

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 17 Number 6

Summer 1996

Edited by Graham Whitehead

The Music Box



Inside

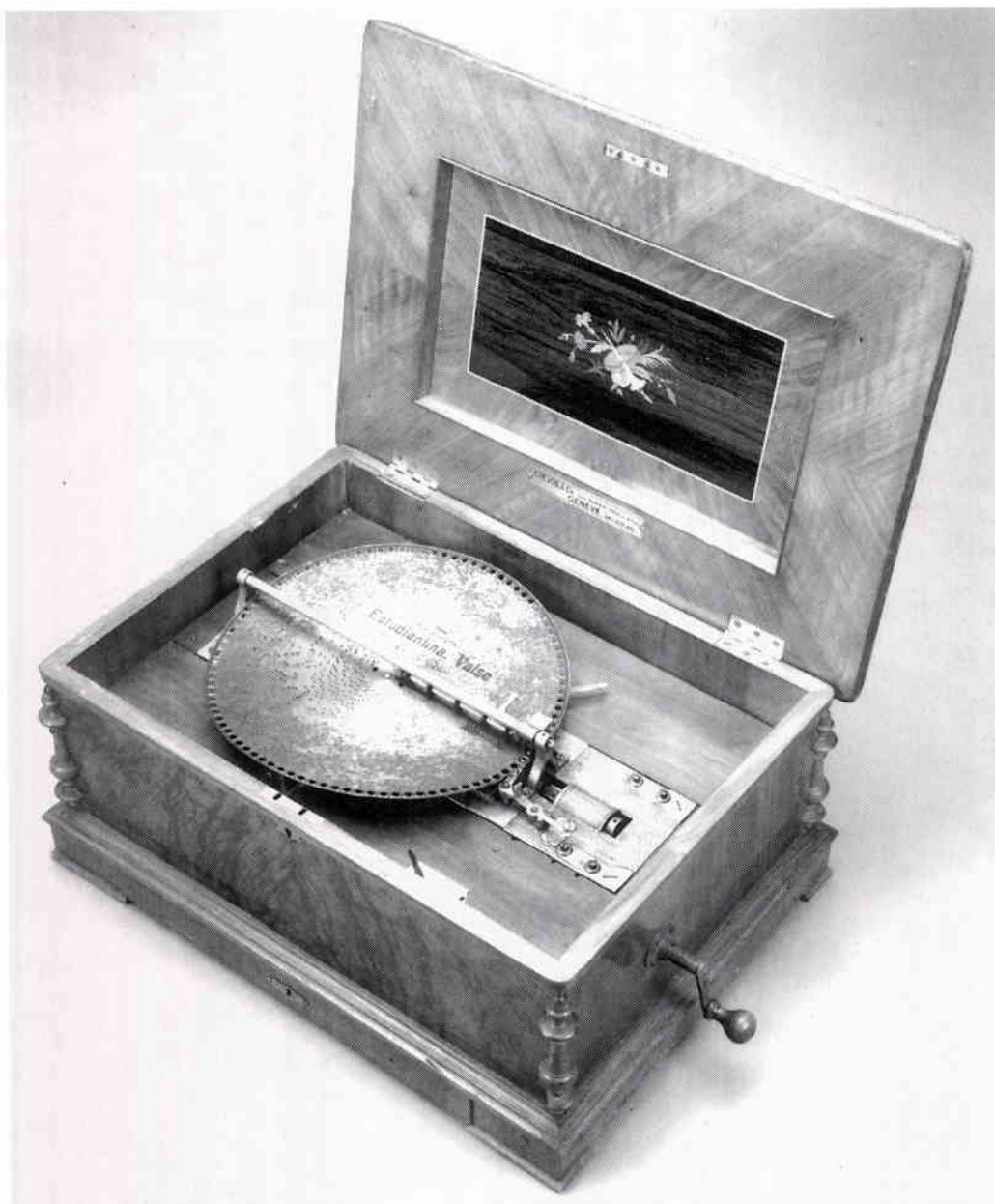
The Scribe of Jaquet-Droz

Barrel Organs

Mechanical Zithers - the Chordephon

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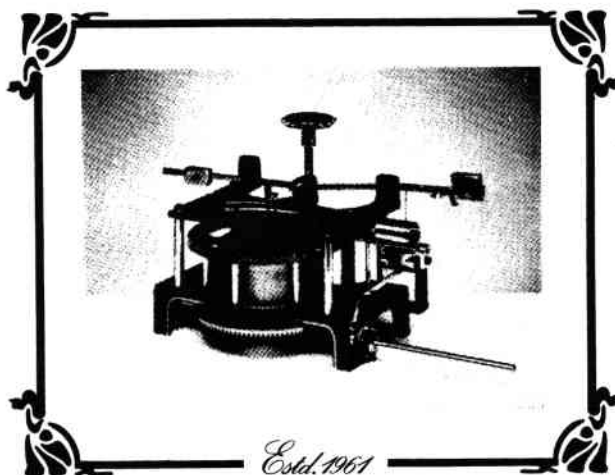
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The Music Box

An International Magazine
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the
Musical Box Society
of Great Britain.

Volume 17
Number 6
Summer 1996

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The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editor expressly reserves the right to amend or refuse any of the foregoing.

Any contribution is accepted on the understanding that its author is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in it and the publication of such contributions does not necessarily imply that any such opinions therein are those of the Society or its Editor.

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Front Cover:

A Victorian lithograph postcard.

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SOCIETY TOPICS

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Society A.G.M. & Auction
Saturday, 1st June 1996
at Ashorne Hall**

Ashorne Hall is located and signposted from Junction 13 of the M40 (from the north Junction 14). It is the home of your editor Graham Whitehead whose collection will be demonstrated during the visit. The programme is as follows:

- 09.30 - 10.00 Registration.
- 10.00 - 10.30 Coffee.
- 10.30 - 12.00 A.G.M.
- 12.00 - 13.00 Lunch break, small plated buffet included.
- 13.00 - 14.00 Auction viewing and Steam Train rides.

14.00 - Society Auction followed by a mini concert on the Mighty Cinema Organ by Craig Boswell, resident organist and conducted tours of the Mechanical Music Museum.

Registration fee of £8.00 includes morning coffee, one course plated buffet and Mighty Cinema Organ Show. Conducted tour free. Licensed bar facilities and cafe. Train tickets £1.50. ■

**Autumn Meeting
13th - 15th September 1996
The Green Dragon,
Broad Street,
Hereford HR4 9BG,
Tel: 01432 272506**

Saturday Morning - Registration 9.30 - 10.00.

10.15 - Leave hotel by coach to visit The Lost Street Museum at Ross-on-Wye.

Wye. The museum is an interesting time capsule of shops and a pub dating from 1885-1935. There is a fine collection of mechanical music machines and lots more besides. Members can make their own arrangements for lunch at the many restaurants and pubs in Ross-on-Wye.

We leave Ross-on-Wye at 2.00p.m. to travel to Hay-on-Wye to spend the afternoon browsing in the many antique and book shops. We shall arrive back at the hotel 5.30 - 6.00p.m. Society dinner 7.30 for 8.00p.m. After dinner entertainment to be arranged.

Sunday Morning - Leave hotel by own transport for a visit to Dinmore Manor and gardens, which is only a few miles from Hereford, to spend the morning looking around the house and gardens. Members will have access to the music room which houses an 18th century chamber organ and a Victorian Aeolian pipe organ.

Local organiser: Jill Haiselden. ■

REPORT ON PAST MEETINGS

**Spring Meeting
Godalming, Surrey
29th - 31st March 1996**

Knowing that this weekend was being organised by Ted Brown, we expected something special, but the really big surprise was to be told, with less than two weeks to go, that the Bramley Grange Hotel, which was to be our base, had burned down! The first reaction was that the whole event would have to be cancelled, but Ted would have none of that. In a truly remarkable display of initiative and determination, he located two other hotels able to accommodate everyone and sent out new instructions, complete with location maps. The accommodation for the full meetings was somewhat unusual but, as always on MBSGB weekends, everyone pulled together to make this event a complete success. In fact, one member described it as 'the best Musical Box meeting he could remember'. Praise indeed.

As always, dinner on Friday evening

was an informal affair at the two hotels, and members gathered at The Squirrels Hotel on Saturday for the first talk on the Programme given by Freddie Hill.

Freddie's talk was entitled 'Miserable Dumbledores,' but it was to be later in the weekend before we discovered the meaning of this unusual title.

His presentation was on bird organs, which he explained were often used to teach songbirds to sing. As well as playing a selection of bird organs from his collection, he demonstrated his considerable musical talents by playing, on the recorder, period music from the Bird-fanciers Delight. Mention of the word recorder so often conjures up visions of school music groups struggling - and often failing - to produce something vaguely musical, but Freddie produced a virtuoso solo performance of music portraying the bullfinch, canary, linnet and skylark. The delight at this presentation could be judged by the way members gathered round to ask questions and hear some of the bird organs again.

After coffee it was off to Bucks Green to be welcomed at The Old School by our hosts for the weekend, Ted and Kay Brown, ably assisted by Ken and Pauline Dickens. The Old School is just that - a school which the Browns have converted to a combined home and a living museum of mechanical music.

With such a large party to cope with, we split into two groups for the next presentations. One group were enter-

We need members to help with future meetings for 1998!

If any member would like to help as local organiser, to put on a meeting in their own area for Spring or Autumn 1998 please contact Meetings Secretary R. W. Ison. It is only with your help that we are able to locate meetings in different areas of the country.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain will take place on Saturday, 1st June at Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill, Near Warwick. The AGM will commence at 10.30a.m. and will be followed at 2.00p.m. by the Society Auction.



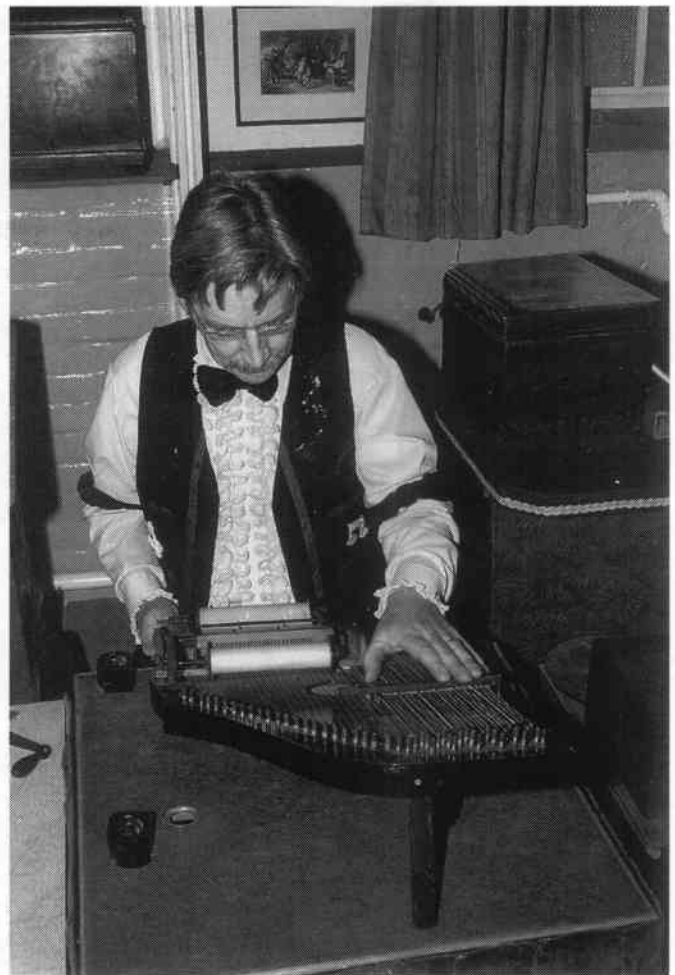
Anthony Bulleid's talk.

