

# The Music Box

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 15 Number 4

Winter 1991

Edited by Graham Whitehead

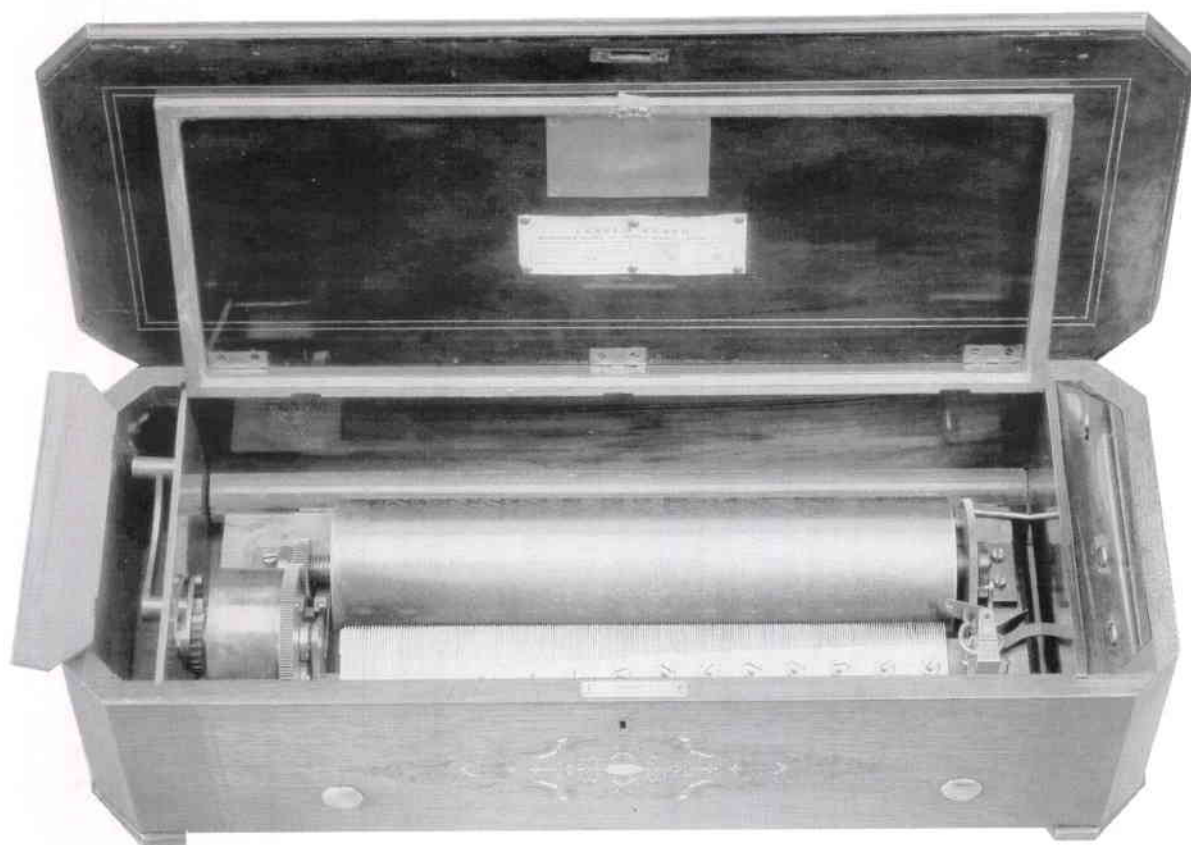


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# The Music Box

An International Magazine  
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the  
Musical Box Society  
of Great Britain.

Volume 15  
Number 4  
Winter 1991

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*The Editor and the Committee  
of the Musical Box Society of  
Great Britain wish all its  
members a Happy Christmas  
and a Melodious New Year.*

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### Front Cover:

From an old French Christmas postcard.

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## Editor's Notes

### Meeting Venues

How fondly I remember those meetings in the Halcyon days of the Society. The days when we could afford the luxury London venues such as the Kensington Close Hotel. Those were the days when around 100 members would always turn up to a meeting. Meetings with an air of excitement from beginning to end. It was not just the quality of the lectures, but also the enthusiastic chatter in the ante-rooms at the back and side, that never left enough time to take in everything. Linger out the back and one would miss the demonstrations which always seemed to be on something new. Take a seat in the meeting and you would miss the gossip of the day from the many dealers and restorers who would never dare to miss a London meeting. Arthur Lewis, Keith Harding, Brian Clegg, Norman Vince, Jim Colley, Jack Donovan, David Secret, the late Frank Holland, in those days I didn't know everyone, else the list of prominent people would go on. There were other regulars who never seemed to miss meetings, Dr Peter Whitehead, John Harold, David Walsh and our President at the time Arthur Ord-Hume, not forgetting Jon Gresham our past President, then a little known backbencher. There were of course many others including Alex Duman always full of wild enthusiasm and unlimited generosity towards the Society. The "sense of occasion" on those memorable meetings was augmented by the presence of the American contingent, led by our former Vice-President the late Hughes Rider - truly an international meeting.

In those days of the early 70's the country's economic growth created more demand for hotel venues. Hire charges increased beyond what the Society could afford. A cheaper and smaller location had to be found and so Fleet Street's Press Club did us proud until its closure. Since then the Society meetings have been held in such unlikely places as a Police Station and a Cricket

Ground. As nice as The Oval is, gone is the glamour of the London Meetings and with it the absence of many once prominent and enthusiastic members. Today we have to be satisfied with the "thread-bare" carpets of the Tuke common room in London's Regent College. Today we are lucky if forty members attend a London Meeting.

Today there is a small consensus of opinion that everything should be done at minimal costs to the Society members. There is nothing wrong with that philosophy if you remember that you only get what you pay for. However, the Society should consider all its members and a cheap meeting should be balanced with a quality meeting. There is no obligation by the Society to ensure that the cost of ALL meetings can be afforded by ALL members and I make no apology for the fact that the Autumn meeting was designed to bring back the content, the enthusiasm, the excitement and some of the faces that have disappeared from our average meetings.

Even after the adverse criticism by one member, prejudging the Autumn meeting at our AGM, we still attained 90 registrations for the Autumn meeting including 14 Americans. Before the advent of the Gulf crisis there were to be 26 more and my efforts and policy was rewarded by the reappearance of several faces that had not been seen at a Society meeting for a long time. John Hammond, Keith Harding and Brian Clegg for instance.

Two small apologies however on my part:- I was so busy at the meeting I neglected to inform staff at Ashorne Hall that afternoon coffee was to be paid for by the Society. For the benefit of organisers of future three day events a registration fee based on "per day of attendance" I now think would be fairer.

At the end of the meeting I invited written comment of the "value for money" of that long-weekend. As a result, not one letter of complaint was received.

A short note from Mr Les Sidaway perhaps sums up that meeting - *"May I take this opportunity to say how much Patricia and myself enjoyed the weekend at Warwick. Without a doubt one of the best weekends ever with the Musical Box Society. A packed programme which was all SUPERB with VERY reasonable overall cost."* ■

## SOCIETY TOPICS

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Christmas Meeting,  
Saturday 7th December,  
1991.**

**Tuke Common Room,  
Regent's College,  
Inner Circle,  
Regent's Park,  
London NW1 4NS.**

A very exciting programme which no one will want to miss - speakers include Clive Jones, about his new disc copying service, Richard Cole, on Aeolian organ pipes, John Powell and Ted Bowman on musical temperament, and Alan Godier on tuning a musical box comb. Members wishing to receive details of scheduling of the talks, catering services, or any other aspect of the meeting, should contact Alison Biden, the Meetings Secretary, on 0962 861350. The registration fee for this meeting will be £7.50 per person.

**Spring Meeting,  
Weekend  
10th -12th April, 1992,  
at The Park Hotel,  
Park Place,  
Cardiff CF1 3UD.  
Tel: 0222 383471.**

Weekend package £90.00 per person for dinner, bed and breakfast for 2 nights, including Society Dinner on Saturday evening. Activities will include a programme of speakers, a museum visit and an invitation to the local organiser, David Shankland's collection of automata. At time of going to press, David Shankland and David Snelling have agreed to each give a talk. This programme is provisional and incomplete at time of going to press. Further details from the Meetings Secretary, Alison Biden, on 0926 861350. Please avail yourselves of the booking form in this issue of the Music Box.

## REPORT ON PAST MEETINGS

by Reg Mayes

**Spring Meeting,  
Post House Hotel, Nottingham,  
20-21 April 1991.**

The meeting on Saturday commenced with a most informative talk and demonstration by our local meetings organiser for this weekend, Nicholas Simons, entitled 'The Organette, its Music and Mechanism'. Nicholas brought along 8 organettes, each using differing methods of 'programming' the music. The English Draper Orchestral with 14 notes using a 7/4 inch wide card. The German Intona, 16 keys a disc. The German Kalliston, a most rare and interesting organette using a zinc strip to play 24 reeds and 4 bells. These were only a few of the fine instruments Nicholas demonstrated and described in detail to a spell-bound audience.

Between speakers Lyn Wright demonstrated the toy flute organ made from the kit as advertised in the Society Journal. An amazing instrument whose designer won the first prize in a B.B.C. competition.

The second speaker, our President Alan Wyatt, gave an illustrated talk entitled 'A case for treatment, the restoration of a barrel piano'. Slides projected showed a most distressed instrument when found and when dismantled many major problems had to be cured not least the complete separation of all the Key Frame components. The technique used to free the old animal glue as used by the original maker, Pasquale & Co., was to inject methylated spirits into the joints to dissolve the glue. This enabled the Key Frame to be repaired and re-assembled without damage. New wrest pins and stringing of the barrel piano was followed by complete restoration of the case work. This small 33 note instrument fitted neatly into Alan's car so he could bring it to the meeting and play all ten tunes to demonstrate this magical transformation of what appeared to be a total wreck.

During the day, for the first time, the ladies organised a very successful Craft Fair. It provided an opportunity to display the skills of these ladies who brought along splendid examples of their crafts to sell and generously gave 10% of takings to the Society.

During the afternoon Members took a coach trip to visit the 'Crich Tramway Museum' where an enjoyable afternoon was spent viewing the displays and workshops and taking rides on the trams. An amusing incident at the cafe involved

Steve Ryder, a long established member, and friends from the USA. This involved a Scotch Egg which being totally unfamiliar to Steve, he photographed from all angles to show this English curiosity to his colleagues at home! (much to the amusement of the staff).

Following the Society Dinner Dorothy Robinson and Richard Booty showed videos of Organ Rallies both in this country and abroad.

Four local members entertained us at their homes during Sunday playing items from their collections, as diverse as miniature musical snuff boxes to player pianos and a superb home built orchestrion. We all found it very difficult to leave the fascinating collection of Roy and Margaret Shaw and could have spent a full day among this mountain of memorabilia but we had to make our departures from a most enjoyable meeting with many thanks to Nicholas Simons and helpers.

## French Society

Following our visit to Paris earlier this year, our President Alan Wyatt has kept in contact with Lorraine Aressy, President of an organisation called Perforons . . . la Musique! which presumably translates to Perforated Music, an association devoted to safeguarding the history of development and the repertoire of music played by mechanical means. The association was originally formed in 1901 and is located at 27 rue Labat de Savignac - F 31500 Toulouse, France. Their communication mentions that their publications are produced in the form of

loose sheets punched ready for inclusion into a binder. New members receive all the articles published since 1987.

## Autumn meeting

Due to space restriction in this issue, the Autumn meeting report will appear in the next issue. ■

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## Wanted

### Articles for publication in the "Music Box"

Let the membership as a whole benefit from the experience of individual members. Write a letter or send a complete "article". Photographs of unusual pieces are also required for "Members Showcase".

