC BOX back where it belongs - as the best society journal in the whole of the mechanical musical instrument collectors' world.

Keep up the good work.

HARVEY ROEHL writes from New York, USA:- Today the MUSIC BOX arrived. and I thoroughly enjoyed reading an Englishman's impression of the MBSI Convention in California last year!

There's one minor item for which you might wish to make a note. While everyone, and particular Ralph and Gloria Schack, worked very hard putting this entire affair together, the 'Organising Committee' was not headed by them, but by Richard Rigg. Ralph was responsible for putting together the tours, and Gloria was responsible for registration matters.

Dick Rigg, an MBSI Trustee, worked very hard for two years on the overall organisational aspects of this. His, and the efforts of his committee, were certainly productive in the extreme! As for actual attendance, it was very close to the 600 mark.

My apologies to Dick Rigg, whom unfortunately I did not meet. Obviously he was kept busy behind the scenes. Ed.

H. STRENGERS writes from Netherlands:- My congratulations with your first "Music Box"!

In Volume 12, Number 5, Spring 1986, page 172, there is a fine story about Lord Baden-Powell - now in automata form. The automaton, plays his favourite tune "Sarie Marais" (and not "O Sari Marès," as mentioned in the article). It is a song, dating from the great Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). The composer and the author of the text are unknown. Nowadays you can hear this song occasionally played by a street organ in the Netherlands. As a schoolboy I have learned this song by heart. It was one of my favourites too. Perhaps you will copy this song in the "Music Box." It is an arrangement for guitar. A translation of the first verse follows:

My Sarie Marais is so far from my heart,
but I hope to see her again.
She has lived in the neighbourhood of the Mooi-River,
but that was before the war started.
Oh, bring me back to the old Transvaal,
it is there, where my Sarie lives.

and to sing

My Sarie Marais is zo ver van my hart, Maar ik
hoop haar weer te sien. Sy het in die wijk van die
Mooi-rivier gewoon. Nog voor die oorlog het be-
gin. O, bring mij terug na die
ou Transvaal, Daar waar my Sarie woon, Daar

J RONALD BOPP, President, Musical Box Society International writes from Joplin, USA:- I received the copy of The Music Box and was very pleasantly surprised at the quality and number of good articles. It is a pleasure to have good things in print about our mutual hobby and I know that if this is a sample of what you are planning to do that your editorship will be a success.

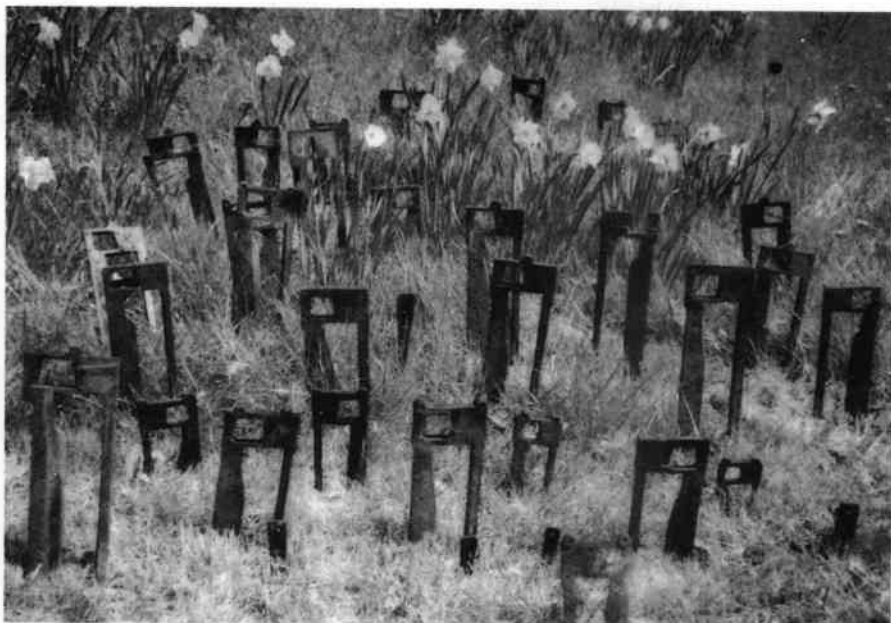
We are looking forward to a super meeting in Cleveland, Ohio at the end of this month when we will have the opening of our second museum. There are many mighty fine collections in Cleveland and this always makes for an enjoyable meeting. Hope to see you this late summer in Sarasota. Mary Jo and I have put together a very unusual and I think, good audio-visual programme for the after dinner entertainment Saturday evening, which will probably be worth the pounds it costs to come over here.