Society Auction

The Society's annual auction will be held at 2.00p.m. on Saturday, 1st June at Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill, Near Warwick. Christopher Proudfoot (by kind permission of Christie's, South Kensington) will be our Auctioneer and mechanical music items of any size will be very welcome. Viewing will be after the A.G.M. finishes and the Auction will be at 2.00p.m. A great chance to sell and buy. Commission rates - Buyer's premium 7.5%, Selling commission 7.5%.



Meeting organiser Ted Brown.



Ted Brown demonstrates his Triola mechanical zither at his Victorian Music Room Museum.

tained by Ted demonstrating a selection from his extensive collection, with his unique mix of humour and encyclopaedic knowledge.

The second group gathered separately to hear Anthony Bulleid speak on Tunes and Tune Sheets. In addition to comparing tune sheet styles and indicating ways in which they can be identified, supported by a series of slides, Anthony played three cylinder boxes - a repinned Nicole Freres, a Rivenc Guitare, and one un-named box - possibly a Paillard.

Before the groups changed over for repeat performances, we were treated to a splendid buffet lunch, courtesy of Ted and Kay, plus volunteers in the kitchen dispensing endless quantities of tea and coffee.

By mid afternoon we were on the move again, this time to Godalming Museum. Again we split into two groups, with Freddie Hill demonstrating the Museum's loan collection of organs, whilst the others were given a brief history of Godalming by Dr. Trevor Kinnea of the Godalming Trust and Museum. Amongst other things, we learned that Godalming claims to have been the first town in Britain to have electric street lighting.

Saturday evening saw the full group gather at The Squirrels for the Society Dinner. Through the generosity of those who donated prizes and those who bought tickets, the Raffle raised £211 for Society funds. The evening ended with live music

and some enthusiastic singing!

Our first call on Sunday was at the home of Peter Hoyte to see, and marvel at, his astonishing collection of old velocipedes, automata and mechanical music. The variety of items defies description - but dusting must be a nightmare!

And so to our final call, to the Mechanical Music Collection at Chichester. Clive Jones and his son Lester had opened the Collection especially for the

MBSGB visit, and we were treated to nearly two hours of superb mechanical music sounds. Many of the disc boxes were playing discs produced by Clive and Lester who have perfected the manufacture of discs copying originals on their own specially developed computerised machines. Of particular note was a magnificent three-disc Symphonion Erioca, but every item played to perfection and all too soon the visit was over.



Freddie Hill with his "bird" organs.

Japanese music's OK!

Your worthy news-reporter popped in to see Steve and Jere Ryder recently at their magnificent and palatial exhibition and display rooms in Summit, New Jersey.

For the benefit of new(er) members, their father, the late Hughes Ryder, bought the one-time Summit Opera House and converted it into a first-rate restaurant. Hughes, a very frequent visitor to our early meetings and our Vice President for some years, died back in 1980 and the business passed to his widow, Frances, daughter Stephanie and sons Steve and Jere.

The driving force in the family centred on Steve and Jere and they restored the 19th century city-centre building to its former glory. Conservation of old buildings and their restoration in America is still a rarity in a nation which prefers the process of total building regeneration via crane and swinging iron ball.

Today the Opera House is still a restaurant (street level) but upstairs is now offices while the upper floor is a huge reception showroom. Steve and Jere both trained in Switzerland and their business is in musical-box restoration. Jere specialises in automata and has undertaken some stunning work over recent years.

Their travels have brought them into contact with one of Japan's most extraordinary characters, Mr Kazuo Tashiro of Nagano. A former graduate of Tokyo University, he was employed by Sankyo Seiki as a music arranger and musical-box designer but now works on his own. He has devoted much time to the arrangement of Japanese music for the 15½-inch Regina. Steve has one of his discs - a piece of traditional Japanese music called *Cherry Blossom*. It is a stunning performance embodying extremely clever arrangement which produces a quality of music which even the old Regina arrangers never quite attained. I have never heard such fine sounds emanate from a disc musical box.

And, for those who think that Japanese music is atonal and tends more towards Schoenberg and Stockhausen than Mozart and Handel, you're in for a surprise. It's *very* good music!

Jim Colley

As announced very briefly by loose insert in the last issue, Jim Colley died on February 18th, 1996. Although he moved to Ireland some six years ago, his was still a regular face at meetings.

Jim was born in Bristol on the 8th March 1921, only child of a well-known pharmacist. His mother's family originated in the Swiss musical-box centre of La Chaux-de-Fonds. Educated locally, he first studied Law at Bristol University after which, in 1948, he joined the Post Office as an experimental



Worthing Accordion Band. The two accordionists on the right are member Peter Howard and his wife, Margaret.



Finishing the evening with a good sing-a-long.

Our thanks go to everyone we visited for their hospitality, and to all those who toiled in the background to make this weekend such a success. But most of all

our thanks go to Ted and Kay Brown who truly snatched success from the jaws of disaster to put on a memorable MBSGB event. ■

The Invisible Musicians

For six months last year the Parc Leopold Park in Brussels was home to a fascinating exhibition of mechanical music under the title 'The Invisible Musicians'.

Featuring 120 instruments, the collection covers the period from 1750 right up to digital pianos for the 1990s. To accompany the exhibition, Automata Musica Foundation have produced a glossy, full colour, 130 page, A4 catalogue. With text in French, English and Dutch, the catalogue features a selection of items from the exhibition covering cylinder, roll and disc machines as diverse as orchestrions and roll monicas, and including phonographs, gramophones and juke boxes.

Most of the significant developments in mechanical music are covered and the reader is introduced to the people and places involved. Technical information of the items illustrated is quite limited but the colour plates are of excellent

quality, some showing rare or unique instruments. However, the presentation is marred by a poor English text. In places the translation is excruciatingly bad, to the point where the real meaning is lost. Also, some technical terms have been 're-invented' by the translator. It is clear that a great deal of work went into this catalogue and it is a shame that the readability of the text is spoiled in this way.

Taken overall, the Invisible Musicians catalogue is an excellent publication and the deficiencies in the text are more than compensated for by the quality and variety of the illustrations.

Copies of the catalogue are available at £25.00 each including postage within the U.K. If there was sufficient demand we could look at ordering a quantity from Automata Musica Foundation on behalf of MBSGB members.

Alan Pratt.

research radio engineer. This position led to work at Goonhilly, Cornwall, on the first telecommunications space satellite, Telstar, in the early 1960s.

In 1970 he gave up this job and became self-employed, trading in and restoring antiques soon specialising on musical boxes and automata. Later still his restoration skills embraced cylinder re-pinning and extended to the repair of clocks and barometers.

A long-standing member of the Musical Box Society (membership no. 447), he served on the Committee for a while and wrote a number of technical articles which were published in **THE MUSIC BOX** and **MUSIC & AUTOMATA**.

Jim's list of interests and activities include a youthful spell as a practising radio-ham as well as an amateur constructor of radio and early TV receivers. A life-long motoring enthusiast, in the early 1950s he restored and drove with care and pride a succession of pre-War cars. Aside from this he was both committed and politically active in promoting the cause of working people and support for those affected by alcoholism.

After moving to Clonmel in Ireland, he took a close interest in the variety and richness of Irish life traditions and customs. He began to learn Gaelic while at the same time embracing the Catholic Church. His greatest pride came only recently when he was granted Irish citizenship.

While his expertise in the world of musical-box restoration earned him contacts and friends throughout the world, he remained a man who deeply loved the simple things in life - conversation, the company of friends, music, the human voice and song, poetry and literature. In all the years that your correspondent knew him he was never without the companionship of a cat although he confessed that he never went out to find one: they came to him and 'moved in'.

Despite failing health in recent times, Jim possessed unfailing good humour, an abundance of energy and enthusiasm, as well as a zest for life. When inspired, he would break into a round Bristol dialect and utter some apt epithet or words of wisdom. He was fond of quoting Ovid, saying "Take rest; a field that has rested gives a beautiful crop" or Picasso - "It takes one a long time to become young".

Jim married Joan in 1947. To her and their three sons, we extend our sympathy.

Jim was a good friend and counsel to the Society and will best be remembered in the words of his local Minister as a mender and restorer of things, who made them new by giving them new life.

Rallying round

Normally, our society draws the line at holding meetings in a bar, attractive though the prospect may be to some. But that's exactly what happened at Godalming last month - and everybody

enjoyed it!

It is now old history that the regional meeting organised by Ted Brown went horribly wrong through no fault of Ted's. It is, after all, not every day that the luxury hotel booked for a meeting gets wiped off the face of the earth. What did happen, though, was that everybody rallied round in an extraordinarily united way and two smaller hotels promptly bent over backwards to pool their resources for our benefit.

Of course it wasn't convenient. With half the members staying at the Inn on the Lake and the other half at The Squirrels, people getting lost in country lanes and so on, one could be excused for a few wry comments. But there weren't any and the meeting went off tremendously.

Besides a loud word of thanks to the hotels involved, Ted and Kay Brown and their team worked their socks off to see that things ran as smoothly as possible.

Somebody said it was a true wartime spirit of co-operation. We hope we don't have to put it to the test too often, though.

Round cheese-graters

Your scribe had not been to the Chichester Museum run by Clive Jones and his son Lester before. But being well-versed in ex-ecclesiastical surroundings thanks to long exposure in the late Frank Holland's disused Middlesex church he did not feel out of place in a West Sussex former church packed tight with mechanical music.

What is very unusual about this collection is that absolutely everything has been most perfectly restored. There is no detail which has been overlooked. And all the disc musical boxes play with a clankless perfection thanks to brand new discs which must be the envy of the average disc-box-owner.

The secret is Lester Jones' professional work in replicating music for musical boxes. According to his current price list he makes discs for 24 different makes of machine and in exactly one hundred different sizes. His extraordinary skill in producing high quality products is now recognised the world over and he trades under the name of Renaissance Discs.

The Museum is outstanding. Superb pieces, superbly displayed - and what a duo those two presenters make! Their sheer enthusiasm shines through a presentation which is that rare mix of convivial laced with a rich background of sound fact. No nonsense stuff at Chichester.

If you haven't yet been there, it's well worth making your first visit quickly - for you will go back again I am sure.

Euroclydon

Names from the past! Norman Vince was on the hunt for some details to help him restore one of his large orchestrion organs and, knowing that a similar one was illustrated in the book *Barrel Organ* by our President, he set about tracking it down.

The problem was that it resided in a hotel which was derelict when the organ

An Appreciation Bob Haiselden

It was with great sadness that we heard of the sudden death of Bob Haiselden.