Address your correspondence to:

**Graham Whitehead,  
Broadgate Printing Co. Ltd.  
Crondal Road, Exhall,  
Coventry CV7 9HN.**



**Flashback to our last AGM:- Alan Wyatt right presents Past President Jon Gresham with a framed certificate awarding him the accolade of honorary life membership of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain.**

## Organ Grinders chat

by Geoff Alford



STEAM RALLIES grew up with mechanical organs as one of the two major attraction elements and provided a forum which encouraged organ ownership. Indeed many are still progressing to organs through an original interest in steam and petrol engines, vintage cars, tractors and even market stalls. A number of these have been able to become street organ owners at a much lesser cost than an arm and a leg for a genuine fair organ. Often their interest in the rally scene is continued through this new interest in place of their first enthusiasm. Bromyard Gala is in fact a week-long carnival and the actual steam rally takes place on the last weekend. At this time the carnival procession wends its way from the town to the rally site in rural Herefordshire countryside on the road to the county town. I gave up being a rallygoer some years ago for a variety of reasons, not least because the balance between the amount of work involved and the pleasure received became too uneven. However I like to support the Gala whenever possible as the main local rally as it has been very well run over many years under its Chairman John Wilkins. It is also regularly supported by some excellent organs. This year I was able to enjoy the unique 98 key Marengi 'Wonderland' fair organ because in the cool of the evening, long after the rest of us had finished our stint for the day, it gave a recital of march and operatic books from the several hundred books it has in its vast repertoire. This is a real fair organ if ever there was! Designed to drown all opposition with the power of its hundreds of pipes. Not a beautiful organ, except in appearance, but impressive to the point of being awesome. Sadly, a favourite Marengi owned by Teddy Reed, which makes Bromyard one of its few outings, was missing. Absent also were the 89 key Limonaire and 46 key Bruder organs of Brian Newth, another Gala regular for many years.

Herefordshire has always been lacking in fair organs within its borders, but now boasts a 65 key

Ruth purchased last year by Mr. Juson of Leominster. He informed me that he had received several offers to 'improve' his organ - perhaps an extra rank of pipes here or there and so on. There wouldn't appear to be much wrong with the organ so why it should need improving is hard to understand. It might sound better with different music, however, which is something entirely different, and I would really like to hear it playing an original book or two of Ruth music. All too often, unfortunately, owners think they can improve their organ (really they mean make it louder) by adding extra pipes. It's a bit like trying to fit a V8 engine into an Austin 7 to make it go faster.

Inevitably, I suppose, there was an increase in modern organs, but surely few can object when they are of the quality of George Houghton's 48 key Page and Howard which both looks and sounds like a fair organ as they used to be built in the factories of Paris. However, one organ in particular had an unpleasant piping sound emanating from the pipes behind its plastic adorned facade, and to make matters worse it was badly out of tune. My sympathies went out to the Chairman and his difficulty in saying 'No' to this kind of organ owner, who may live locally, and the almost impossible task of avoiding giving offence to someone who may be nearly tone deaf and convinced that his organ sounds beautiful.

Raymond Grimmett's column in the newspaper World's Fair provides lists of organs which may be seen at various events the following weekend. This is a useful service for organ enthusiasts but occasionally it highlights the fact that such lists, provided by organisers, are not always as accurate as they might be. For example, at least two organs shown as appearing at Bromyard were also listed as entrants elsewhere that weekend. In some cases the organ owner may have been naughty and applied to two or more locations - I do know from my experience with Llandrindod organ festival that a number of owners make multiple applications for one weekend. A major problem is the length of time that organisers take in replying to applications, and if full up you are lucky to get a reply at all. Having suffered from this myself I always ensure that applications are

answered reasonably promptly. But there is certainly room for rallies to tighten up their organisation so that organ owners know where they are and the public know what organs they can reasonably expect to see. After all most rallies run at a substantial surplus so they can afford the postage!

For me, one of the main attractions of Bromyard has always been the opportunity of seeing Bob Minney and listening to the organs he brings. Since being occupied full time in restoration these have tended to become more varied, though he is only able to attend on Sundays now. The fact that many look forward to seeing him as I do was proved by the number who approached me on Saturday to enquire where he was situated. This year the trusty VW van must have carried a record load. Apart from the marvellous 48 key Imhof, enjoyed by many at rallies for so many years, he had brought Norman Woodford's 34 key Molzer. This dates from about 1880 and I have only seen organs like it at Thun festival. It is so improved since I first saw it nearly a decade ago that I failed to recognise it. It plays much better, so giving better musical appreciation of its Viennese melodies, and the case has been restored to almost new appearance. It was at the 1989 Bromyard Gala that I first saw the only other Ferdinand Molzer and Sohn organ in Britain. Bob Minney hasn't had time to do much to the cabinet, which is not original and is hand-painted over the veneer. But the sound is much improved and the tunes now all play as tunes should, even if all have yet to be identified. But the piece de resistance for me was the first sight of the 34 key G. Chiappa trumpet barrel organ. This organ was built by Victor Chiappa's grandfather around 1890 and it is basically a 22 note organ with 12 trumpets, the latter being mainly packed between pairs of flutes. The base dimensions are probably little less than the Imhof, but it is much lower in height. It was surprising that, with so few pipes and the trumpets not being backed by flutes, the organ provided so full a sound. One is even more surprised upon peering under the lid that it plays at all as the almost black pipework have their ends badly eroded, as if chewed away by mice. Credit for the quality of the music must also go to the barrel by G. Varetto which was still in excellent condition and contained no less than nine well-arranged British marches and variety hall



tunes. It was my first introduction to the work of the Manchester firm and one can well appreciate that they were leading suppliers of pinned barrels in their day. Sadly this art has all but died out.

The Chiappa firm are today known for their fair organ work and the sudden appearance out of the blue of this barrel street organ raises a number of interesting question marks over early organ production of the Company. In those days it was normal for business owners to keep company records indefinitely and it may well be that this still applies in the case of Britain's leading mechanical organ builder. If so, they would provide a fascinating insight into organ production around the turn of the century, and also tell us something about the demand for and usage of street organs in Britain.

With the breaking down of the Iron Curtain, a process which started a few years ago, we have learned of the wealth of rare mechanical musical instruments still surviving in the communist bloc. Through the medium of radio and television they were made aware of the growing demand and value of such things and soon organs and orchestrons were filtering through to the west by various means. It is possible that the surfacing of an increasing number of organs built by the Viennese firm of Molzer can be partly explained in this way. Bob Minney's Molzer was purchased lacking its front, as is often the case, and he believes that this is having an effect on the sound quality. On Alan Pell's latest organ he has decided against having the lid opening to release more sound as he has found this affects the tuning. The situation is a little different on the Raffin trumpet organ. Here the trumpets are mounted along the rear with their mouths upward, in which situation the lid really has to be open. But many grinders rest their free hand on the organ top when it is difficult not to obstruct the opening with unsettling sound results!

The 45 keyless ALAN PELL TRUMPET ORGAN may well be the first roll-playing trumpet street organ to be produced by an organ builder in Britain. It was a challenging task and the result is a worthy achievement. I consider that the organ reproduces the traditional Berlin sound as accurately as one could wish for. In general the organ follows traditional pipe composition

but with one extra accompaniment and bass note - 3 ranks of melody, two ranks of ten note accompaniment, two ranks of 16 note counter melody and five doubled bass notes. I was hoping that Alan would explain the 'loss' of two of the 45 notes on the traditional organ, but it appears that he is mystified.

The other obvious major departure on the Pell organ is the retention of the open music transport system as used on his other models. On most German organs a closed box is used - Bacigalupo, Niemuth, Hofbauer, Bruns etc. This is mounted vertically on the rear left and reached by a long rod on the right for rewinding. I find this a fiddly system at best when mounted on the top on smaller organs. It becomes much worse when rear mounted, involving crouching to change rolls. But as with the pipe peculiarity I am sure there must be a good reason. The open 'drop-in' roll system is so simple and practical as to be idiot-proof and, furthermore, is more music-friendly in organs where the music is guided the whole way across from spool to take-up drum, so avoiding curling damaged roll edges and other wandering problems.

The 45 note organ is not a small instrument by any means, and the Pell organ is bigger than normal, being some nine inches longer. This means that it will also be appreciably heavier, but it should still pack into the back of many hatch-backs as well as most estate cars. But the biggest attraction must be the price. If you are fortunate enough to be able to get one of these organs in Germany by no means an easy task, it will cost around £15,000, and that has been the going price for a number of years. The new Pell organ knocks about a third off that figure, which must be value for money, and at that price is likely to attract more buyers. With an organ of this length, operation of the register sliders in play must be an impossibility, unless you are a contortionist. But on this type of organ it is not usual to operate the registers in play, so that isn't a problem. It is not unknown for some vintage barrel organs to have their sliders well down the side of the case, making them equally inaccessible in play.

One of the great attractions about these organs is that they are usually turned at a very slow speed. Whilst this is less tiring it does mean that it is much more important to turn evenly, for accidental variations will

be quickly spotted. It is surprising how many people have difficulty keeping to a steady turning speed, but usually they can get away with it on faster turning organs. The ample air supply ensures that enough air is generated for virtually any situation. So it is easier to play a tune faster or slower to suit individual preference. With the 31 note Pell and Raffin organs it is possible to have a lot of fun adding your own expression to the music. Judicious use of the four or five register, speed control and volume changes add interest to a tune. I have not found this possible on 45 note organs which I consider sound best played 'straight.' These organs should give you all the pleasure you need through the extra variety available in the arrangements through having a strong counter-melody able to complement or take over from the melody ranks. It is definitely an organ which demands attention!

MUSIC, and we are still with the Alan Pell stable. Receipt of a computer list for all the Pell organ scales shows that he has now got his computer organised to produce music on an automatic basis. Unlike other roll music suppliers, the music is sold in the same way as book music at so much per metre, instead of a fixed roll price. Whilst this makes it less easy to know what you will be paying for a music roll, you are able to build up rolls with your own choice of tunes or selections up to 40 metres per roll. So one is less likely to have to buy tunes which are not liked in order to get tunes one wants. Until stocks of music are built up, waiting time for music will probably vary, depending whether your choice happens to be all in stock. From the builder's point of view there must be disadvantages in this system in that each roll has to be put together individually and priced separately, and it is not possible to keep boxed rolls in stock ready for immediate despatch. Alan Pell Music are now concentrating on Harmonist and roll-playing organs and have ceased making book street organs although music will still be supplied to book organ owning customers. Obviously I applaud this decision and see it as a victory for common sense over what has always been done here in the past. It will be easier if the firm can concentrate on two systems. The 'progressives' will have their Harmonist music whilst 'traditionalists' should be better served with roll music.

A reasonable range of music is available for all scales of organ supplied, but is obviously a bit thin for the 45 note organ as only two have been completed at the moment, though I understand another has been ordered. I am sure that there will now be a bigger drive to extend the music list so that choice will be more comparable with firms like Hofbauer and Raffin. Apart from 25, 31 and 45 scales it is hoped to also produce 20 scale roll music in due course. Meanwhile Melvyn Wright tells me that he is nearly geared up for roll music production and this will include 20 scale music, owners of these type of organs will be pleased to hear. I now have strong hopes of being able to play mainly British arranged music at Wesel Organ Festival in October. One of the most attractive features of the Pell music list is the large number of Singalong selections, making up four or five rolls. To this total may reasonably be added Dixieland and other American selections which can also be classified as Singalong. Whilst the majority of organ owners wouldn't be without their traditional marches, opera and operetta, German folk and Dutch music, all you have to do is watch the faces of the public to know what goes down best.

I suppose that I choose my music on the basis of two-thirds for personal enjoyment and one-third with commercial considerations in mind, so in public the one-third gets much more of an airing. Most members of the public don't listen to an organ for any length of time, but it is the popular numbers and the old faithfuls which draw most. For example, even though Lambada is a boringly repetitive tune, it is the one in my repertoire which receives most requests at the moment.