ANGELO RULLI, Editor of MBSI Technical Journal, writes from Minnesota:- Sometimes procrastination has some advantage. In this instance it offers me the opportunity to congratulate you on two outstanding issues of The Music Box. I knew that your talent and enthusiasm would make a difference in the publication; however, you have exceeded any expectations I might have had.

I wish you continued success and thank you for your efforts. I look forward to future issues and know that the magazine will add much lustre and incentive in widening the scope of our wonderful hobby.

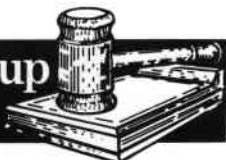
G PLANUS writes from South Salem:- The editor. (May the Lord have mercy upon him) etc. You must be bored wiv all them bleedin' compliments, so I'll just say "Jolly good show, Ole Chap" an' get on to other matters.

Enclosed is a photo of a Music Box graveyard I have established. Perhaps one could be established in the UK? If any member is interested I can Franchise the idea.



"Rust in Pieces", G. Planus. 1st May 1986 N.Y. See letter above.

Coming up Soon



The 5th June sale at Christie's South Kensington was dominated, in terms of lots, by the gramophone section, but the sixty-three lots of pneumatic and stringed mechanical instruments and musical boxes contained several very noteworthy items.

Pride of place goes to the 1836 Davrainville clockwork barrel organ (featured in the Christie's South Kensington advertisement in the last issue of *Music Box*), a table instrument with five 12-inch barrels which realised £8,000. An Imhof & Mukle barrel organ, with nine 28-inch barrels, brought £1,000 less, which shows that small is beautiful. A rare 20% in. coin-slot self changing Regina reached

£6,500, and a much less rare 24% in. Polyphon with disc-bin made £6,000, which perhaps shows that familiarity does not always breed contempt.

Turning to the next sale on 18th September, early entries include an Erhlich's Patent Orpheus mechanical zither (a miniature grand piano that works from 13 in. Ariston-type discs) and a Symphonion longcase clock 13% in. Sublime Harmony movement. There is a 19% in. upright Polyphon – isn't there always, but this one has a clock in its pediment. Cylinder boxes include two P.V.F. Mandoline Expressive models, one in good condition and one for an expert tip-replacer, as well as a splendid Baker-Troll drum, castanet and bell box. There is also a bocage automaton with rocking ship and clock in the gilt base, while pianos include a Weber Duo-Art Grand and a satinwood Pianola push-up.

Reviews: by Ian Alderman

"Good Old-Fashioned Player Piano Music." Vol. 1. Tape Cassette No. MRR 1003A. Available from Marion Roehl Recordings, PO Box 97. Vestal NY 13850 USA.

The Kohler and Campbell Autopiano of 1923 is no concert grand. Anyone expecting Carnegie Hall should forget it. If you want the Western Saloon, however, buy this tape. I should mention in passing, that at one point the recording level is not constant, but you may not notice this, and I got into a muddle trying to match the tunes I heard to the printed list, but you may unscramble what I could not. All this is insignificant when set against the music recorded. The pianists I will list: J. Lawrence Cook, Harry Shipman, Ben Coots, Bud Earl, Burt Franklin, Herb Willett, Max Kortlander, Jonathan Jensen and Osborne Howe making their rattling duet of "Under the Double Eagle" sound like four pianos, not one. It is all most enjoyable from "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider" to "Darktown Strutters Ball." This is a good-tempered tape and I enjoyed it vastly. So will you. I would have liked to tell you how much it costs, but I can't.

Cassettes are available direct from Vestal Press price \$9-98 or in England from Leslie Brown. Ed.