Bob and his wife Jill became close friends of many in the Society and Bob's happy and deeply caring personality touched all who knew him.

During my term as President I had many crises to deal with and on losing the Subscription Secretary it was Bob who rang me to say he would take on this office for the Society. This was so typical of his attitude to life. To help, support and befriend, not waiting to be asked but to see a problem and instinctively putting his whole weight into solving it, that was Bob.

A modest man whose interest and vast knowledge of the theatre was known to but a few close friends. A subject he lectured on with the greatest ability and unfortunately died before giving his talk to members at the forthcoming Hereford meeting.

Bob's caring, happy personality is a great loss to the Society and to all who knew him.

We send our warmest thoughts to his wife Jill, his family and grandchildren, with sympathy in their loss of a loved one.

Alan Wyatt

Bob joined this Society in 1986, membership number 2025. Bob would have described himself as a mechanical music enthusiast rather than a collector. Bob was the sort of member who thought it a great privilege that he was able to visit the collections of others and inspect other collectors' items brought along to Society meetings. Bob was also a great Gilbert and Sullivan fan and before retirement worked in the ticketing division of British Rail.

Many other members, I'm sure, including myself would wish to be included in Alan's thoughts and message of sympathy.

Graham Whitehead

was viewed a quarter of a century ago. The Euroclydon in The Forest of Dean was a one-time spectacular place with a ballroom which could do justice to a vast barrel-operated Imhof & Mühle. But, after so long, would it still exist?

A story with a happy ending. Norman reports that the owner, relieved for some years of the burden of life, has left the instrument in secure hands where it is preserved. How nice to hear of something cheerful!

Harold Lapworth

With great sadness we have to record the passing of a much-respected member, Harold Lapworth of Nuneaton who died on February 23rd 1996 after a short illness. He was 73.

Harold was born in Caldicote near

Nuneaton and entered the profession of pharmacist, a calling which gave him special satisfaction. Even though he partially retired several years ago, he still operated several days a week as a locum and had completed 50 years in practice.

A devoted conservationist he was also an avid bird-watcher but the dramatic changes in farming which took place in the early 1970s and destroyed the habitat of so many species depressed him so much that he gave up the hobby.

Arthur Ord-Hume writes: "Harold possessed a real love for mechanical music. His collection was restricted to pieces of the highest possible quality which gave him immense pleasure.

"I remember so well his arrival at my former West London home one day. In his pocket he had a small gold snuff-box containing a tiny musical movement featuring twin stacks of grasshopper-leg musical teeth. The signature was Nicole et Meylan and the musical performance was out of this world. We spent all afternoon making tape-recordings and then writing out the music.

"The last time I met Harold was at one of the major London salerooms where he thrust into my hand a tiny musical scent-dispenser of great beauty and richness. Again it played from a miniature stacked comb.

"Harold Lapworth was a man who always said it was through me that he had become interested in mechanical music, yet it was he who consistently managed to show me things that were unusual, rare and exciting.

"Our world is a poorer place without his presence."

Harold Lapworth never married. He lived with his sister in the same home they had lived in since he was a child.

Een Top-hit voor en Cent

Are you planning a visit to Holland this summer? If so, you must take in the new exhibition at the Nationaal Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement in Utrecht.

Called *Een Tophit voor en Cent* - literally 'a pop-tune for a penny' - the exhibition comprises a large selection of disc-playing musical boxes and their music.

The exhibition opens on May 3rd and runs through to September 15th.

We also learn that the Museum is shortly to produce a new CD recording of some of its organs. This is being undertaken in conjunction with the Kring van Draaiorgelvrienden which will be sharing the production costs.

The recording will feature the Museum's renowned 'Double Ruth' organ which was built to play the music of Wagner without orchestral abbreviation, and the 61-note keyless Wilhelm Bruder Söhne built in 1910. This instrument, which only recently emerged from a comprehensive rebuild in the Museum's own workshops, is renowned for its sonorous trombones, the lowest of which is C which is even lower than the Double Ruth's 16ft G. The recording promises to be a cracker! We will keep you informed. ■

— Register News —

My thanks to Derek Shorter who wrote an interesting letter in the Spring edition of the Journal on the subject of Bois Durci. This is exactly the sort of information that needs to be recorded as it adds to our knowledge of musical boxes.

Hopefully, the Letters to the Editor section of the Journal will become more of a feature with members writing on items of interest and historical importance. By sharing our knowledge and becoming more involved with the Society, members can gain a great deal of pleasure and make new and enduring friendships.

Continuing on this line, could there be a case for establishing small groups or sections within the Society who have a common interest in a particular type of instrument? Such members could contact one another to discuss a problem, swap ideas, or state their needs.

The new groups would not in any way be a break away movement from the Society, but a useful augmentation to it. Groups would probably consist of a few members having access to each others name, address and telephone numbers on a STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL basis.

Members could arrange to swap information, discs, rolls, or offer a copying service, where appropriate, for the mutual benefit of all within the group.

Several groupings come to mind. How about the following:- The Rolmonica Group. The Forte-Piano Group. The 14 note Group. The Cabinetto Group. The Overture Box Group. The Tanzbar Group. The Nicole Group. The Triola Group.

These are just a few of the names that spring to mind. Groupings that could prove to be the means by which like minded collectors' get to know each other. Many would wish to join more than one section.

If any member feels that they would like to start or belong to such a specialist group, write to the Registrar giving details of your interest. That interest will be publicised in the next edition of the Register News. Note that the interest and not the person will be mentioned. Interested parties should in turn write to the Registrar who will then forward their letters in strictest confidence to the person who made the first move. It will then be up to these members to organise their group as they wish, remembering that the section is always under the umbrella of the Society.

Each year it seems to be a regrettable fact of life that some older members appear to lose interest in the

Society and cease their membership. Not being able to afford continuing membership is understandable, but I would strongly urge members to keep their interest flourishing and not to vegetate. Remember, life and the Musical Box Society are like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedalling!

A topic that should arouse interest and be the cause of many Letters to the Editor is the quality of Lecoultré musical boxes. The main criticism is levelled at the comb and cylinder areas.

Having listened to the comments of many respected repairers over a period of countless years, I am forced to conclude the quality control and build quality of a number of Lecoultré boxes is not what it should have been.

Some Lecoultré combs start off in perfect register, but by the mid section of the comb have wandered out of register. Sometimes a section of the comb is well out of register. Teeth require to be re-aligned. At least three of the well known repairers have noted that the tuning of Lecoultré combs is difficult and quite unlike the combs of other makers. Right from the start it has been noticed that some of their boxes were very weak in the bass notes.

A number of Lecoultré cylinders have been inaccurately pinned. In the Music Box Volume 17 Number 5 on page 133, Anthony Bulleid notes the difficulty he had with a Lecoultré Brechet box. Others have noted similar problems with cylinders. No one disputes the quality of the musical arrangements of these boxes, but Lecoultré could have done a great deal better in the accuracy of manufacture and on quality control. Of the two Lecoultré boxes I have investigated personally, both had inaccuracies in comb work which necessitated specialist help.

The pinning of Bremond, Nicole, Langdorff and other makers and their general build quality seem to have been of a much higher standard. It would be interesting if the well known repairers, along with those who have closely examined a large number of Lecoultré boxes, could find time to write to the magazine giving their views.

Finally, can anyone help with information on Fieldings Crown Devon Pottery? They were the people who made musical mugs and jugs in the 1930's. Often based on well known songs, that had a certain charm and appeal. "De ye Ken John Peel" and "A Bicycle made for Two" along with "Sally in our Alley" are the common survivors. This area of collecting seems to have been largely unnoticed. ■

Docti Homines

Being a review of contemporary
literature on mechanical music
published at home and the world
over as monitored by The Library
of Mechanical Music & Horology,
Guildford, Surrey.

The Keyframe, Journal of the Fair Organ Preservation Society, Number 1, 1996.

Chairman Peter Haywood describes how the FOPS archivist has been concerned about the preservation of their archives. As a result of this, the Society says it is about to move the archives to the University of Sheffield which is also the home of the National Fairground Archive.

He also discusses a potentially difficult problem which concerns anybody operating old vehicles, especially those towing organ trailers. The Department of Transport is pressing for old commercial vehicles, if they are used on the roads, to carry a modern HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) certificate. "We are totally opposed to being involved in HGV testing and plating as this would involve an operator's licence," asserts Haywood. "Organ owners are not carrying out a profit-making business - travelling organs to rallies and events is purely a hobby."

A major new book on fairground instruments, Scrivens and Smith: *The Circular Steam Switchback*, receives a review no fewer than five pages in length. Australia is a hive of mechanical music activity, even if it is spaced out a bit thinly. Midway between Sydney and Melbourne is the township of Bombala and this was the venue for what was proclaimed as 'the first FOPS rally in the southern hemisphere.' Three hours' drive from Canberra, the town's population of a mere 1500 was swelled to two thousand by organ buffs from all around.

The number of fairground organs around is surprisingly large and a four-page register of organ availability lists instruments from one end of the country to the other in sizes from a mere 20-key up to 110.

Hans van den Berg continues a fine series of illustrated articles on the restoration of *De Zeventiger* in Holland in a skilful translation by Andrew Pilmer.

Pianola Bulletin, Nummer 73 December 1995, and 74 March 1996. Journal of the Nederlandse Pianola Vereniging.

Jo Jongen writes on Scott Joplin and his influence on ragtime with the emphasis on the piano roll. Joplin's sheer musicality in the majority of his compositions seems hard to equate with

a man who had so little education and who learned music purely by playing it. It is thus even more remarkable that some of Joplin's later music was composed in the same sonata format as the early compositions of Beethoven who, arguably, had the better education!

The Mignon reproducing piano originally sold without a keyboard and could thus only be played by paper roll. Hendrik Strengers traces the history of this unusual and advanced instrument and reproduces an old advertisement from the Amsterdam distributors, C. Kettner.

The same author takes a fresh look at the business of M. J. H. Kessels of Tilburg, the company which made piano, harmoniums, organs and player-pianos. Besides their own roll-playing player piano called the *Delphin*, Kessels also appears to have sold German-made automatic pianos and reproducing instruments.

Not a lot is known about the Amphion Piano Player Company in Syracuse, New York. This firm made the Amphion Accessible Action for player pianos. Fred Bernouw and Jo Jongen describe the action and its history.

Finally a page facsimile of an advertisement for single-cylinder steam-engines must surely inspire somebody to make the first steam-powered musical box?

In the second issue under review, Jongen looks to the J. P. Seeburg Company and relates the history of the business which made player pianos (the *Autophone* was one) through to juke boxes.

Christo Lelie looks at Bartolomeo Cristofori whom he describes as 'a visionary instrument-maker'. In a well-researched article he relates how Cristofori developed the 'hammer-klavier' or 'instrument to play loud and soft' at a time when the harpsichord was enjoying a rich solitude amongst keyboard stringed instruments.

Player Piano Group Bulletin, No. 138, March, 1996.

The major contribution in this issue is a history of the American Piano Company which turns out to have first appeared in the Bulletin of the AMICA. In turn it seems it was produced as a case study by the Harvard Business School in 1934. This is significant because, in tracing the history of the business to 1932, it means that the report was based on current and accurate information.