Orgelbau Goeckel have been around for a few years now, based in Heidelberg. The firm concentrates mainly on two scales - 20 and 26 and supply their own roll music for these scales. One 20 note model follows Raffin design with 31 stopped pipes and doubled melody ranks. The slightly larger Harmonipan is more similar to the original Hofbauer, with nine pan flutes, and thirteen wooden pipes. The 26 note model also has pan flutes. The Old Heidelberg model has 29 pipes while the Violinopan has 44 pipes. These organs feature twin drop-in music spools instead of the more normal fixed take-up spool. This enables an

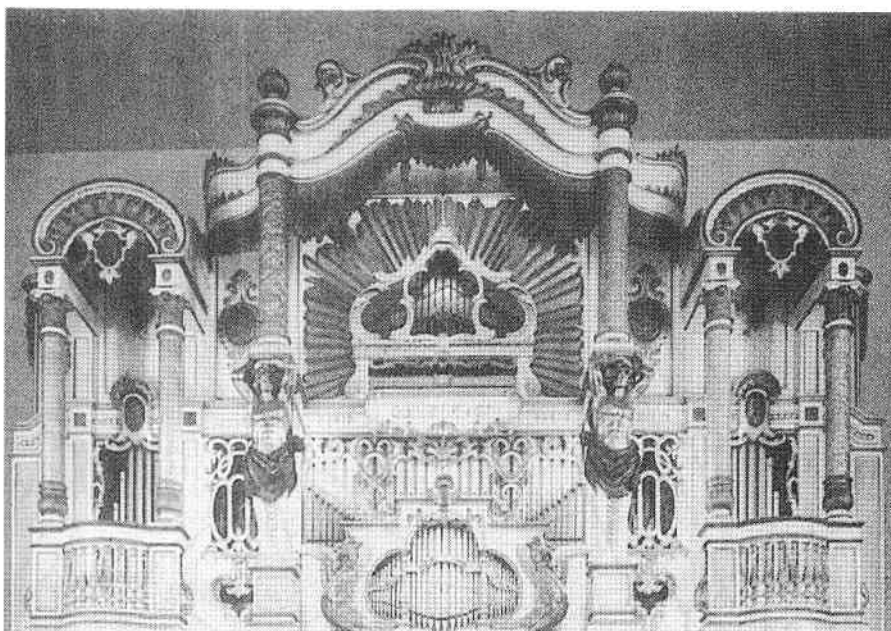
automatic rewind system to be used and rolls replaced as quickly as books. Jaeger and Bommer also known as Waldkircher Orgelbau, have been in business several years based in the famous organ building town. They advertise a 26 note street organ which departs from traditional German design by having the pipework displayed along the front, French Thibouville-style. A carved front in fair organ format is available together with carved figures.

The production of new reed organ models by Hofbauer and Raffin has helped to raise interest in reed organs. But reproduction Ariston reed organs have been built in Germany and Switzerland for some time and on the stand of J. and A. Bluemel several of these small organs were displayed in street and salon-organ form.

For some years now collector's markets have taken place in Rudesheim, the popular Rhine tourist resort, at the Musical Cabinet of Siegfried Wendel. This second venue at Sinsheim shows that there is a growing demand and need for this kind of Bring and Buy, which should also be available in Britain without going through the formality and expense of the auction showroom. However, I am not convinced that Sinsheim is the ideal venue, as mechanical music is very much a minority exhibit there. The overwhelming majority of visitors have no interest in the subject, yet those wishing to attend just for the Sammlerboerse, still have to pay museum admission charges. I would have thought that the superb Schloss

Bruchsal, housing the magnificent Jan Brauers collection, only a few miles distant from Sinsheim would provide a much more ideal location. Perhaps we can one day have collector's markets in Britain, and attempts have been made in this direction at the Llandrindod organ festival, where there was evidence this year of much more support for it.

GAVIOLIZAAL is the somewhat unlikely name of the new music hall for the Helmond organ Stichting. I was pleased to see leaflets advertising the new location when at Assen for I had always enjoyed my visits when it was located in a disused church. Unfortunately they had to vacate these premises and obtaining this new site has taken some time. Previously they had switched their open day from Saturday to Sunday, which was most inconvenient for visiting Brits hoping to combine Haarlem and Helmond in one weekend as Haarlem also opens on Sundays. The Stichting are now much more ambitious with open hours of Tuesday to Friday 13.00 - 17.00, Saturday 10.00 - 17.00 and Sunday 14.00 to 17.00. Entrance charge is a modest fl.1 (just over 30p) but is free on Saturday up to 13.00. The publicity lists five resident organs - none of them Gavioli's. Perhaps the most enjoyable are the two Gaudins, though all organs can be expected to play to the usual impeccable Dutch standard - the 90 key Bockens Mortier dance organ, 63 key Koeningsberg De Blauwe Trom and a 58 keyless Ruth fair organ dating from 1856. ■



The Gaudin organ in the Gaviolizaal museum at Helmond, Holland.

# Agents and Makers

by Graham Webb

The trade label shown is that of John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd. Complete with its Victorian postage stamp and the date of 14.4.1896 it was found in a box of paper rolls and 'endless bands' which accompanied an 'Improved Celestina' which I bought recently in my Brighton shop. When discovered it was attached to a thin card wrapper that still enclosed a group of 'endless bands'. Almost all of the 20-note, 5 inch paper rolls and all of the 'endless bands' were cut as hymns, so it is logical to assume the instrument I had acquired was originally used in a chapel, as several different kinds of organette often were.

The advent of the 'Improved Celestina', playing 'endless bands' by means of a simple attachment, must have been a boon in the use of the instrument. A roll of paper music had to be rewound onto its spool after playing, before a new roll could be played. With an 'endless band', usually cut for a single verse and a chorus, or to otherwise suit, the changing from one tune to another was relatively quick and simple.

The firm of John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd. was founded by John Gloag Murdoch in 1863 at 91 and 93, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. Though they were the sole licencees for the Celestina organette, the firm's main claim to fame was under the trade mark 'J.G.M.', which is seen on a large number of miniature, snuff-box size, movements used in musical photograph albums and the



like. The mark can be simply 'J.G.M.', or 'J.G.M. & Co./Paris', or 'J.G.M./Made in France'. In all cases the movements were made elsewhere and imported, to be placed in various novelties.

There is believed to be a link between J. G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd. and The National Fine Arts Association, which marketed 'The National Music Box', because both Companies occupied the same address. Musical boxes sold under this label, generally the smaller type of standard box, were of good medium quality and bore the general characteristics associated with Ami Rivenc. The tune card used a wide colourful border of flowers with a central, sometimes offset, panel for the tune titles, which were often printed rather than hand-written.

Murdoch's French connection was with Jerome Thibouville-Lamy, makers of musical instruments and mechanical musical instruments, though they did not make musical boxes being main agents for L'Epee, one of the few French makers. It is generally believed that Murdoch imported its many small movements from, or through, Thibouville-Lamy, whose main premises were in Paris. In the late eighteen eighties this firm opened a branch in London.

Though it is known that

Thibouville-Lamy was also agent for Ami Rivenc musical boxes, it is more probable that movements for boxes sold under the name 'The National Music Box' were procured through Thomas Dawkins of 17, Charterhouse Street, London. This firm was agent, probably main agent, for Rivenc movements. The Dawkins claim to be a maker of musical boxes rests on the fact that the movements imported were cased in London. The cases of National boxes do not correspond to those of Dawkins/Rivenc, which are generally wider from back to front than usual, a style that gives a flatter look to the case.

All of the above illustrates the pitfalls ready to entrap the researcher into musical box makers. Import movements, get cases or novelties made, or even import the whole piece, get some tune cards printed or make up a stamp, and you were in business as a manufacturer!

As a footnote: Christopher Proudfoot tells us that 'J.H./M.', another trade mark found on miniature movements in photograph albums, is that of John Harrop of Manchester. Ord-Hume tells us ('Music Box') Harrop appears to have obtained the movements through Murdoch. It is assumed that these are L'Epee movements coming from Thibouville-Lamy. ■

Mayhews London (Abridged Edition by Quennell)

Published by Spring Books

# “LONDON LABOUR AND THE LONDON POOR”

by Henry Mayhew

First published in 3 volumes in 1851

## Street Musicians

Concerning street musicians they are of multifarious classes. As a general rule, they may almost be divided into the tolerable and the intolerable performers, some of them trusting to their skill in music for the reward for their exertions, others only making a *noise*, so that whatever money they obtain is given them merely as an inducement for them to depart. The well-known engraving by Hogarth, of ‘the enraged musician,’ is an illustration of the persecutions inflicted in olden times by this class of street performers; and in the illustrations by modern caricaturists we have had numerous proofs, that up to the present time the nuisance has not abated. Indeed, many of these people carry with them musical instruments, merely as a means of avoiding the officers of the Mendicity Society, or in some few cases as a signal of their coming to the persons in the neighbourhood, who are in the habit of giving them a small weekly pension.

These are a more numerous class than any other of the street performers I have yet dealt with. The musicians are estimated at 1,000, and the ballad singers at 250.

The street musicians are of two kinds, the skilful and the blind. The former obtain their money by the agreeableness of their performance, and the latter, in pity for their affliction rather than admiration of their harmony. The blind street musicians, it must be confessed, belong generally to the rudest class of performers. Music is not used by them as a means of pleasing, but rather as a mode of soliciting attention. Such individuals are known in the ‘profession’ by the name of ‘pensioners’; they have their regular rounds to make, and particular houses at which to call on certain days of the week, and from which they generally obtain a ‘small trifle’. They form, however, a most peculiar class of individuals. They are mostly well-known characters, and many of them have been performing in the streets of London for many years. They are also remarkable for the religious cast of their thoughts, and the comparative refinement of their tastes and feelings.

### ‘OLD SARAH’

One of the most deserving and peculiar of the street musicians was an old lady who played upon the hurdy-gurdy. She had

been about the streets of London for upwards of forty years, and being blind, had had during that period four guides, and worn out three instruments. Her cheerfulness, considering her privation and precarious mode of life, was extraordinary. Her love of truth, and the extreme simplicity of her nature, were almost childlike. Like the generality of blind people, she had a deep sense of religion, and her charity for a woman in her station of life was something marvellous; for though living on alms, she herself had, I was told, two or three little pensioners. When questioned on this subject, she laughed the matter off as a jest, though I was assured of the truth of the fact. Her attention to her guide was most marked. If a cup of tea was given to her after her day’s rounds, she would be sure to turn to the poor creature who led her about, and ask, ‘you comfortable, Liza?’ or ‘is your tea to your liking, Liza?’

When conveyed to Mr. Beard’s establishment to have her daguerreotype taken, she for the first time in her life rode in a cab; and then her fear at being ‘back’erds’ as she termed it (for she sat with her back to the horse), was almost painful. She felt about for something to lay hold of, and did not appear comfortable until she had a firm grasp of the pocket. After her alarm had in a measure subsided, she turned to her guide and said, ‘We must put up with those trials, Liza’. In a short time, however, she began to find the ride pleasant enough. ‘Very nice, ain’t it, Liza?’ she said, ‘but I shouldn’t like to ride on them steamboats; they say they’re shocking dangerous; and as for them railways, I’ve heard tell they’re dreadful; but these cabs, Liza, is very nice’. On the road she was continually asking ‘Liza’ where they were, and wondering at the rapidity at which they travelled. ‘Ah!’ she said, laughing, ‘if had one of these here cabs, my “rounds” would soon be over’. Whilst ascending the high flight of stairs that led to the portrait-rooms, she laughed at every proposal made to her to rest. ‘There’s twice as many stairs as these to our church, ain’t there, Liza?’ she replied when pressed. When the portrait was finished she expressed a wish to feel it.

The following is the history of her life, as she herself related it, answering to the variety of questions put to her on the subject—

‘I was born the 4th April, 1786 (it was Good Friday that year), at a small chandler’s shop, facing the White Horse, Stuar’s-rents, Drury-lane. Father was a hatter, and

mother an artificial-flower maker and feather finisher. When I was but a day old, the nurse took me out of the warm bed and carried me to the window, to show some people how like I was to father. The cold flew to my eyes and I caught inflammation in them. Owing to mother being forced to be from home all day at her work, I was put out to dry-nurse when I was three weeks old. My eyes were then very bad, by all accounts, and some neighbours told the woman I was with, that Turner’s cerate would do them good. She got some and put it on my eyes, and when poor mother came to suckle me at her dinner-hour, my eyes was all “a gore of blood”. From that time I never see afterwards. She did it, poor woman, for the best; it was no fault of her’n, and I’m sure I bears her no malice for it. I stayed at home with mother until I was thirteen, when I was put to the Blind-school, but I only kept there nine months; they turned me out because I was not clever with my hands, and I could not learn to spin or make sash-lines; my hands was ocker’d like. I had not been used at home to do anything for myself – not even to dress myself. Mother was always out at her work, so she could not learn me, and no one else would, so that’s how I was turned out. I then went back to my mother, and kept with her till her death. I well remember that; I heard her last. When she died I was just sixteen year old. I was sent to the Union – “Pancridge” Union it was – and father with me (for he was ill at the time). He died too, and left me, in seven weeks after mother. When they was both gone, I felt I had lost my only friends, and that I was all alone in the world and blind. But, take it altogether, the world has been very good to me, and I have much to thank God for and the good woman I am with. I missed mother the most, she was so kind to me; there was no one like her; no, not even father. I was kept in the Union until I was twenty; the parish paid for my learning the “cymbal”; God bless them for it, I say. A poor woman in the workhouse first asked me to learn music; she said it would always be a bit of bread for me; I did as she told me, and I thank her to this day for it. It took me just five months to learn the – cymbal, if you please – the hurdy-gurdy ain’t its right name. The first tune I ever played was “God save the King”, the Queen as is now, then “Harlequin Hamlet”, that took me a long time to get off; it was three weeks before they put me on a new one. I then learnt “Moll Brook”; then I did the “Turnpike-gate” and “Patrick’s day in the morning”: all of them I learnt in the Union. I got a poor man to teach me the “New-rigged ship”. I soon learnt it, because it was an easy tune. Two-and-forty years ago I played “The Gal I left behind me”. A woman learnt it me; she played my cymbal and I listened, and so got it. “Oh, Susannah!” I learnt myself by hearing it on the horgan. I always try and listen to a new tune when I am in the street, and get it off if I can: it’s my bread. I waited to hear one to-day, quite a new one, but I didn’t like it, so I went on. “Hasten to the Wedding” is my favourite; I played it years ago, and play it still. I like “Where have you been all night?” It’s a Scotch tune. The woman as persuaded me to learn the cymbal took me out of the Union with her; I lived with her, and she led me about the streets. When she died I took her daughter for my guide. She walked with me for more the five-and-