"Brass Whistle Ballyhoo": the Tangle Calliophone. Vol. 1. Tape Cassette No. MRR 1001A 61593. Marketed by Marion Roehl Recordings, PO Box 97, Vestal, NY 13850, USA.

Calliopes, as everyone knows, used to ride the Mississippi riverboats last century. They had brass whistles, and like locomotives were sounded by high pressure steam, which enabled them to be heard for miles. Happily the instrument on this tape dates from 1930 and runs rather tamely on compressed air. It once played in the circus of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey. The picture with the recording shows it outside under a flowering cherry, looking for all the world like a picnic table laden with bottles. Presiding at the small keyboard is a genial figure in a summer hat, but whether he is responsible for the music or not, I cannot say.

I put on the tape rather timidly, for brass whistles at high pressure sounded a bit daunting, but I can report that the sound of 11 1/4 p.s.i. (and its generator) pulsing through 43 whistles is surprisingly sweet and persuasive, at least for a time. The music continued with unremitting cheerfulness and such remorseless vitality that I think the instrument may well be operated not by the keyboard, but by the paper rolls it also plays. Whatever the method, the music played on. Pop tunes all compressed into 43 notes and one rank; a sweet fortissimo. On the tape went, on and on. Perhaps the best music are the reams of marches – Sousa, Fučić – everybody is there, pounding on. I don't know how much the tape costs, but you must get value for money. It goes on and on. It's something different, and perhaps you should give it a try. But it does go on. ■

NEW MEMBERS

The Committee welcomes the following:

- 2017 S. Linder
Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2018 S. Fisher
West Midlands
- 2019 K. Lehman
Escondido, California, USA
- 2020 T. Callow
Lincolnshire
- 2021 S. P. Greatrex
Middlesex
- 2022 F. J. Cook
Devon
- 2023 R. H. Gillingham
Surrey
- 2024 N. Griffin
Lancashire
- 2025 R. H. Haiselden
Surrey
- 2026 D. R. Lowde
Devon
- 2027 N. G. Rafferty
London
- 2028 J. G. Van Der Neut
Holland
- 2029 G. B. Toth
Scharmbeck, W. Germany

- 2030 Miss. K. Taylor
London
- 2031 Mr. & Mrs. F. Nix
California, USA
- 2032 J. McGlynn
Lancashire
- 2033 R. Siebert
Lancashire
- 2034 J. Woodhouse
Lancashire
- 2035 T. Longhurst
Surrey
- 2036 B. F. Walker III
Maryland, USA

Change of Address

- 0044 Dr. J. W. Fritz, Delaware, USA
- 0071 R. A. F. Benton, Isle of Wight
- 0652 Mrs. D. Kelley, Florida, USA
- 0737 J. E. Conway, Birmingham
- 1158 E. C. M. Hollingworth, London
- 1602 F. Robinson, Derbyshire
- 1718 Mrs. A. M. Biden, Hampshire
- 1977 R. Slater, Australia

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LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE:- 7th OCTOBER 1986.

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Tel: 0706 224617.

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Tel: Bourne (0778) 425178 Evenings.

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Tel: Blackpool (0253) 63996.

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WANTED

Advertising and display material, also postcards. G. Whitehead, Editor.

Violano Virtuoso Roll frame in any condition provided more or less complete and suitable for copying. Keith Bonner, 150 High Street, Harseahead, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 4JX.

9 1/2" Polyphon Discs (one or more). M. S. Calvert, Calverts Hotel, Newport, Isle of Wight. 0983 525281.

M.B.S.G.B. member would like to acquire **Street Piano** in good order: also a street barrel organ, playing or restorable. (Heywood, Lancs.) 0706 66021.

Discs Wanted: Thorens 8". Symphonion 7". Kalliope 17". Tel: 0706 224617.

EXCHANGE

I wish to exchange postcards on mechanical music; street organs, phonographs etc., with readers of the Music Box. Claude Marchal, CH 1451, Bullet, Switzerland.