The story is the more fascinating because it reveals how much mismanagement went into the collapse of the Ampico business. It is easy to blame the Wall Street Crash but in this paper we have all the blunders spelled out - a sale of the company to a management board that did not understand the trade, of marketing moves which alienated dealers and demolished years of brand loyalty and company reputation, of

diversification into radio sets, of lost money, lost opportunity and, above all, ineptitude.

The story of the American Piano Company is therefore one of the most important factual contributions to have been published for many years. It is hard to believe today that in 1921 the value of the ordinary upright player-piano market in America was \$29.85m and four years later it reached \$38.16m before declining to a mere \$273,975 in 1931. This is the stuff that movies are made of!

Three pages are devoted to a 'kitchenola' which turns out to be a compact-kitchen or caravan fitment nothing to do with mechanical music. The publication of this sort of nonsense does not endear the reader. This is the more so when, further on, one finds another three pages devoted to what are apparently new products. One of these is promoted as a portable piano player, another as a self-playing violin but since the pieces carry neither name nor contact address, let alone any indication as to who has written them, one is forced to conclude that perhaps it is another space-wasting spoof.

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes, Journal of the Association des Amis des Instruments et de la Musique Mécanique, No. 18, 2ème trimestre, 1996.

Space is devoted to the arrangements for the AGM which took place on April 21st in Lille. A list of mechanical music museums throughout Europe is interesting in that it includes a few names not listed elsewhere. There is also a sad reminder that France's greatest National museum, the Musée du Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers and its superb Musées national des Techniques is closed and will remain so for a very long while. This is due to the start of a long-overdue programme of renovation which means that the building had to be cleared.

Voyage au pays des Automates is the title of an article describing how a delegation from the AAImm visited Switzerland by arrangement with Christian Bailly who is president of the Association des Automates, Poupées et Jouets anciens. It describes visits to Sainte Croix and the workshops of François Junod and Michel Bertrand as well as the recently-opened museum of CIMA. There is also a picture of a brand new writing automaton made in the classic style of the Jaquet-Droz. This one, delicately called *Columbine répondant à Pierrot*, is by the Grenoble artist C. Laurent and was made in 1993.

The Library of Mechanical Music &
Horology,
24 Shepherds Lane,
Guildford,
Surrey,
GU2 6SL.
October 10th, 1995

The Scribe of Jaquet-Droz

by

Hendrik H. Strengers

If you have ever travelled through The Netherlands, you may have seen many traffic signs placed by the A.N.W.B. These letters stand for "Algemene Nederlandse Wielrijders Bond" ("General Dutch Union of Cyclists"). The A.N.W.B. was founded in 1883 and although the name has not altered since, it is in fact the greatest union for motorists in the country with far more than a million members, mostly motorists. So you can conclude that every member owns more tyres than the name of his club suggests! The monthly magazine of the A.N.W.B. is the most widely distributed monthly in The Netherlands. The title of this magazine is "De Kampioen" (The Champion).

In the Winter 1984 bulletin of the MBSI you can find an article about The A.N.W.B.-Carillon at The Hague, which was founded by the Royal Eijsbouts Bell Foundry on the occasion of the centenary of the union in 1983.

Recently the A.N.W.B. has visited the Museum for Art and History in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where you can find the three world-famous automata, created by Jaquet-Droz: the musician, the draughtsman and . . . the writer.

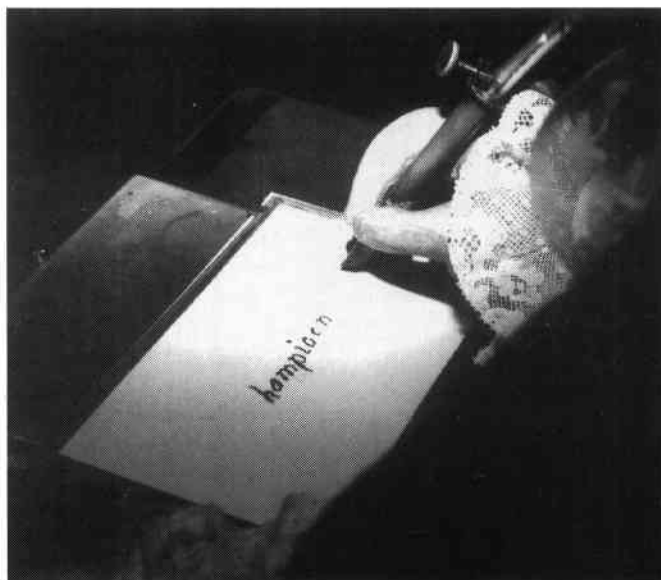
Pierre Jaquet-Droz (1721-1790) and his son Henri Louis (1752-1791) became world-famous by building three mechanical puppets now belonging to the Neuchâtel Museum.



The Scribe = Writer.



Mr. Yves Piller fills the ink-well.



In 1995 The Scribe writes his first Dutch word.

The credit for the essential part of the "Scribe's" (the writer) internal construction must go to Jaquet-Droz the elder. He designed it when his son was still an adolescent, but was assisted in his research by Jean Frédéric Leschot (1746-1824) and other skilled workmen. To quote the description by Alfred Chapuis and Edmond Droz (1956):

"The Scribe's mechanism is extremely complex, much more intricate than those of the other two puppets. Pierre Jaquet-Droz must have been faced with very difficult problems: the major one being how to lodge the entire mechanism inside this child-sized body and how to make the elbows and the arms command the movements of the wrists. There are two distinct sets of wheel-works. An ingenious system sets them alternately in motion until, without any interruption, the last full stop has been accomplished, thereby automatically bringing the whole machinery to a halt. The first mechanism is situated in the upper half of the body. It propels a long cylinder on a vertical axis composed of three sets of cams, each of which controls the levers which, in turn, direct the movement of the Scribe's wrist in the three fundamental directions. In this way the quill not only travels on a single plane but is equally capable of tracing the upstrokes and downstrokes of each letter, as in correct penmanship. Each turn of the cam forms a letter. Then the second mechanism starts: it conveys to the cylinder an upward or downward movement of translation. The length of this stroke is determined by a disc situated in the lower half of the movement; this disc has forty (40) interchangeable steel pegs fixed on its periphery, each peg being set at an angle of nine degrees ($40 \times 9 = 360$). Each individual peg impels the cylinder into a determined position corresponding to a specific letter or change of gesture (i.e. beginning a new line, dipping the pen in the ink, etc.). So it is possible to set the mechanism in such a way that the Scribe will write any desired text of not more than forty letters or signs."

The exact date of the creation of the Scribe is not known: the postcard picture of the Museum states 1769, but the book "Androids" (Scriptar-F. M. Ricci, 1979) states; "In 1773 the Draughtsman and the Writer were completed..." (page 18).

In the Summer of 1995 the Scribe wrote his first word in Dutch after more than two centuries! The word was "kampioen," the name of the bulletin of the A.N.W.B. In the issue of November 1995 the photographs and a short history were published. The photographs were taken by Mrs. Jacqueline Beckers and I have obtained special permission to reproduce these photographs in the MBSGB. Can you imagine that I am a little proud!

BARREL ORGANS

—by Laurence Elvin—

During the early part of the nineteenth century, a considerable number of Lincolnshire churches were the possessors of barrel organs. Gradually they were replaced by instruments of normal design, and at the present time very few examples remain of these interesting little organs.

Even in 1826 churches were disposing of their barrel organs, as will be seen from the following advertisements. In *The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* for August, 11th, 1826, the following appeared:-

"Barrel-organ to be sold. A very good secondhand barrel organ made by Lincoln, containing 20 popular psalm and hymn tunes, and well suited to a small chapel or church. The purchaser may have ten more tunes of his own choice, or an additional barrel for five guineas. Apply Mr. Brooke, bookseller, Lincoln."

On May 11th, 1838, in the same paper was advertised: "A large church barrel organ by Courcell, with 6 stops, £45," and on February 7th, 1840, we read that a large chamber organ was for disposal, as follows:-

"A fine toned machine Barrel Organ, built for the late Sir George Osbourn by Flight & Co., in a handsome mahogany case, 7ft. high, 3ft. wide, 2ft. deep, contains stopped and open diapasons, principal, 12th and 15th stops with shifting movement, and nine large spiral and other barrels in an extra case, set with choruses, overtures, and rondos, by Handel, Pleyel, and Mozart, the organ is now for sale at the original cost of the barrels only, viz., £40."

In Carlton le Moorland Church, near Lincoln, a barrel organ was installed in 1863, replacing the village orchestra which had led the singing for many years. It was placed in the old musicians' gallery at the west end of the church, and remained there until 1885, when it was replaced by the present one manual organ by Wordsworth & Maskell. In the *Graffoe Rural Deanery* magazine, 1885, we read that 'the old barrel organ was sold to Wordsworth & Maskell, the makers of the present organ, for £5 which was paid as part of the £14 for the bourdon stop of 16ft., added to the pedals in 1885.'

The name of the builder is unknown, it was bought secondhand for £45, and played thirty-two tunes. An old "serpent" hanging on the wall of the vestry serves to remind us of the village orchestra, which is still remembered by some of the old inhabitants of the village.

Huttoft Church, near Alford, still possesses a barrel organ, but it is now

in poor condition, having suffered from neglect and wanton damage. Nothing is known of either the builder or the date of installation.

There are three barrels, thirty six psalm chants and hymn tunes. The absence of "Amen" curiously anticipated modern custom. It was superseded by a harmonium, which in turn was replaced in 1916 by a secondhand two manual chamber organ. A further example may be found at Raithby Church, near Louth. It is placed in the west gallery, and possesses a case of deal painted to imitate oak. It has three barrels playing thirty-three tunes, and three stops: open diapason, stopped diapason, and principal. The name of the builder and date installed is not known and it is over sixty-five years since the organ was last used to accompany the services.

In conclusion, in *The Stamford Mercury* of November 23rd, 1821, we read of a new barrel organ being completed for Rampton Church, in the neighbouring county of Nottingham:

"Last week was finished for Rampton Church, Nottinghamshire, a superb, modern, Gothic barrel organ, built by Mr. Martin (formerly of the Theatres Nottingham and Stamford). The instrument is of the following dimensions, height 10ft., breadth 5ft., it contains 5 stops of pipes, including all the half tones, has 4 barrels, which are filled with psalms, anthems, responses, &c. We are authorized to state that the organ is made on the most approved plan, the tone fine, and the barrels pinned with the greatest precision, grace and harmony."

The installation of this instrument was the outcome of a special meeting of the inhabitants and occupiers on September 30th, 1819, when it was "unanimously resolved and agreed that a keyed Barrel Organ would be a great acquisition to the said church for the support of the singing therein." The meeting trusted "the proprietors and occupiers will cheerfully contribute to the furtherance of the same," the balance to be provided by a church rate.

There is no record of what happened to the barrel organ, but in 1871 a harmonium was purchased which was opened with some ceremony, as the organist and the whole of the choir from Armitage Bridge Church, Huddersfield, came over for the day. In 1902 an organ of one manual, built by Abbott & Smith, was substituted, preparation being made for the addition of a second manual at some future date.

This article was first published in the trade magazine *Musical Opinion & Music Trades Review* in 1936. It is reprinted here as a tribute to its author who died last September - see NEWSDESK, "The Organ Man," Vol. 17, No. 5, Spring 1996.