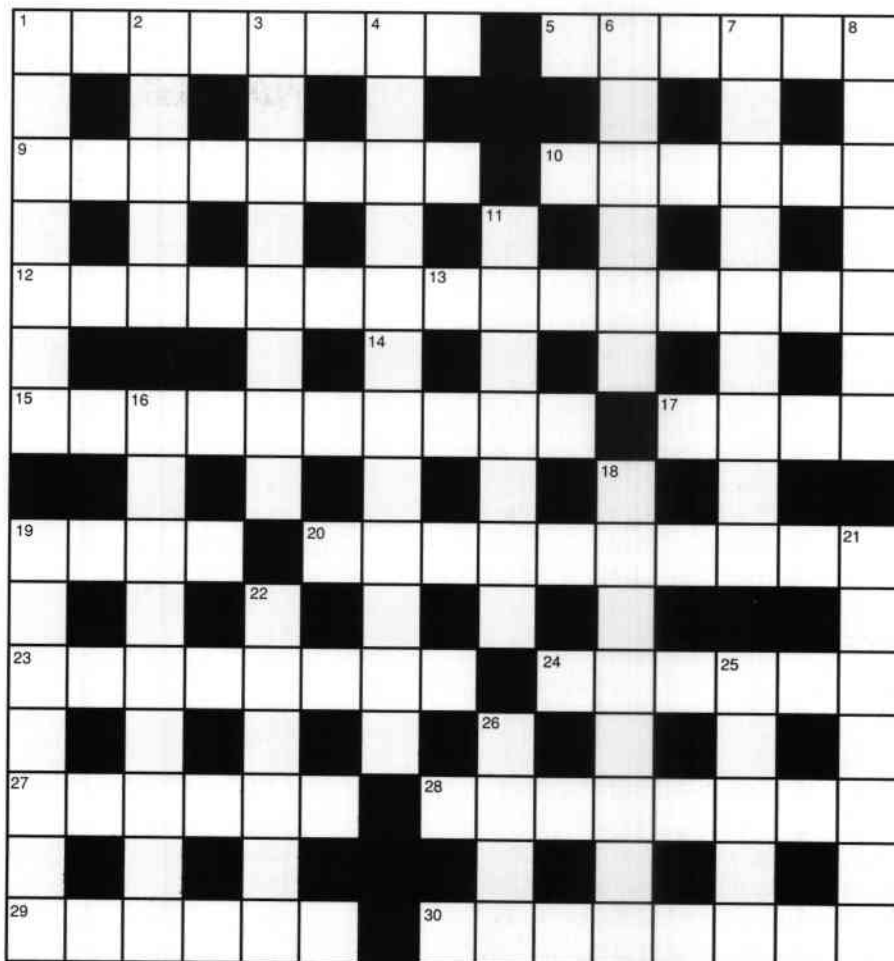


\*twenty year, and she might have been with me to this day, but she took to drinking and killed herself with it. She behaved very bad to me at last, for as soon as we got a few halfpence she used to go into the public and spend it all; and many a time I'm sure she's been too tipsy to take me home. One night I remember she rolled into the road at Kensington, and as near pulled me with her. We was both locked up in the station-house, for she couldn't stand for liquor, and I was obligated to wait till she could lead me home. It was very cruel of her to treat me so, but, poor creature, she's gone, and I forgive her, I'm sure. I'd many guides after her, but none of them was honest like Liza is; I don't think she'd rob me of a farden. Would you, Liza? Yes, I've my reg'lar rounds, and I've kept to 'em for near upon fifty year. All the children like to hear me coming along, for I always plays my cymbal as I goes. At Kentish-town they calls me Mrs. Tuesday, and at Kensington I'm Mrs. Friday, and so on. At some places they likes polkas, but at one house I plays at in Kensington they always ask me for "Haste to the Wedding". No, the cymbal isn't very hard to play; the only thing is, you must be very particular that the works is covered up, or the half-pence is apt to drop in. King David, they say, played on one of those here instruments. We're very tired by night-time; ain't we, Liza? but when I gets home the good woman I lodges with has always a bit of something for me to eat with my cup of tea. She's a good soul, and keeps me tidy and clean. I helps her all I can; when I comes in, I carries her a pail of water up-stairs, and such-like. Many ladies as has known me since they was children allows me a trifle. One maiden lady near Brunswick-square has given me sixpence a week for many a year, and another allows me eighteenpence a fortnight; so that, one way or another, I am very comfortable, and I've much to be thankful for'.

It was during one of old Sarah's journeys that an accident occurred, which ultimately deprived London of the well-known old hurdy-gurdy woman. In crossing Seymour-street, she and her guide Liza were knocked down by a cab, as it suddenly turned a corner. They were picked up and placed in the vehicle (the poor guide dead, and Sarah with her limbs broken), and carried to the University Hospital. Old Sarah's description of that ride is more terrible and tragic than I can hope to make out to you. The poor blind creature was ignorant of the fate of her guide, she afterwards told us, and kept begging and praying to Liza to speak to her as the vehicle conveyed them to the asylum. She shook her, she said, and intreated her to say if she was hurt, but not a word was spoken in answer, and then she felt how terrible a privation was her blindness; and it was not until they reached the hospital, and they were lifted from the cab, that she knew, as she heard the people whisper to one another, that her faithful attendant was dead. In telling us this, the good old soul forgot her own sufferings for the time, as she lay with both her legs broken beneath hooped bed-clothes of the hospital bed; and when, after many long weeks, she left the medical asylum, she was unable to continue her playing on the hurdy-gurdy, her hand being now needed for the crutch that was requisite to bear her on her rounds. ■

## CRYPTIC CROSSWORD PUZZLE

by A. J. L. Wright



### ACROSS

1. Finished true around the introduction. (8)
5. The Spanish worker leads a music maker. (6)
9. Sales come when a cut is on. (8)
10. Girl takes action about prices. (6)
12. Queue up to get in register. (2, 4)
13. Old, bored and assuming a ruddy hue! (5, 3)
15. Step ever faster towards a race elect. (10)
17. Note added to diary to gum up the works! (4)
19. Lay in a way so peculiar I altered it. (4)
20. A hunt's near for this opera lover. (10)
23. Cast an eye around a while! Dramatic musical? (8)
24. And the rest he'd eaten into. (6)
27. I see! I see the French drops frozen. (6)
28. Let the rep. hop in for a merry trip. (8)
29. In Tyne & Wear, 10% less. (6)
30. Tin gears to hold up the ringers, perhaps. (8)

### DOWN

1. No car in Austria has a curious blower. (7)
2. Used to be noted pupil and well-to-do? (5)
3. Relating, perhaps, to an organ accessory. (8)
4. Perform right to the finish. (4)
6. In a dream, a Zonophone turned into a flower. (6)
7. Prolonged beatings from cylinder spools. (9)
8. Proverbial wanderer got sold in distress. (4, 3)
11. Girl with virus plays cranky whistler. (7)
14. Natural growth of pipe music? (7)
16. Does this disc player set a standard? (9)
18. What the fisherman did goes 'clickety-click.' (7)
19. Put a note round then nail back a musical scale. (7)
21. Put right the Russian soldiers on board. (7)
22. Passes air through as friend allowed. (6)
25. Aha, it inspires me! Look back in the Pacific. (5)
26. Firm notes at the tail end. (4)

Answers on Page 125.

# The formation of a Musical Box Directory & Register

by a well known member of the Musical Box Society

For some time now, I have been compiling a register of surviving musical boxes with the idea of assisting researchers and collectors in finding out more about that mainly Victorian phenomenon of mechanical music. The results have already proved most useful in solving some queries.

May I ask all members to respond to my request for assistance and to send in information about their cylinder musical boxes following the guide lines outlined below. All information is useful including the personal information sometimes found written on the box or attached by way of a plaque. The information accrued will be published from time to time in the Society Journal.

The Register/Directory will be published in suitable sections in alphabetical order of makers and agents.

I feel that it is important to record as much as possible before the passage of time makes this kind of research almost impossible. Fewer and fewer boxes are to be seen and the large collections of yesteryear are no longer available for inspection or have become scattered.

The aim and intention of the compiler of the Register is to:-

Catalogue as many as possible of the surviving cylinder musical boxes.

Increase our knowledge of the manufacturers of musical boxes and their methods of working.

Gain an insight into a small part of the social history of the time.

Provide records which may assist in the recovery of stolen boxes and also be a deterrent to theft.

Try to link up parts of boxes which are found with their original box. e.g. Interchangeable cylinders, tune cards, zithers etc.

Note as much information as possible in the hope that in the future the Register will provide a foundation for future research.

## The Register/Directory Guide

1. The Register is written up on 8" x 5" record cards. The minimum information required to establish an entry on the register is a name and a serial number. If the makers name is not known, then the box should be listed as Unknown.

**Realistically, much more information is required and could well follow the guidelines set out below.**

- (a) Name. Serial No. Gamme No.
- (b) Type of box. e.g. 6 air Key-wind. 8 air Forte - Piano. 4 Overture Mandolin.
- (c) Cylinder. Size in cm (e.g. 33cm).
- (d) Tune Card. Details of programme.
- (e) Comments. Anything of interest. Details of dates, agents labels and any inscriptions will be most welcome.

**Enthusiastic members and Specialist collectors could well add all or some of these extra details:-**

- (f) Comb(s). Number of teeth and marks.
- (g) Foundry marks on comb bases etc.
- (h) Scribed marks on bass lead.
- (i) Blank code numbers and letters.

Please follow the guidelines indicated above when making any return and rest assured that no names or addresses will be made known.

**NO NAME OR ADDRESS IS EVER NOTED ON EITHER THE RECORD CARDS OR THE COMPUTER DISCS.**

In fact there is no need to give your name and address on any reply should you so wish. The real interest is in the music box. Who has custody of it for the moment is rightly a confidential matter. However, any member willing to send their name and address and a large S.A.E. will receive a computer print out of their boxes. This listing will include the allocated Register numbers. Once this Register list has been sent to the member concerned, their covering letter with their name and address will be destroyed. May I remind members again that names and address of contributors are kept confidential.

Members not giving their name will eventually see their boxes listed in the Magazine as the Register is published.

2. The Register is also kept on computer disc in two forms.

## The First Register.

This is a Mini list which details Name, Serial No., Gamme No. A note is made if the box has a tune sheet or not together with very brief comments.

This uses a computer programme called Mini Office Professional. This programme is limited as to the quantity of information which can be stored and because of this a more powerful programme is used for the main computer Register.

## The Second Register

This is an expanded register using a much more powerful computer programme and it lists many more details, including the names of tunes if they are available.

3. Compilation of the Register to date has been made from information received from members of the Musical Box Society, Auction House catalogues plus other written material and personal observations.
4. There will undoubtedly be some errors in the lists as information received has had to be accepted in good faith. Corrections are made regularly and a great deal of cross checking is done.

Replies should be sent to:-

The Registrar,  
c/o G. Worswick,  
108-110, Station Road,  
Bardney,  
Lincoln

BR3 4TS.

**PLEASE NOTE:** George Worswick is **not** the Registrar. He is kindly acting as a collection point for all correspondence and has no access to the Register or other details.

Adjacent is a sample record card and a part of the print out of the Register. This is of course based on the information to hand at the moment and will expand as time goes on.

Once boxes are positively identified, members could consider the idea of marking the Register number externally on the **L/H rear corner** of the base board of the box. Using a very hard pencil to mark the base board would ensure that the register number would be indented into the fibre of the board. This would be an extra identification and security device working in much the same way as vehicles have registration numbers to identify them.