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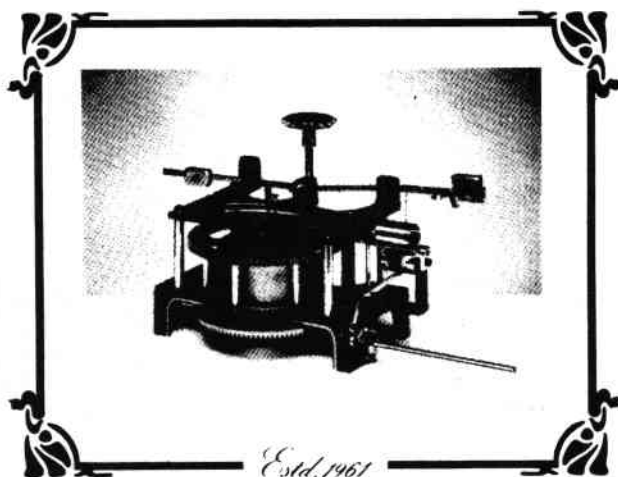
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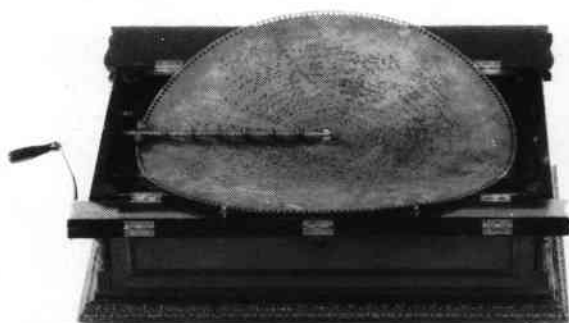
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LONDON

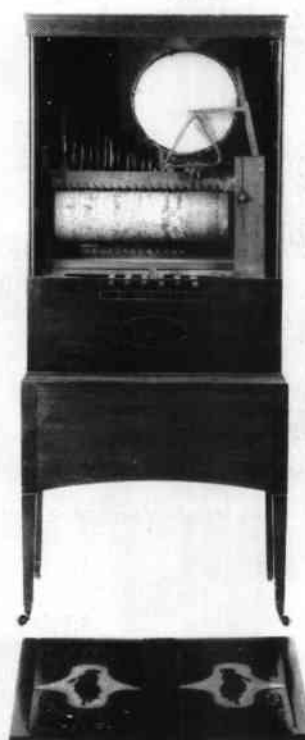
TUESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER AT 2.30 PM



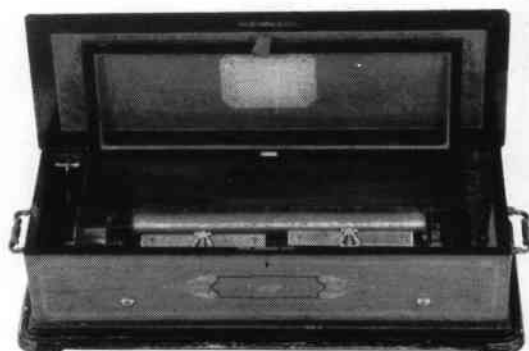
A 27 inch Regina Sublima disc musical box.
American, c. 1900, 84cm. wide. Estimate £2,500-3,500.



An Ariston Organette, German,
late 19th century, 35cm. wide.
Estimate £400-600.



A John Longman 20-key
chamber barrel organ, English,
early 19th century, 158cm. high.
Estimate £1,200-1,800.



A Nicole Freres grand format cylinder
musical box, Swiss, c. 1880, 97cm. wide.
Estimate £4,000-6,000.



A Grenier & Bremond 'Hidden Bells
and Two-per-Turn' cylinder musical box.
Swiss, c. 1870, 71cm. wide.
Estimate £1,800-2,500.

For further information on this sale, and requests for lavishly illustrated
catalogue please contact Jon Baddeley.

Shelagh Berryman

MUSIC BOXES

- * Fully restored Mills Violano Virtusoso in mahogany case.
- * Symphonion Eroica. Coin operated.
- * Lochmann 100 Disc piano Orchestrion in Art Nouveau style. Light oak case.
- * 19 5/8" Polyphon on disc bin, complete with 15 discs.
- * Hopefully always in stock! A good range of Disc Boxes, Cylinder Boxes, Phonographs, Organettes etc.