Collector's Showcase

The miniature singing-bird shown is of interest mainly due to its unusual case. This is oval-shaped, silver-gilt and engine-turned on all surfaces with ornamental borders along all edges. There is a watch inset into the front of the box which has no connection with the singing-bird movement.

The lid is intriguing in being engraved with a simple scene of a sunrise over the sea but the sun is replaced by an embossed crown. One is tempted to wonder if this has any significance! The bottom of the case has 'FABR.

DE GENEVE' and the number 170 stamped on it.

The movement is quite orthodox apart from being shaped to fit an

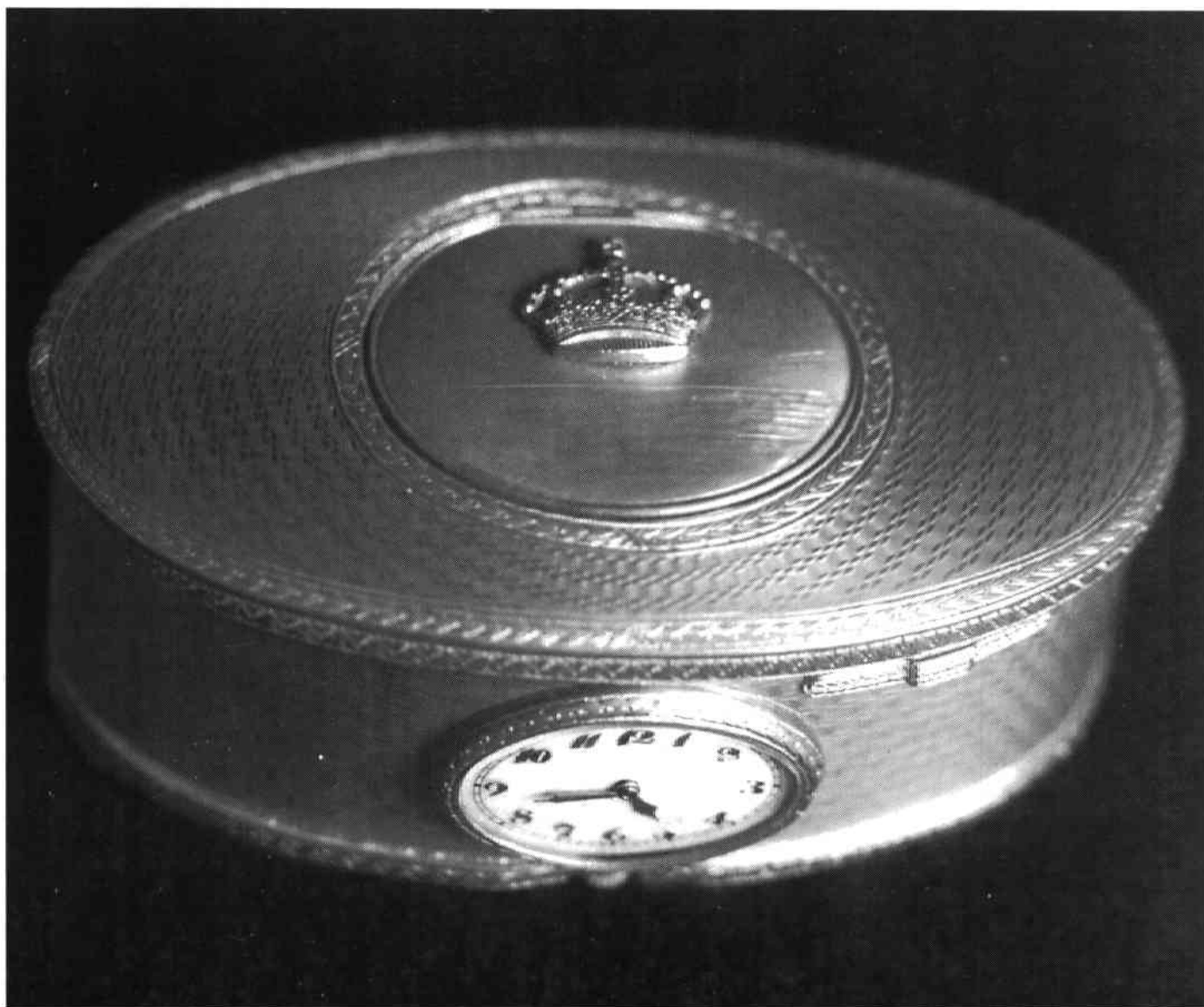
marked with the name RHYMYS but very little seems to be known of this name.

However, in "Musical boxes and other Musical Marvels" published by MBSI in 1987, Pierre Germain describes a box with all the same characteristics except the lid decoration. This box contained a cardboard spacer rubber stamped "C. MARGUERAT, Manufacture d'Oiseaux Chanteurs,

Avenue de la Gare des Eaux Vives, 18, GENEVE," and it has been established that he was there in the 1920's. The style of the watch and movement is consistent with this date. ■

Silver-Gilt Singing-Bird Box

oval case. It is not marked but the late Robert Burnett thought it bore a resemblance to one he had seen



Mechanical Zithers - the Chordephon

by

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

SPEAK of mechanical zithers and usually the first thing which comes to mind is the Triola, made to patents taken out after the First World War by Paul Reissner.

But while the Triola used an oscillating plectrum rail and a perforated roll of music, it still required the user/player to insert the accompaniment chords.

However, a fully automatic string-plucking machine had already appeared as far back as the mid-1890s. This machine, respected by discerning disc-machine collectors today, probably owes its origins not so much to the musical box but to the organette.

After the landslide success of Ehrlich's Ariston organette, Ehrlich went on to find other and more exotic uses for his vast library of circular perforated cardboard tunesheets. There was a license agreement with Johan Peter Nyström of Karlstad in Norway whose self-playing harmonium - the Nyström Reform-Orgel - was a 'disc-and-finger' reed organ forerunner of the player reed organs made popular by Wilcox & White, Aeolian and Estey among many others. There was also a push-up piano-player worked by a large cardboard disc which was sold initially by Grob and, later, Hupfeld.

Of all the Ariston-type music adaptations, however, the most attractive was the little Orpheus piano made by Ehrlich's own company. This played Ariston music which was widely available and was an immediately attractive instrument, elegant to behold and pleasing to listen to.

It seems likely that the potential of the disc for playing a simple piano combined with the great advances in the manufacture of metal musical-box discs may have been the inspiration leading to the evolution of the Chordephon.

Invented by Th Br Püttmann, M O Claus and P R Püttmann and patented in Germany in 1895, the Chordephon was a very unusual instrument and, initially, was made without any form of case. It was manufactured by a company originally called the Fabrik Mechanisches Zithern Chordephon Claus & Co which was run by Hans E C Felix and Armin Kreckler. The address was Waldstrasse 20, Leipzig.

There had been several attempts at making a mechanical zither and, indeed, there would be others including the unusual and unsuccessful Guitarophone. But the Chordephon was an instrument which played music discs and plucked its strings like a zither.

The first Chordephon, introduced in 1895, comprised a zither-shaped wooden box strung with 46 strings comprising approximately 22 or 24 notes. This model seems only to have been marketed for a short while and neither disc diameter nor even full specification seems to have survived. The advertisement for this in Leipzig distributors Peters' catalogue for 1895 says that 'Clock-work for this harp

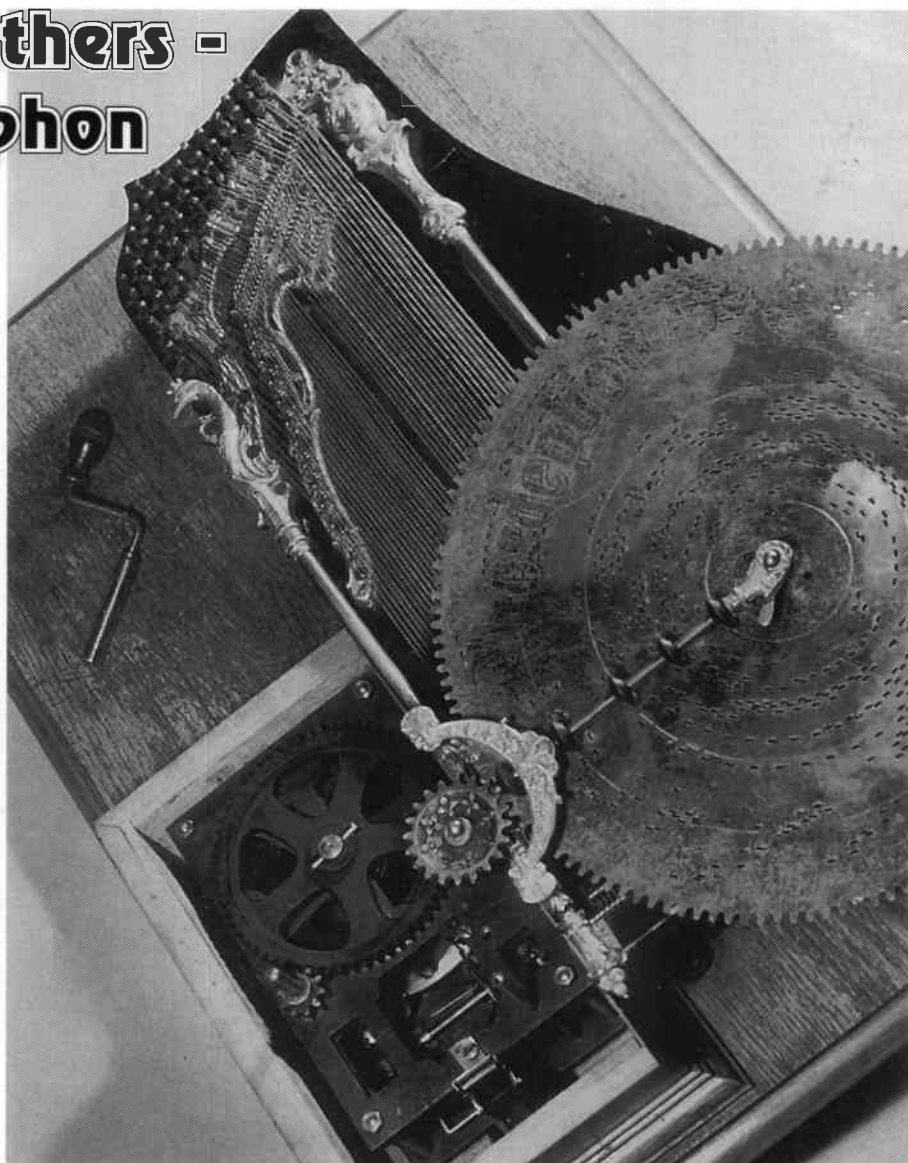


Fig. 1. Thirty-note Chordephon Bijou model playing a disc 11¼-inches (28.5cm) in diameter. The add-on nature of the clockwork motor (which has its cover removed) is very apparent. Note the unusual form of the disc pressure-bar which is hinged on a yoke so as to clear the drive pinion while at the same time allowing the first of the pressure-bar rollers to be as close as possible to the point of drive-tooth engagement.