**Note:** Once a box has been allocated a Register number, this number will never be changed or used again.

Please do try to send in a list of your boxes. I realise that it will be a lot of work and that time is always pressing, but I am sure the results will be well worthwhile. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

Members who send in information and also give their address may expect to have to wait for some time for their printed results as processing information on this scale is very time consuming.

At some time in the future, the Register may be produced in book form as a Directory and Register. In any event, the filing system and the 8" x 5" record cards will eventually be bequeathed to The Music Box Society hopefully to be continued by some enthusiast to enhance the aims and objectives of the Society.

*The Registrar.*

Name.	Serial No.	G/No.	Reg/No.
Ami-Rivenc.	38834	?	R-1750.
Type.	8 air. Lever wind.		
Cylinder.	27.9cm x 6.2cm		
Comb.	77 teeth. Zither over comb.		
	Tune Card.		
1. Yeoman of the Guard. Where I thy bride.			
2. My Lady's Bower.			
3. The Bohemian Girl. The Heart Bowed.			
4. Mysotis. Waltz.			
5. The Lost Chord.			
6. In Tyrol. Mazurka.			
7. Dorothy. Queen of my Heart.			
8. They all love Jack.			
Comments.			
Sphinx on governor and Dawkins rosette comb washers. Stained beech case with 2 lines of stringing on front & sides. Rosewood lid with floral inlay.			

Name.	Serial No.	G/No.	Reg/No.
Ami-Rivenc.	44191	?	R-44.
Type.	8 air Harmonical Harp Piccolo.		
Cylinder.	28cm x 6cm.		
Comb.	L/H comb = 52 teeth. R/H comb = 25 teeth. 77 teeth in total.		
	Tune Card.		
1. Le Beau Danube Waltz.			
2. Shop Girl. Perambulator Duet.			
3. Czarina. Mazurka.			
4. Carmen. Toreador Song.			
5. Autographs Waltz.			
6. In my Pansie.			
7. Schuloff Waltz.			
8. Sweet Marie.			
Comments.			
Sphinx on governor and tune sheet. Rosewood case with inlay of flowers. Tune indicator. Writing in pencil under box:- "To James Graham. Evelyn Graham. Bought 17th January 1898."			

TUNE CARD					
NAME	* YES - NO	S/N	G/N	COMMENTS	REG/N
A.R.F.....	-	163	168	2 air. Snuff box type.	R-1749.
Abrahams..B.H.....	-	104	0	10 air. R-1.	
Abrahams..B.H.....	-	3398	0	8 air. 2 bell 2 doll L/W.	R-1550.
Abrahams..B.H.....	*	3766	827	12 air. R-2	
Abrahams..B.H.....	-	4214	0	20 air 2 per turn.	R-3.
Abrahams..B.H.....	*	7971	0	3 Bell box.	R-4.
Abrahams..B.H.....	-	11784	0	10 air. R-5.	
Abrahams..B.H.....	*	17658	0	12 air. R-6.	
Abrahams..B.H.....	-	27305	0	8 air 3 bell L'wind.	R-1748.
Abrahams..B.H.....	*	37152	0	12 air. R-7.	
Alexander..F.....	-	8345	0	8 sleeves.	R-1306.
Alexander..F.....	-	9648	0	Interchange. 6 sleeves.	R-8.
Alibert..F.....	-	2581	416	2 air early snuff box.	R-9.
Alibert..F.....	*	3804	0	3 air. Necessaire.	R-10.
Alibert..F.....	-	6245	0	4 air. R-11.	
Alibert..F.....	-	6749	0	6 air. Keywind.	R-1416.
Alibert..F.....	-	7672	0	2 air snuff box.	R-12.
Alibert..F.....	-	10751	0	2 air snuff box.	R-13.
Allard.& Sandoz.....	-	4267	0	8 air. Concert Piccolo.	R-14.
Allard..D.....	-	4526	0	6 air Organocleide Inter.	R-15.
Allard..D.....	*	5395	0	8 air. L/wind. S/H piccolo	R-1373.
Ami..Geneux.....	-	623	0	4 air.L/wind. R-16.	
Ami..Geneux.....	-	8353	0	8 air. Lever wind.	R-1375.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	28806	0	6 air. Harp-Harmon. Piclo	R-1713.
Ami..Rivenc.....	*	29290	564	4 air. Forte/P.L/wind.	R-20.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	29524	0	6 air.Hymn box.	R-1351.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	29670	0	4 air. R-21.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	29896	0	6 air. R-1307.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	31076	1706	6 air L/Wind.	R-22.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	31317	0	12 air. R-1504.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	31795	693	? air S/Harmony Concerto.	R-23.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	31829	0	6 air Harp Eolienne.	R-24.
Ami..Rivenc.....	*	32383	84	10 air. R-25.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	35021	0	8 air. R-1478.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	35109	0	4 air. R-1618.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	35135	0	6 bell box.	R-26.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	36179	0	8 air. R-1714.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	*	36272	0	8 air. L/wind.	R-27.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	37223	0	8 air. Hymn Box.	R-28.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	37621	0	10 air. L/wind.	R-29.
Ami..Rivenc.....	*	38274	0	6 air Mandolin Ex. Intchg	R-30.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	38398	0	6 air. 3 bell. L/wind.	R-1466.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	38618	0	6 air. R-1715.	
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	38834	0	8 air. L'wind.	R-1750.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	38873	0	12 air Drum/bell/castanet	R-31.
Ami..Rivenc.....	-	39493	0	? air. R-1630.	

# Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 51

Here are three more composers often met on tune sheets . . .

Alfred Cellier (1844-1891) was an English organist, conductor and composer. His operetta successes included . . .

Nell Gwynne	1876
Dorothy	1886
Doris	1889

*Dorothy* was very successful and its tunes are fairly common on cylinder. Both the title and the libretto of *Nell Gwynne* were used by Planquette in 1884.

Aimé Maillart (1817-1871) was a French composer best known for *Les Dragons de Villars*, 1856. His other operas also turn up . . .

Gastibelza	1847
Le moulin de tilleuls	1849
La croix de Marie	1852
Les pêcheurs de Catane	1860
Lara	1864

The mazurka from *Lara* is very nicely rendered in mandolin on Nicole Gamme 2283.

Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896) was a noted French composer of numerous operas, ballets, songs and instrumental works. Of his twenty operas, the following are likely to appear on tune sheets . . .

Le caïd	1849
Le songe d'une nuit d'été	1850 (1)
Raymond	1851
Le carnaval de Venise	1857 (2)
Mignon	1866 (3)
Hamlet	1868

(1) has no connection with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (2) uses Paganini's variations on the old

Venetian tune. (3) was one of the all-time great successes, with over 1000 performances in Paris between 1866 and 1894. Thomas followed Auber as head of the Paris Conservatoire.

It helps in dating musical boxes to spot tunes which are very early and therefore irrelevant - for example *Lillabullero* which sounds like 1890 Music hall but dates from 1687 and was arranged by Purcell. Often the best clue is the life span of the composer; for example J. P. A. Schwartzendorff (1741-1816). He is tersely referred to as Tedesco (= German) on tune sheets. He settled in France where he found Italian music very popular, so he adopted the name Martini. But the locals were not fooled, and labelled him Martini il Tedesco, which stuck - until PVF and others did without the Martini. He composed several operas and had a big success with *Sappho* in 1794; they all included his popular songs, among which was the "classic" *Plaisir d'amour*.

## Stickers on tune sheets

We keep seeing examples of tune sheets adorned with small printed labels whose purpose was to advertise a shop or agent and sometimes also to imply that the persons named were the makers.

Bremond and Paillard tune sheets were among those susceptible to these stickers, notably the often-seen Paillard design shown in Oddments 50. It appeared on C. Paillard as well as PVF boxes and we still do not know if both used the same run of serial numbers.

When this same tune sheet turned up on serial 5395 with a sticker in the top cartouche reading "Allard et Jaquet. Fabrique de pièces à musique, Genève," I attributed this box to Allard, a maker since 1880. The "old Allard factory" was actually visited by Chapuis in 1920). I described this in Vol. 13, Page 29.

Now I am sure I was wrong because, as well as the tune sheet, it has many features almost identical with Paillard 49793, recently described in Oddments 50. Though their serial numbers are 44,000 apart

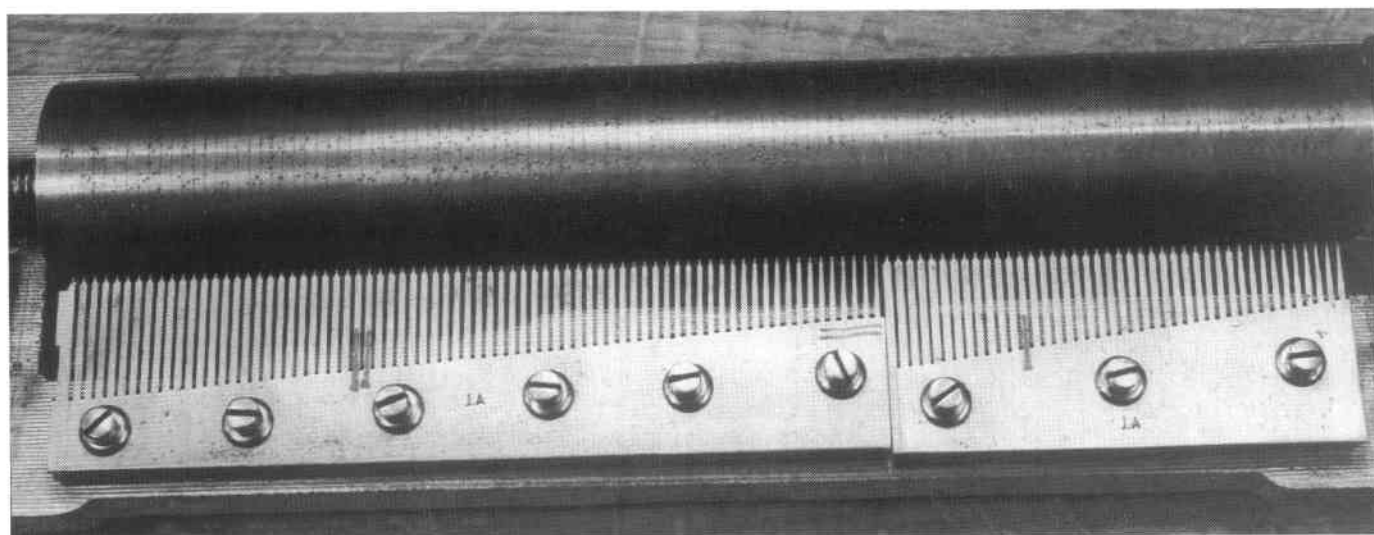


Fig. 1. Combs engraved J.A on serial 11404. The *a* teeth are marked on each comb. The underlined top six teeth on the forte comb are all tuned to the same pitch.



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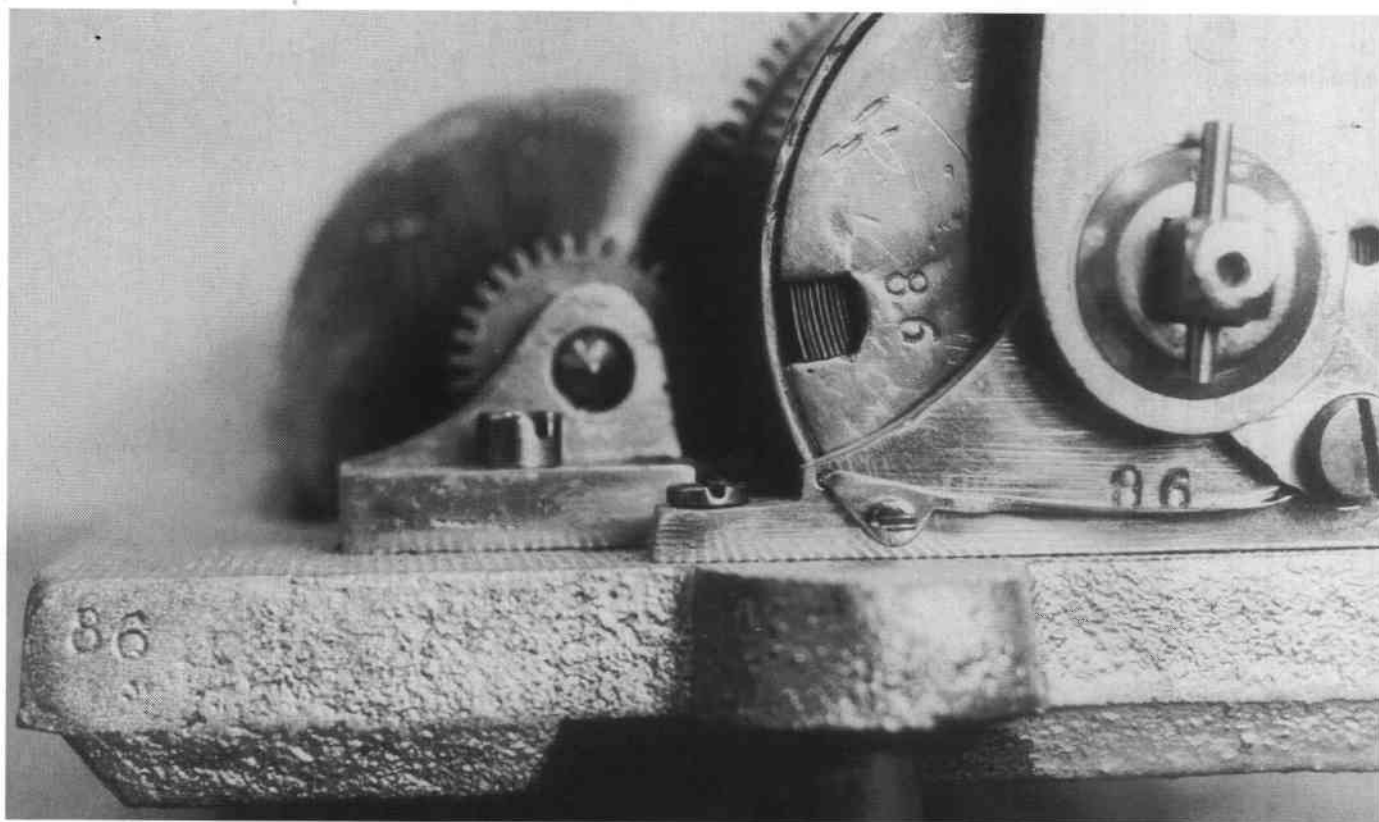
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Signature  Please allow 21 days for delivery



**Fig. 2. Serial 11404 with blank code 86 stamped on bedplate and spring components.**

they may be only five years apart in date of manufacture; their latest tunes are only six years apart and Chapuis firmly stated that in the 1870s "the Paillard firm alone produced 10,000 cartel boxes in one year."

This throws a lot of suspicion on tune sheet stickers, and after discussions with several members I am convinced that it is safe to say that no Swiss maker ever adorned a tune sheet with his name on a sticky label - nor, for that matter, in casual handwriting.

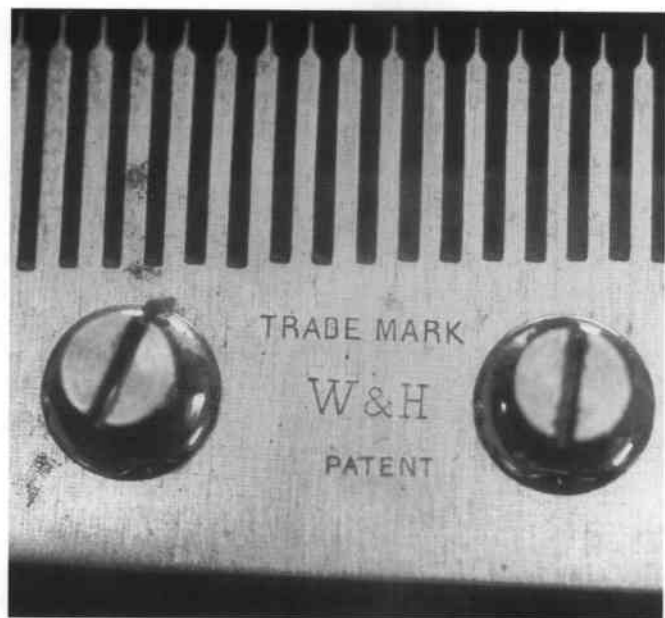
### **Selling agents' marks on mechanisms**

There is a strange contrast between the anonymity of makers and the publicity of agents, who progressed beyond mere stickers and often had their marks stamped or engraved on parts of the movement. Metert and Langdorff took second place to numerous agents or sellers, and L'Epée was positively obliterated by Woogs on the bedplate and Thibouville-Lamy claiming manufacture. The problem is, how to treat the stray initials or names one occasionally finds stamped or engraved on bedplate or comb. Where these do not relate to a known maker I am sure they should be dismissed as the whim of some agent, however strikingly presented. The basic fact is that there were many times more agents and sellers than makers, so any newly discovered marking is least likely to belong to a maker. Recently I saw a device with GL on a comb; it is far less likely to be some hitherto unknown maker than a busy agent like Golay Leresche.

Another clue that these markings cannot belong to a maker is a high serial number. Can you really imagine his ten thousandth musical box and never

heard of before? Fig. 1 shows a typical case in point - a mysterious J.A stamped neatly and accurately at the precise centre of both combs of an otherwise anonymous Forte Piano movement, serial 11404, lacking tune sheet. Its 13" = 33cm cylinder plays six airs with combs of 74 and 42 teeth, a very good class movement probably made about 1870 - the tunes I recognised were all pre-1870. The relative stiffness of the *a* teeth on the forte comb was 160 and on the piano comb 120, I think the teeth would have been stiffer if made any later than 1875.

Nothing else furnished any clue. Typical cast iron bedplate, comb with SBI base, bass lead marked



**Fig. 3. Comb of serial 20139 clearly claiming the Weill & Harburg patent no. 528 of 1875.**



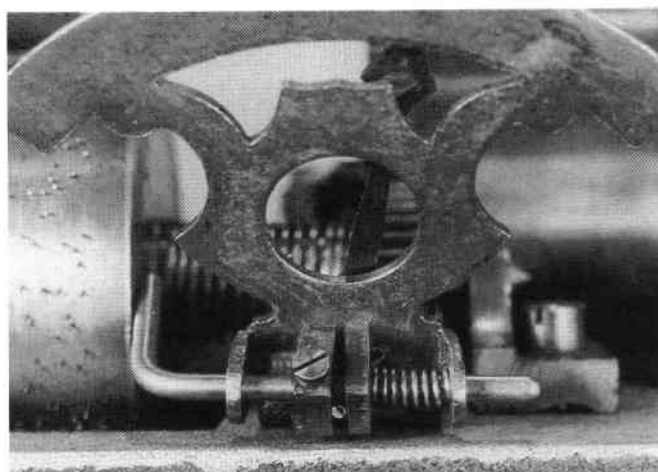
**Fig. 4.** Characteristic Weill & Harburg tune sheet of serial 20139 with their trade mark initials in lower central cartouche and royal arms at the top centre of an otherwise typical garlanded columns design. Tune 3 is mentioned above; tunes 1 and 5 date from 1867 and 1868.

2567, presumably gamme number. Any clue from the blank numbers, I wondered, 86 on spring assembly and governor, shown in Fig. 2. After due search I found another movement with 86 on spring and governor; but this one was Bremond serial 6705, eight airs, 6" = 15cm cylinder. Would you believe it? This must prove something about blank numbers which I certainly intend to find out.

A decidedly more aggressive marking on a comb is shown in Fig. 3. Its corresponding tune sheet, Fig. 4, gives its serial number 20,139. It has a 9" = 23cm cylinder playing eight airs on 66-tooth comb, probably made in or soon after 1870. The latest tune dates from 1868 and the patent referred to in Fig. 3 was granted to Henry Harburg in 1875. It is described below and was well publicised. It has nothing whatever to do with the comb. The W and H stands for Weill & Harburg neither of whom, I feel quite certain, had anything directly to do with making musical boxes. I expect they were on-the-ball agents who spotted a sales gimmick with this invention and got some maker to arrange the necessary modified blanks and cases. It would be interesting to know at what point in manufacture these writings were added to the combs... right at the very end, I think. The comb steel is quite soft when clear of the teeth, as often noticed when the screw holes have been enlarged by filing.

What I hope we will one day find out is, who did make these boxes? A possible clue linking them to

the George Bendon maker is the royal coat-of-arms at the top of this Weill & Harburg tune sheet. Organ or "voix celestes" boxes with another style of Weill & Harburg tune sheets, made around 1875, had the same coat-of-arms (but in a design closely similar to that on George Bendon tune sheets) on a panel fixed over the central organ keys. One of them with Moody



**Fig. 5.** Back view of tune indicator on PVF serial 49793. The sides of the frame are bent back and drilled to provide a sliding fit for the operating rod in contact with the cylinder. This rod carries one fixed and one loose brass slider which straddle a pin fixed to the indicator lever, the coil compression spring pushes them towards the cylinder. (Red backing felt removed to clarify photo).

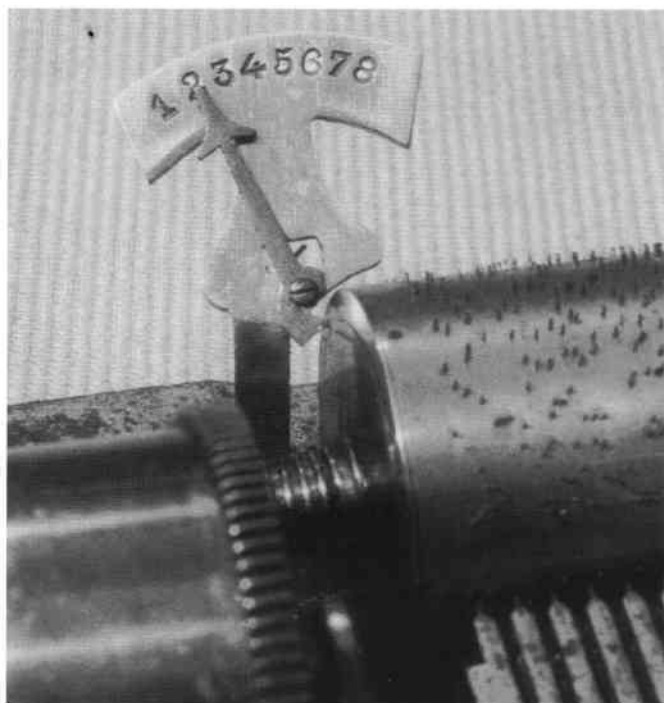


Fig. 6. L'Epée's latest tune indicator, seen here on serial 78554, the lever extended with a tail directly in contact with the cylinder end cap and held against it by a short brass leaf spring fixed behind the frame.

and Sanky tunes of 1874 is shown on Page 91 of Vol. 9. Another, given as a birthday present about 1880, is on Page 193 of Vol. 14. Neither has a tune indicator. Dear me. I think the most likely maker of these boxes is Grosclaude, as explained below.

### Tune indicators

These gadgets first appeared a bit before 1870. There were many design variants, but all used the axial shift of the cylinder to operate a pointer. A curved scale behind the pointer was stamped with the tune numbers, spaced up to a quarter of an inch

apart which involves a magnification of the cylinder shift by nearly fifteen times.

In the most common variety a pin on the pointer lever engaged the cylinder end cap, and the lever was pivoted on a slanting frame fixed to the bedplate with a single screw. The screw hole was oversize to allow adjustment until the correct tune was indicated. Early frames were of polished brass but a nickel-plated style very soon took over with the central part cut out to reveal an effective backing of bright red felt. It was the earliest application of bright nickel plating, and is a great survivor. A small coil or leaf spring held the pin against the cylinder, whose end cap had to be flat and had to run true.

In a development of this design the actuating pin was set behind the lever and was indirectly linked to the cylinder as shown in Fig. 5. In this example the pivot-to-arrow length is 43mm and pivot-to-pin 3mm, giving 14.3 times magnification. The main advantage of this complication was greater latitude in placing the tune indicator relative to the cylinder, but it also offered the slight technical advantage that the thrust on the pin had no bending effect on the lever, though at the expense of extra friction.

L'Epée provided the simplest, cheapest and in some ways the most elegant design for its later boxes. At first they had curved pointers and fancy shaped scales but later, as on serial 78554, it was a plain brass pointer against a polished nickel-plated frame and scale, as shown in Fig. 6. This simple design is technically superior because the cylinder thrust is directly in line with the lever. The pivot-to-arrow and pivot-to-tail dimensions are 25mm and 3mm, giving 8.3 times magnification. With L'Epée tune tracks at  $.018" = .46\text{mm}$ , this allows spacing of  $.15" = 3.8\text{mm}$  for the tune numbers on the scale.