Fig. 2. This is another variant on the 30-note style. The clockwork motor, now provided with a better winding handle and coin-operated, still appears as an extra item. In this picture, the disc is not in contact with its drive pinion due to misalignment of the motor assembly. The notice on the coin-slot reads *Einwurf 10 Heller* suggesting that this example was made for use in Switzerland.



Fig. 3. From the collection of Werner Baus comes this fine example of the upright-cased model playing 60 notes using a disc 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inches (50cm) in diameter. The case design is clearly after the *jugendstil* fashion.



Fig. 4. Interior view showing the disc in place and also the slim proportions of the motor assembly.

will be delivered not before January 1896, but will suit all those harps which have been bought in the meantime.'

Very shortly afterwards, a new model was put on the market which appears to have replaced the small one first introduced. This comprised a finely-decorated cast-iron frame on a baseboard. The string-plucking mechanism was beneath the strings and the whole was operated by turning a handle which in turn operated the plectra and also turned a peripherally-driven 28.5 cm diameter punched steel tune-disc. The compass was 30 notes semi-chromatic.

At a time when spring-driven disc-playing musical boxes were becoming the normal style, it should have been obvious that the idea of a manivelle was outmoded even at this early date. In response to criticism from both the musical-instrument trade and also the trade press, the following year clockwork-driven models were increasingly available.

By 1897, a variant having a larger compass was introduced. This featured a rectangular baseboard on top of which was a small handsomely-cast iron frame with strings for 44 notes. Initially this, too, was made as a manivelle and played a disc 36 cm in diameter, but the makers offered as an addition a detachable clockwork motor in a wooden box which would replace the handle.

Subsequently, this table-top model was available in four versions - hand-cranked, sold with an optional separate spring

motor, integrally spring-driven and worked by a manual on-off lever, and integrally spring-driven with coin-operation.

By 1898, both table and upright models were made. The company seems to have dropped the smaller, 30-note size and concentrated its efforts on the larger. In that year this 44-note instrument was available as the *Salon-Chordephon*, still as *Eichenholz-Untersatz* to sit on top of the table and priced at 138 Marks. At the same time, the *Chordephon-Salon-Schrank* was introduced, fully-cased and playing its discs vertically like the Adler or Comet. This was priced at 243 Marks.

Over the 14 or 15 years of its existence, the company produced a variety of models differing in detail rather than specification.

The styles of cases were numerous. As the 20th century opened, designs ranged from those in the traditional Polyphon and Symphonion genre through to the rising *jugendstil* style.

The largest Chordephon produced was also among the last. Playing no fewer than 60 notes, this was offered as a caseless table-top model or as a cabinet-contained upright. Its discs were 50 cm in diameter. An unusual style in the *jugendstil* was a peculiar 'compromise' version made, apparently, to stand on a table or counter. It comprised a plinth on which was mounted a fully-enclosed clockwork motor. A simple backboard thus extended to mount the unenclosed 50 cm musical

movement. An example of this very unusual instrument is illustrated in Witteloostuijn.¹

As regards the manufacture or build-quality of these largest models, the construction of the strung back or frame was robust while at the same time decorative. The lowest 15 notes were of heavily-wrapped single strings. From thence up the scale, the stringing was bi-chordal, the uppermost notes having three strings.

All of the upright models were provided with soundboard casebacks and the sound produced is very attractive. In view of the commensurately poorer-quality sound produced from the table models, it seems surprising that this style received such a long-term following. It was, however, far cheaper: the prices already quoted illustrate that the case almost doubled the price of the instrument.

During 1909 the company introduced an unusual style featuring a 50 cm mechanism fitted into the drawer of an otherwise rather plain table. This was advertised as suitable 'for use in restaurants'. No examples are known. At this time, the company called itself 'Chordephon' Fabrik von Musikwerke.

After 1909 the manufacturing company was reorganised and changed its name to the Fabrik Neuer Musikwerke 'Chordephon'. The address remained the same.

Chordephons were very well-made and played steel discs which were pinion-

driven through peripheral serrations. The plucking method employed disc projections as in a normal comb-plucker. The musical arrangements were quite satisfactory but fell short of being venturesome like, for instance, those of Bruno Rückert's Orphenion.

To recapitulate, there were four sizes made but the first was of limited duration and its details are now unknown. The three popular sizes were as follows: 30 notes 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inches (28.5cm); 44 notes 14.5-inches (36cm); and 60 notes 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inches (50cm) in diameter. By far the greater majority of models were of the second size; the smallest is scarce and the largest is rare. No examples are known of the small 'prototype' production machine.

Manufacturing quantities of machines can never have been as great as that of the comb-pluckers but nevertheless the Chordephon was a novelty which enjoyed a comparatively long period of reasonable popularity.

Its limitation was the old one which made string-playing clocks unpopular on every count except price. Unlike the organ and certainly the comb of tuned steel teeth, the Chordephon needed regular tuning. When you bought a Chordephon, you were also given a tuning-key. This worked fine if you had the ability to tune it - and until such time as you lost the tuning-key!

The pleasing sound of the Chordephon today stands out above that of other ordinary disc-playing musical boxes. As a disc-operated string-plucker, it is a novelty and, as far as collectors go, it is well worth having.

Make sure, though, that you keep it in tune!

Footnote:

1. Witteloostuijn, Jaco van: *Muziek uit Stekels en Gatén*, Frits Knuf, Buren, 1984. See Plate 92 on p.245. ■



Fig. 5. With the disc removed, the shape of the harp is revealed together with the detail of the finely-finished frame for the strung back.

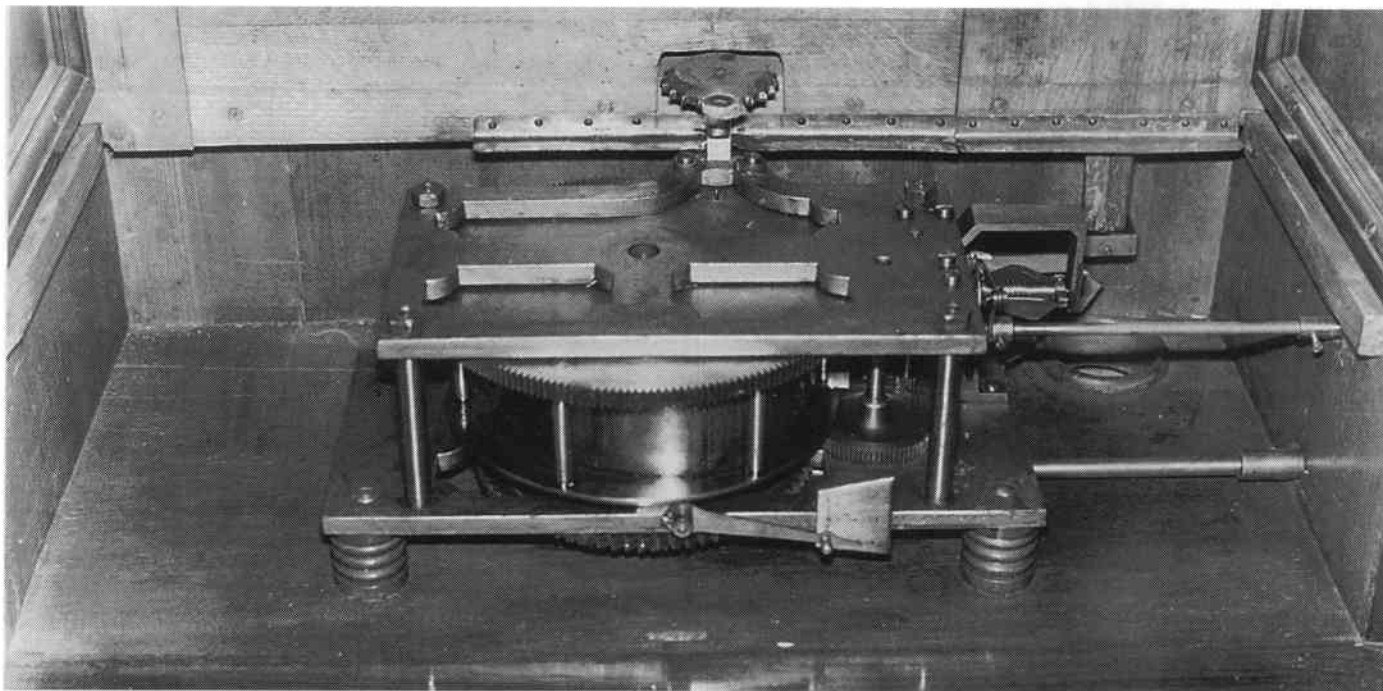


Fig. 6. One very unusual characteristic of the large-sized coin-operated Chordephon is visible in this close-up of the motor mechanism. If the Polyphon could be set to play two revolutions for one coin, then Chordephon went one better. The pointer right in the front can be set against the quadrant scale to play once, twice or even thrice for one coin. The coin chute is just visible top right. It is mounted behind the furniture board on the soundboard from a coin slot in the right-hand side. The second shaft which protrudes through the right side of the case (the lower one being that for the winding handle) is a manual start/stop push-pull rod.

Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 69

The versatile French composer Hervé (1825-1892) could, when required, be author, composer, conductor, actor, tenor singer or producer; and sometimes almost the whole lot, with his company on tour. He composed numerous short plays and ballets and about thirty full-length operettas including . . .

Chilpéric	1868
Le petit Faust	1869
La veuve du Malabar	1873
La marquise des rues	1879
Mam'zelle Nitouche	1883

These titles are not rare on tune sheets, – particularly *Chilpéric* (a French King about 550AD). Hervé himself played this title rôle in Paris and in the English version in London. He also conducted the promenade concerts at Covent Garden in 1874.

J. H. Heller

J. H. Heller of Bern (or, French spelling, Berne) was a noted agent for German-made orchestrions, and was keen enough to put his own name on some of them. One so named gained an award at the

1873 Vienna Exhibition. In August 1878 he planned to start making musical boxes. This news caused worries at St. Croix but they were short lived; Heller's musical box manufacture was probably limited to tabatieres.

Such is the Heller story as reported by Chapuis, and I have not seen it challenged. Also it is supported in part by Heller not being mentioned in Jaccard's 1932 book about the Ste. Croix region.

What Chapuis failed to report is that Heller acted as a selling agent for musical boxes from way back in the 1860s, adding his name to tune sheets so prominently that he was assumed to be the maker. A good example is shown in Fig. 1, which is to a design used by both Greiner and Bremond but altered to remove the wording *FABRIQUE* and *DE GENÈVE* from the top border and to use the spaces to state (twice!) the number of tunes. When your premises are in Berne you do not want people asking, how come you make your boxes in Geneva.

The musical box sporting the tune

sheet of Fig. 1 is shown in Fig. 2. It is a typical early lever-wind job, made between 1861 and 1866; it contains a hand-written note, probably by its first owner, dated June 24th 1866, in English, written by a mature hand. It sets out how to wind the box and how to use the control levers, – which are numbered in small J. H. Heller labels. The case, 19 by 10½ inches (48 by 27cm), has elaborate marquetry and multiple stringing on lid and front. The feet are made not with the usual triangular pieces but from two lengths of ¾" square fluted moulding joined at right angles – as sometimes seen under Greiner and Bremond cases. The spring bearings and the governor are secured from under the bedplate, and the case has red interior finish; both these features faded out in the early 1870s. At that period Heller was not even thinking of making musical boxes.