Naturally some makers had the idea of getting the pointer to indicate the actual tune in play, on a

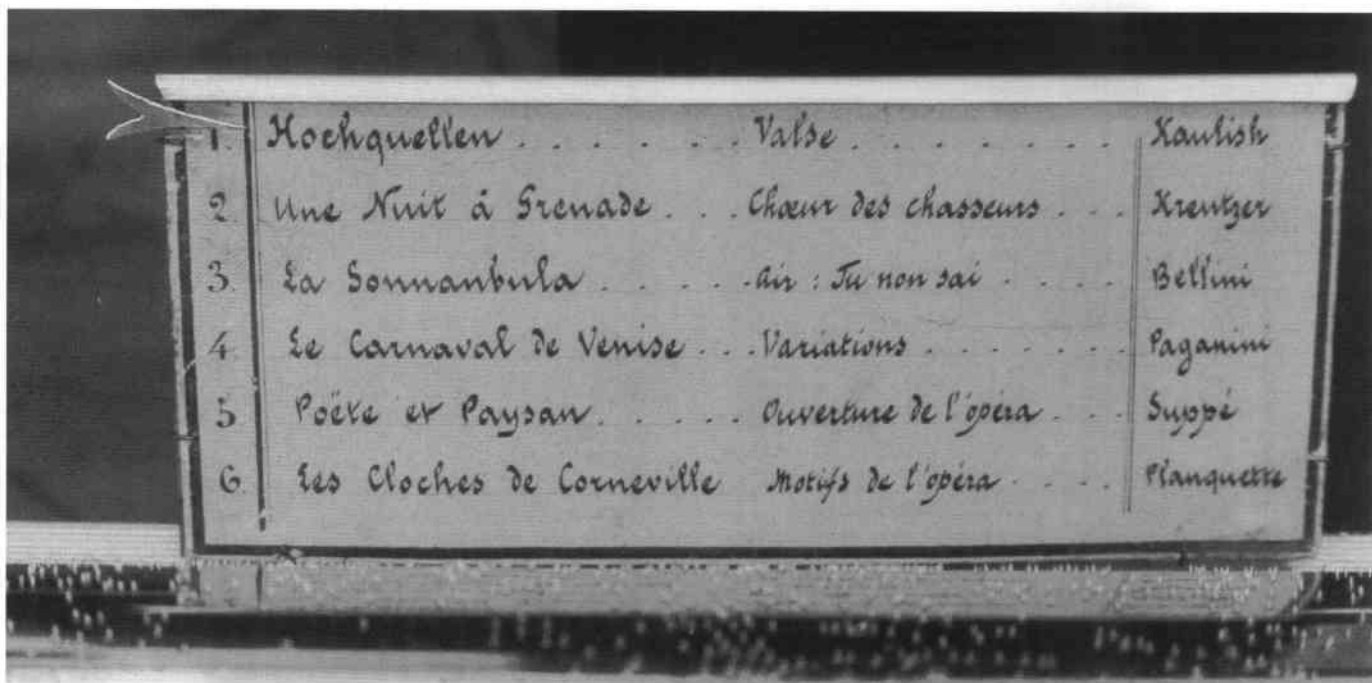
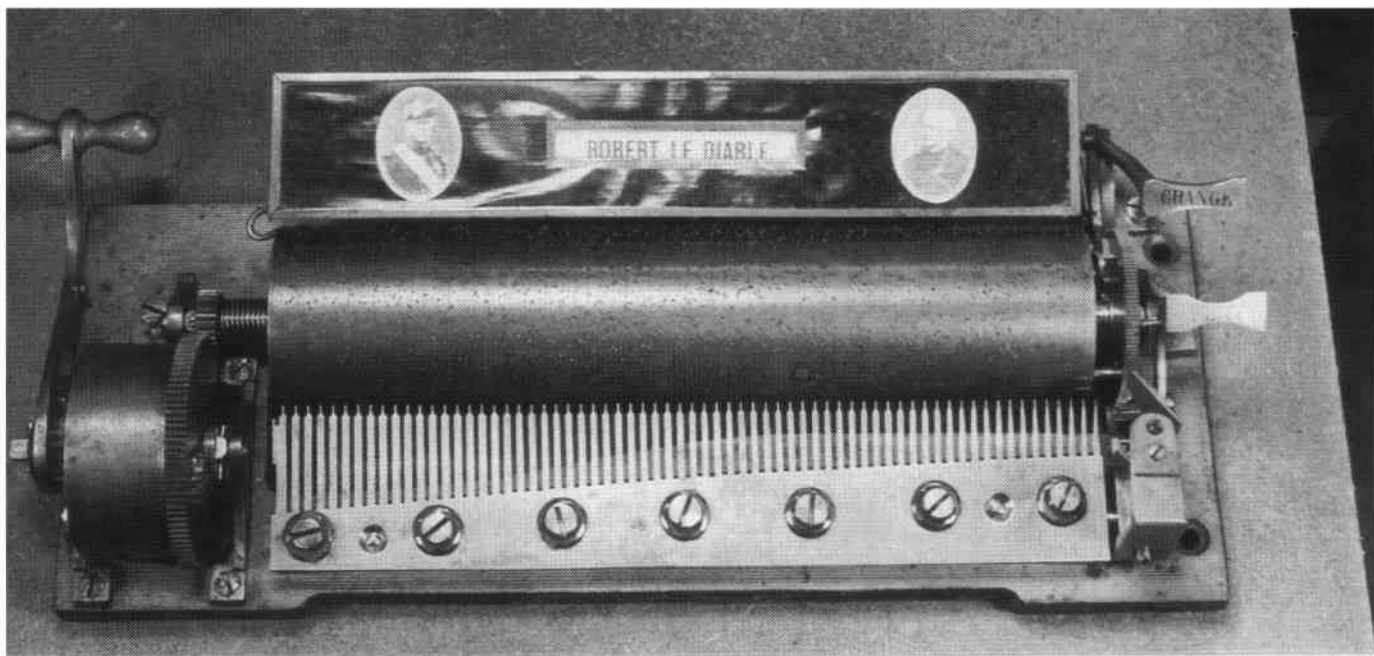


Fig. 7. Pointer indicating tune 1 on 16" Bremond sublime harmonie piccolo serial 18272. Tune 6 dates it after 1877.





**Fig. 8.** Tune in play shown by the W & H patent indicator on serial 20139, 11" = 28cm cylinder. The operating rod can just be seen, bent round to contact the cylinder end cap. The tune selector and start/stop levers are mounted directly on the mechanism.

tune sheet mounted centrally behind the cylinder, as shown in Fig. 7. This involved the operating rod being bent round in a U-turn to contact the cylinder end cap, and the pointer was made in the form of a bell crank, to give vertical movement from the horizontal pull.

A complicated but impressive extension of this idea displayed each tune separately, as shown in Fig. 8. It involved translating the cylinder shift into a rotary movement, as illustrated in Fig. 9. The list of tunes was wrapped round a drum with only one showing through a slot in the supporting wooden frame, which was embellished with two imposing but uncredited portraits.

The original version of this 1869 Harburg

provisional patent was probably as illustrated in Vol. 9, Page 71. A search by member Luuk Goldhoorn of Utrecht unearthed a later version, no. 528 of 1875. This confirms the layout of Fig. 8 as can be seen from part of the patent drawing reproduced in Fig. 10. The significant detail about this later Weill and Harburg patent is that it was submitted from Geneva by Louis Auguste Grosclaude. So I think we can safely assume that these movements, including of course the writing on the combs, were made by Grosclaude.

An intriguing detail of these indicators is that several different type faces were used so that all the tune titles occupied a reasonable length of the slot. A sad detail is that their cost compared with Fig. 6 killed them.



**Fig. 9.** As the cylinder shifts towards the bass end the operating rod pulls the short arm of the spring bracket causing the long arm to lift and pull the cord which turns the display drum to the next tune. Tension on the leaf spring seen at the right is thereby increased, ready to turn back the drum after tune 8.

Restoration of a Weill and Harburg indicator requires more patience than skill. Restoration of the common pivoted types usually involves missing or damaged springs and missing or dirt-laden red felt backing. The only serious problem concerns the pivot, a small shouldered screw which must be a close fit in the lever, both on diameter and length, otherwise the offset thrust will tilt the lever and cause juddering or even binding. Setting the indicator should be done at one of the middle tunes, to halve any error. The finger touching the cylinder can be bent a very small amount towards or away from the pointer pivot to increase or decrease the pointer's arc of movement.

The only lasting distinctive alternative to the pivoted lever design was Mermod's combined indicator and selector, described in Vol. 13, Page 197.

## Lacquered

Occasionally one has the misfortune to get involved with a cylinder movement which has been liberally adorned with lacquer. It was probably done by a well-intentioned restorer who had obtained a bottle of this easily-applied material, usually labelled Gold Lacquer or Brass Lacquer and with the label also carrying notes stating: Clear; Apply cold; Highly inflammable; Clean brushes in methylated spirit.

This lacquer, when applied to a clean metal surface, has the useful properties of being invisible and delaying tarnish. Obviously a thin coating of this type is not completely impervious to air and moisture and therefore the underlying brass or nickel will tarnish in time, and probably in irregular patterns; but this will generally take years compared with months for the bare metal.

So the application of lacquer can be recommended on decorative parts such as case screw washers and brass rosette comb washers and carrying handles; but it should never be used on mechanical components because it is very susceptible to scratching and other damage after which the underlying metal will very soon become unsightly. Then removing it with solvent (methylated spirit) or abrasive is tedious and can cause damage.

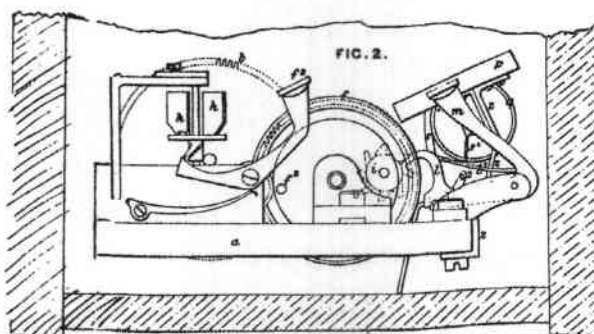
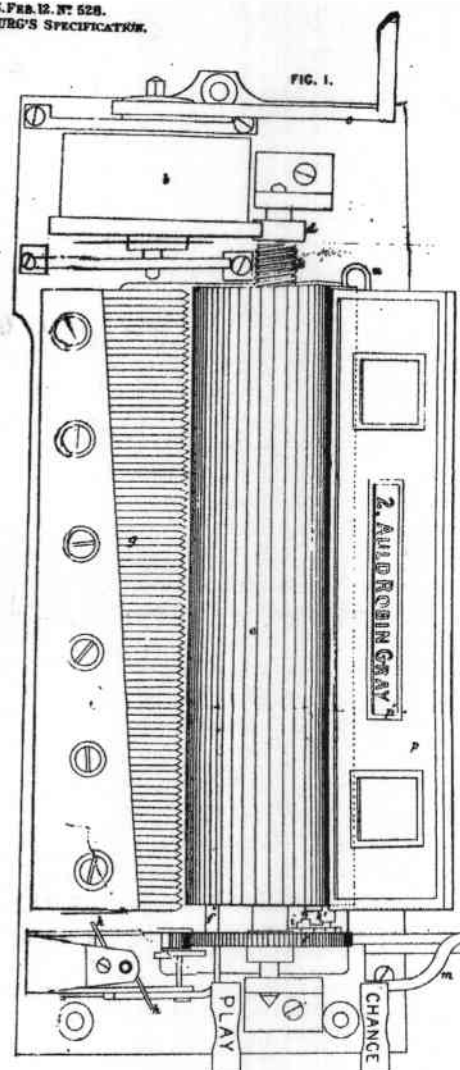
There is a 50/50 case for using it on non-ferrous borderline components such as operating levers and plain covers for bearings; but it should never get onto any main parts of "the works" - and absolutely never on a comb.

## Disc in cinema

Most of the visual delight in a cylinder musical box comes from the case and sometimes the tune sheet; the mechanism can only offer the sight of the lifting and falling comb teeth making patterns like the unattended notes of a pianola. I have heard zithers condemned for obstructing the sight of the comb teeth.

So what visuals can a disc machine offer? This

A.D. 1875. FEB. 12. N° 528.  
WEILL & HARBURG'S SPECIFICATION.