The 11" (28cm) cylinder plays six airs on a comb with 102 teeth of which the first six at the bass end are for the six bells. The serial number 1076 is on the side of the winding lever, the great wheel, both end caps, spring cover and the under case. Gamme number, 100. Blank nos. are 52 on bedplate edge, spring and governor; and 4 on cylinder details. The cylinder pins are raked and the lining-up dots are on tune 6 which means that the box was almost certainly made in Geneva.



Fig. 1. Heller's tune sheet for serial 1076 with his number added, No. 622 and 400, in lower border. On some Heller versions of this tune sheet the two panels in the top border are shifted towards the columns and the central musical array is removed, to make room for the Paris 1867 and Vienna 1873 medals. Latest tune is the hymn of Garibaldi, about 1860.



Fig. 2. Serial 1076, with marked *a* teeth (440Hz) and bell teeth. The bells are plain, with plain ball strikers, and cannot be switched off. Small Heller labels numbered 2 and 3 are stuck beside the control levers. The governor fly is not sprung (compensated) as claimed on the tune sheet.

The Geneva makers operating in 1861 to 66 were Nicole, Langdorff, Lecoultre, Ducommun Girod, Greiner and Bremond. The first three are eliminated because their serial numbers were higher at that time. Ducommun Girod boxes did

not lose their identity. That leaves Bremond and Greiner, who are by far the most likely—especially while working together. Their dates and output are charted in Vol. 16, page 107 and my second book page 65. They seem to have

started a new set of serial numbers in or soon after 1858 so serial 1076 in 1861 is possible.

Greiner and Bremond

That possibility is strengthened by a look at Greiner and Bremond serial 1111, gamme 102, a 6-air organ box of "typically Bremond" appearance, with 13" cylinder and 16-reed organ at the bass end, probably made in 1860 or 1861. It has the genuine original version of the Geneva tune sheet, identical with Fig. 1 except for the top border. It retains the microscopic credit to the lithographer, Kübli & Noverras, Genève, – as seen in Fig. 3.

The fact that this box was made by Greiner and Bremond is confirmed by their firm's stamp on the back of the tune sheet, shown in Fig. 4.

Théodore Greiner

At the Paris Exhibition in 1867, four years after their partnership ended, Greiner aged 47 and Bremond aged 33 both won bronze medals for musical boxes. Greiner also exhibited (without award) a brass *orgue mécanique*. Greiner certainly produced excellent musical boxes before, during and after the partnership, including organ and orchestral types, some with attractive landscape paintings behind the glass lid. His serial 12489 is a good example with 13" cylinder and main comb of 66 teeth cut in two to



Fig. 3. Serial 1111 tune sheet, printed in blue with headings and tunes written in matching blue. Tunes 1 and 5 are from 1831 to 1853 operas and the Labitzky waltz is about 1858.

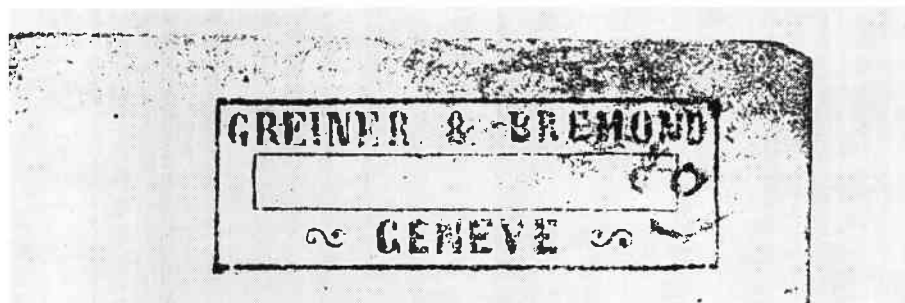


Fig. 4. Greiner & Bremond stamped in blue on the back of serial 1111 tune sheet.

straddle the 17-reed organ. Separate combs of 8 and 6 teeth serve the drum and the six bells which are in three vertical pairs – just visible with their

bird strikers in Fig. 5.

The case has multiple stringing and large, intricate marquetry on lid and front; the serial number 12489 is in very

small figures underneath. The tune sheet is exactly the same Heller version as shown in Fig. 1, with the same J. H. Heller BERN printed in the bottom border. It also has No. 1197 heavily written in the left corner of the bottom border, similarly to the No. 622 seen in Fig. 1. The claim "Volant compensé" is here justified because the governor has a small flywheel and sprung fan blades to reduce the speed fluctuations caused by working the bellows. The tune list omits all the composers, but tune 1 is *Woodland Whispers* by G. Stanley, 1857. Tunes 2 to 5 are from famous operas, the latest being *Faust*, 1859. Tune 6, *Giganten Galop*, ought to be easily seen but I cannot find it. However, it is sure to be earlier than 1860 and I am sure this box can be safely dated at 1861. It also



Fig. 5. Théodore Greiner's 6-air orchestral, with optional drum and bells, serial 12489. Photo, also Fig. 11, thanks to Sotheby's, London.

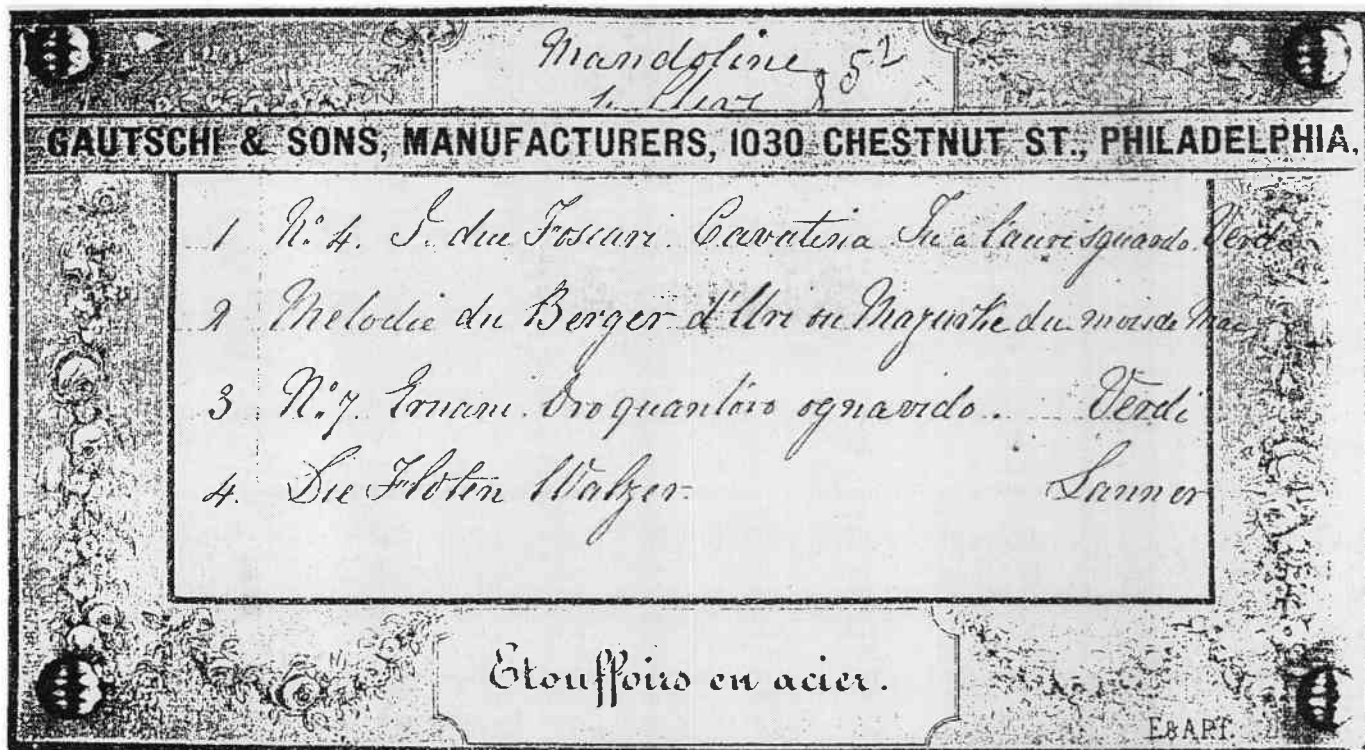


Fig. 6. Ernest and Amédée Paillard tune sheet for serial 896. Thanks to Larry Karp for this tune sheet and data.

fits the dating chart mentioned above . . the version in my book needs the Greiner line added, from 1850 to the start of the Rivenc line. It was shown dotted in Vol. 16, page 107 which is a later version.

More about Alliez & Berguer

Member Alan Robb reports from New Zealand another box of the type sometimes associated with Alliez & Berguer. Two were described in Oddments 64 and his exactly matches all their features except that its cylinder length in pouces is cast under the brass bedplate – $5\frac{1}{2}$ (= 6", 15cm). The serial number is 8545 and it plays four airs with 82 comb teeth. It was sold in

Manchester by I. Simmons, Watchmaker & Jeweller.

Its tune sheet, fixed inside the back of the case, has the same border design as serial 8458 (seen on page 23 of Vol. 17) and likewise has its gamme number 112 written in the left margin. All its four obscure tunes are so far untraced; but on serial 8329 the latest is 1854, so serial 8545 must have been made between 1855 and the end of the key-wind era, say 1860.

A maker starting from scratch might produce, say, 500 boxes in the first three years and perhaps 500 a year thereafter. So to reach these serial numbers the start would be about 1837 leading to

serial 8500 about 1856. I expect they also made plenty of 6" six air boxes; the four air versions are always more interesting on account of the excellent musical quality they coaxed out of at least 80 teeth.

The latest of these boxes so far reported is serial 11,139, key-wind with hinged glass lid – again with 4 airs but $6\frac{1}{2}$ " cylinder. The tunes are listed on a brass plaque inscribed Berguer et Fils and dated 15 juillet 1863. This must be a later phase of Alliez & Berguer but the box certainly comes from the same maker. Serial 11,139 coming at mid 1863 puts serial 8545 at about 1857. This box was noted on page 254 of Vol. 9, Spring 1980, together with serial 9209.