**Fig. 10. Part of the drawings on British Patent No. 528 dated Feb. 12, 1875 - Weill & Harburg's Specification. They show the combined claim for the tune indicator and control levers mounted directly on the mechanism.**

question is not very well answered in the eminent Swedish film *Elvira Madigan* (1967, by Bo Widerberg) which is set in the year 1889. During a meal in a restaurant garden there is an establishing shot of a 50cm Polyphon in the restaurant lobby and a child inserts a coin. Then in close-up only the bottom corner of the disc is seen rotating for a few seconds. The recording is good and is heard for nearly three minutes as background music to the meal in the garden - the long running explained by another glimpse of the child watching the rotating disc. Though nothing to do with the story, it makes nice sound and picture and provides good period detail - accurate within very few years. ■

## Letters to the Editor

*Letters sent to the Editor may be reproduced in part or whole, unless marked, "Not for Publication." Due to the amount of work involved in producing the "Music Box" the Editor regrets he cannot answer all letters personally.*

### Protest

#### Roger Booty writes from Essex:-

I am sorry, but I feel I must protest. Music Box, Volume 14 No. 5, has a centrefold spread which is very good on quality and content, but so poor in prior thought, ie how can anyone who binds their journals in any way whatsoever, read what is printed in the fold? Please, don't do it again will you. On page 126-7 of the same volume, there is a short piece by myself. Before it was published it seems it was outdated, as over the winter months "Paulus Potter" was sold. It now resides in the collection of Teddy Reed of Amersham, Buckinghamshire. Keep up the good work, and I hope all is going well with your new "Nickelodeon".

*Editor's Note - The provision of colour illustrations in the inside of the magazine is always made without any charge to the Society. To keep these extra printer's costs to a minimum, the least expensive position for colour is the centre spread. If your binding strip obscures part of the illustration or text, then this can simply be remedied by inserting the binding strip into the next pair of pages, the centre spread will then be unobscured and still held intact by the printers stitching wire.* ■

### The Mysterious Pyke

#### Mr Simons writes from Derby:-

On page 83 of the current issue of The Music Box you published an article entitled "The Mysterious Pyke" and you attribute the authorship of this tome. I am, however, not the author. Someone out there must be disappointed at not getting his rightful credit. Your comments on page 72 should therefore not be addressed to me. Also, I was surprised to see that you had omitted to print Reg Mayes' report on the Sandiacre meeting held at the end of April. His report was submitted just too late to be included in Vol. 15 No. 2 and so should have taken precedence in the current issue. Certainly, lack of space couldn't have been the reason for this omission as the contents of page 96 could have been left until next time. I trust that this error will be remedied in the next issue. ■

### Appalled at AGM

#### Mr Cramp writes from Sussex:-

I was appalled at the behaviour or questions asked at the last AGM of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain to the Editor of our excellent magazine. I think that advanced notice should have

been given and everyone should remember that all our workers are volunteers and do it for the love of the job and to help the society and all the members. ■

### Saddened at AGM

#### John Powell writes from West Yorkshire:-

I was one of the members who attended the Summer Meeting and AGM in London this year who were saddened by criticism levelled at yourself as both Editor of the journal and organiser and host of the Autumn Meeting recently held at Ashorne. I for one firmly believe that the AGM is not the venue to raise subjects of this nature. I have spoken to many members who were present who are of a similar mind and am sorry if our silence at that meeting gave the impression of lack of support for the arrangements for the Autumn Meeting. I believe that any member who has a complaint or grievance and cannot get satisfaction from the Society officer concerned, then that member should address the matter to the committee. If the committee cannot satisfy the complainant, only then should it be raised at an AGM having given prior notice (as present rules require) and the matter settled by a vote of members present. It is grossly unfair and unethical to expect any officer to answer certain questions and any accusations without prior notice. I thoroughly enjoyed the Autumn meeting and found the hotel accommodation excellent and was charged the special rate of £22.50 B & B for all three nights of my stay and had a very satisfactory evening meal for less than £14. Being guided round the Warwick Castle staterooms in twilight and the banquet that followed was a memorable occasion, made more so by the convivial presence of our American friends. Time spent at Ashorne was both interesting and enjoyable. Interesting to see the transformation that you have achieved with the building and the greatly improved facility for display of items of your collection. Enjoyable regarding the evening meal at Ashorne, the following cabaret, Adrian Little's talk and your guided tour of local and historical background of Ashorne Hall and not least the relaxed and friendly atmosphere achieved for the whole three days. Thank you also for allowing me access to the inside of your Black Forest organ clock. I now have the solution to several problems I have had with my own restoration. If value of these meetings can be measured by relating enjoyment and satisfaction to cost then I believe that this meeting is amongst the best we have had so far and look forward to our next visit to Ashorne Hall. ■

### Thank you

#### Mr Haiseldon writes from Surrey:-

We thoroughly enjoyed the Music Box weekend and would like to thank you for all the hard work you put in to making it such a success. It seems a bit odd to us that anybody could decide (presumably BEFORE the event) that the weekend was to be a "rip off". What more could anybody want? Value for money we give it ten out of ten! ■

### Never before experience

#### Ted Bowman our Membership Secretary writes:-

Again I should like to thank you and your good lady for all the effort which went into the Autumn Meeting. Never before had I experienced such a good evening meal as at Ashorne Hall served to so many people, and I fully support your decision to arrange it as a carvery. ■

### Enjoyable weekend

#### Lyn Wright writes from Worcestershire:-

Just a note to let you know how much Peg and I enjoyed our weekend at Ashorne Hall. It must have been a tremendous amount of work for you and Pat and Paul and no doubt others whose names I don't know. ■

### Exceptional moments

#### David Shanklin writes from Cardiff:-

Wow! What a weekend! It would take far too long to describe all my happy memories of this meeting but a few moments were quite exceptional - the superb atmosphere that greeted us upon arrival at Warwick Castle, where the dark red sky slipped behind the ramparts and the still air mingled with the soft American accents - was this true or a scene from "A Yank in King Arthur's Court"? An opportunity to view the inside of the castle was followed by a very entertaining medieval banquet...

The weather was not kind for the organ grind but we fortunate modern grinders could keep dry in the shopping arcades. Highlights of the privileged visit to Ashorne Hall? Again very difficult but from a personal point of view the picture piano orchestrions were exceptional. Juliet liked the Blue Angel and I had to agree that for some peculiar reason it also fascinated me - did I admire these uncouth musicians or feel sorry for them? I don't know. Coincidentally I believe the tune played was Bluebell Polka and as I heard it again on the radio this morning I have just ordered a copy from the music shop.

Back again in the evening all toshed up we were able to savour an enjoyable meal in the ambience of the Hall and relax listening to the Imhof & Mukle.....every note beautiful but perhaps suddenly aroused by a Rossini crescendo. That would have been more than enough but oh no - more to follow! Comedian, Can-Can Girls but the rising cinema organ was a superb sight to behold. Craig the organist was extremely talented and his virtuosity enthralled us all. I haven't danced for years.

One American asked if all the UK Meetings were like this?

Thank you, Graham, and Pat and Paul and the Sunday speakers for an excellent weekend. ■

### Fun weekend

**Bob Yates writes from Glenshaw USA:-**

What a super time our group had at your meeting. The evening dinner and entertainment was just super. We all had a fun weekend, any many thanks for your kind hospitality, and all your help to Diane and I for setting up some of our trip arrangements. Everyone had a fun trip to England, and we met a lot of new friends. Hope you come to Glenshaw sometime. You are most welcome to come and visit us! ■

### Swiss Society

**Monsieur Blyelle writes from 11 Boulevard DuCons Deharve, Geneva, Switzerland:-**

We read with interest the magazine of MBS and appreciate its contents and especially Oddments from M. Bulleid. We are sending you our annual contribution of this Society which we would like you to print in your magazine. Included is information from Caban which is neither Swiss nor French but Frankophone (people speaking French in Switzerland). Please tell us if you appreciate them. We have previously written about our exhibition held in the musee du chateau de Montbeliard entitled La Boyt exhibitioon which received 5,000 visitors during the 2.5 months it was open to the middle of January 1990. We are sorry to see that the MBSGB has not published this information.

*Editors Note - It would be certainly nice to publish information from Geneva, but an English magazine must print in English and I would welcome a translation from Frankophone, a language which I must admit I have never even heard of, into English. I expect someone understanding French would stand some chance of translating this "Swiss French" for us. Any volunteer please contact your Editor. ■*

### Assistance required

**John and Joyce Turner write from 33 Water Lane, Middlestown, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4PX:-**

Being a street organ enthusiast and

collecting the sum of £1300 last year for the Wakefield Hospice, I am organising "A CAVALCADE OF MECHANICAL MUSIC" at the Theatre Royal and Opera House, Wakefield on the 25th October 1992. It is hoped that a sum in excess of £2000 will be raised on the night.

I am appealing to the members of the M.B.S. G.B. for assistance. To fit in with the script being written for this unique evenings entertainment we require the offer by members to loan the following instruments and to operate them..

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7. Early type Gramophones.

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Any member who owns a particular instrument that we have not listed and is willing to bring it along - please let me know.

We shall require the persons loaning the equipment to operate it on the stage. One of the final scenes will be a modern home with the latest in audio - this being arranged by an Internationally famous audio equipment manufacturer. The grand finale will be a Fair Organ in all its glory.

We have already been offered the services of a Television presenter who is prepared to act as the link person and narrator. The script is being prepared

by an experienced script writer. Members of a Theatre, Operatic Group and Corps de Ballet will also be participating.

We regret that we will be unable to offer a fee, but we can ensure a most enjoyable and interesting time. If you are willing in assisting and participating with us on this evening in the surroundings of a beautiful recently restored old Theatre - please let me know what you can offer.

Please help us. ■

### Addendum to Vol. 15, No. 3.

On page 83 the article "The Mysterious Pyke" was wrongly credited to Nicholas Simons. This item was in fact submitted by Roy Ison. Your Editor apologises for this error. Contributors are asked to include their name on any article or photo submitted as any accompanying correspondence can become separated during print production.

### ANSWERS TO CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

**ACROSS:** 1. Overture; 5. Handel; 9. Auctions; 10. Values; 12. In line; 13. Blood-red; 15. Accelerate; 17. Clog; 19. Aria; 20. Tannhauser; 23. Operatic; 24. Etched; 27. Icicle; 28. Hornpipe; 29. Ninety; 30. Gentries.  
**DOWN:** 1. Ocarina; 2. Excel; 3. Triangle; 4. Rend; 6. Amazon; 7. Drumrolls; 8. Lost dog; 11. Flutina; 14. Organic; 16. Criterion; 18. Castanet; 19. Aeolian; 21. Redress; 22. Pallet; 25. Haiti; 26. Coda.

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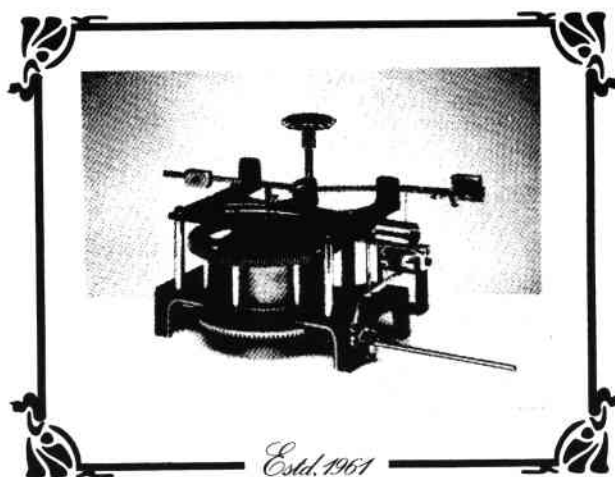
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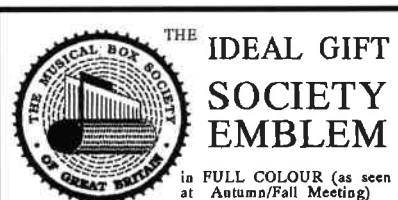
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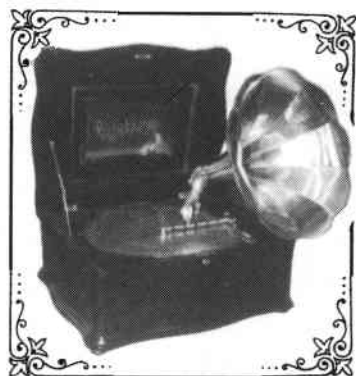
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