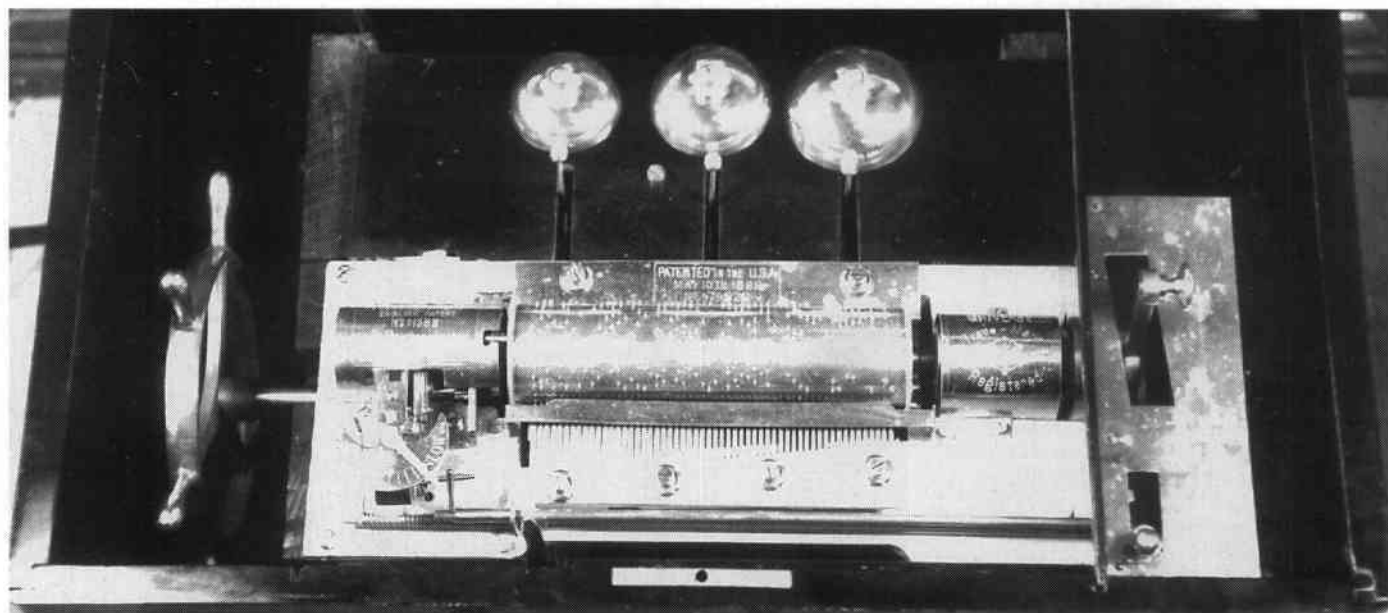


Fig. 7. Three-bell version of the "Universelle." Cast iron bedplate with integral bearings; speed controller over governor; spring below bedplate driving a lay shaft above with slot in disc to drive cylinder; retracting centre to release cylinder at other end; both ends with covers giving patent dates – continued on a plate behind the cylinder.

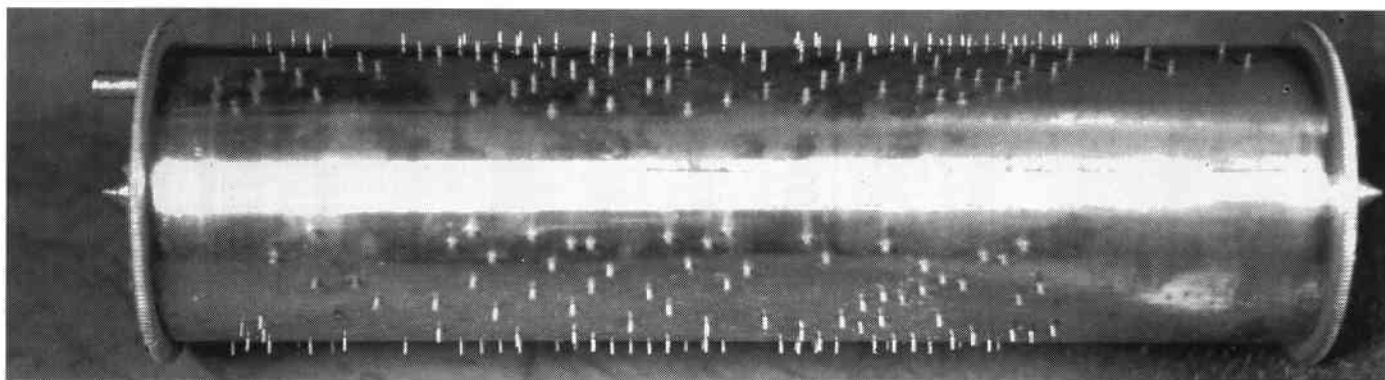


Fig. 8. "Universelle" cylinder with male centre each end, driving peg at bass end, and large knurled end caps for easy handling.

The finest of these boxes so far reported is a super-mandoline. Its 190 comb teeth, in several groups of eight, play 4 airs with cylinder a bit over 13". The serial number reads 788 in the usual style and position, but damage marks make it possible that there is a missing first digit. Just below it is stamped, in italics, *Allez & Berguer*, and Geneva in plain capitals, (the missing *i* in *Allez* has been previously reported). The mechanism has been altered to lever-wind and the three control levers are mounted on a complex brass casting bolted to the treble end of the bedplate. This has involved a wider but still plain fruitwood case, with a full-length hinged glass lid. The usual A B tune sheet is fixed to the lid.

A curious and noteworthy feature of these boxes is that they have tune sheets ruled to list twelve airs – hardly ever necessary in those early days. Another very curious feature is that some had tune sheet pins made by soldering two turns of thin brass wire around one end of a thicker piece, its other end cut to a point. Fascinating trivia. But I hope it will not be too long before we find out who actually made these A and B boxes.

Early Paillard super-mandolin

Examples of the high class musical boxes Paillard must have produced before or even during the early 1850s are very rare. Luckily an excellent one has recently turned up, with early serial number and identified tune sheet of known type. Best of all, it is a super-mandolin type, having groups of up to eight teeth tuned to the same pitch and a 13" (33cm) cylinder playing four airs on 192 teeth, serial no. 896.

The typical key-wind layout is exactly in line with Geneva standards (as listed in Vol. 17, page 81) which is not surprising when you consider that all Ste. Croix makers were buying blanks from Geneva at that time. You could easily mistake it for one of the "A and B" keywinds, notably serial 788 mentioned above, except that the serial number on the Paillard is in smaller figures. If this box had lost its tune sheet, it could not have been safely attributed to Paillard.

The simple blue-on-white tune sheet is the same as that on page 143 of Vol. 16, with modest E & AP fin in the lower border. This one has an agent's label stuck rather aggressively over it, see Fig. 6 . . . Gautschi emigrated from Ste. Croix to

Philadelphia, though perhaps not early enough to have handled this box when first sold.

Tune 4 is Lanner's opus 140, date 1839. Tune 2 is, unusually, given with alternative titles: *Melody of the shepherd of Uri* or *Mazurka of the month of May*. It must be an old folk tune from centuries ago: the Canton of Uri is one of the four original Swiss Cantons which surround the Lake of Lucerne. Tunes 1 and 3 by Verdi are dated 1844. So it is extremely probable that the box was made no later than 1846.

The serial number 896 is stamped on bedplate and great wheel and twice on the comb base. The case is plain except for fine marquetry and stringing on the lid; there is no provision for a glass lid. This fits in with dating earlier than 1850, and is a great help with Paillard dating. A few more such fixes would establish the early output of the Paillards.

One-tune cylinders

By 1890, when discs were clearly showing

their huge advantage of "extra tunes cheaply available," most cylinder box makers must have thought about "cheap available cylinders." One such thought was the "Universelle" patented by Cuendet & Develay in 1891. It had cylinders $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{5}{8}$ " diameter (19 by 4cm) with pins about .02" ($\frac{1}{2}$ mm) diameter playing one tune on a 57-tooth comb. The comb teeth had chunky tips like on disc boxes and robust dampers soldered to the comb base, rashly billed as "undestroyable." Tunes lasted about half a minute.

The 3-bell version of the "Universelle" is shown in Fig. 7. It is wound by pushing the capstan at the base end. The start/stop control lever is in the conventional position and operates on the stop tail of the governor by the rod seen over the front of the bedplate. The larger lever is for changing the cylinder. It also prevents the mechanism from starting, by lifting the stop finger at the left side of the governor. The cylinder, shown in Figs. 8 and 9, is easily grasped by the extended



Fig. 9. Label on the end of a single-air cylinder.



Fig. 10. B. H. Abrahams post-card sized Trade Card, discovered and kindly lent by Ted Brown.

end-caps, but a safety shield is also added over the tooth tips. All cylinders had bell pins so on non-bell boxes the three bass end teeth were shortened to remain inactive.

These very robust boxes were advertised by Cuendet on a Paris printing of the "lyres and stars" tune sheet, shown in Vol. 3, page 158 (Autumn 1967) or more recently in my second book, page 195. Written under the case shown in Fig. 7 is "8/3/98. 6 barrels. £6-6-0."

The makers were taken over by B. H. Abrahams, probably some time before 1900, as shown in Fig. 10 on one of their trade cards.

Even more modest one-tune cylinders came with the "Multiphone," an 1886 John Manger patent. It was a superior manivelle, though a clockwork model was also on offer.

The "Multiphone" came in a case $6\frac{3}{4}$ by $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches (17 by 15cm) with five cylinders, one of which was in the playing position, see Fig. 11. The cylinders were $1\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter (44 by 16mm) each with a fixed gear. This mated with a worm gear turned by a crank handle pushed in at the front of the case. Flats on the cylinder spindles ensured they could only be inserted with the tune gap facing the vertical comb teeth. Tune length was nearly twenty seconds but wholly dependent on the whim of the operator.

Probably these "Multiphones" were made wholly or partly by Mojon, Manger and Ch. Ullmann; the Ch U in a triangle appears on the cylinders and on the combined brass bedplate and comb base. They were certainly superior, and of course interchangeable, manivelles. ■



Fig. 11. Hand-cranked "Multiphone" with cylinders $3\frac{1}{4}$ inch long including gear and spindles. (Not to be confused with the 24-air coin-slot 1905 phonograph of the same name!) More details on page 37, MBSI Journal, Spring 1986.



Mark James is asking if any member has any copies of the six known Canon Wintle broadcasts from the 1950's? He has three of them as mentioned in the "Projects and Wants" in our last issue, but would like to find the missing ones. The national sound archive does not have them all either!

Thanks as always to those of you busy people who took time to respond to requests from last time, but I still need help for all catalogues as mentioned in the last issue, plus this additional one listed below.

I have nearly completed Symphonion 30cm Musical Box Discs, thanks particularly to Ralf Smolne in Germany for a copy of a 1908 catalogue which now means the only missing numbers are:-

3015, 3040, 3168, 3227, 3256, 3267, 3270, 3271, 3290, 3292, 3304, 3327, 3433, 3449, 3450, 3604, 3648, 3716, 3717, 3732, 3741, 3751, 3754, 3780, 3786, 3790, 3898, 3906, 3913, 3922, 3962. 3999 = highest number in first series. 35055, 35073 and above in second series.

The Regina/Polyphon list of titles missing from Graham Webb's book is coming along slowly, but many, many titles are still needed so do please list discs in your collection for me.

Mark James is currently researching the history of the Barrel organ. It is his intention, in the near future, to write a booklet: "Barrel Pianos, Their History, Repair And Maintenance."

He is compiling a register of Barrel Pianos. This may help anyone who is unable to successfully/authentically restore a Barrel Piano because of a lack of information about it.

It would be very helpful to him and others if you could participate in this project. Any information would be treated in strict confidence. The register would only consist of Barrel Piano details and under no circumstances would a name and address appear on it, or be disclosed to a third party, as to safeguard security.

He has enclosed a list of the sort of information that he is compiling. Any other information, history or stories relating to them would be most appreciated.

If you could help him with any information that he is requesting, please forward it to: Mark James, 28 Lime Close, Stevenage, Herts SG2 9QB (01438) 318866, so he can add them to his register.

Barrel Piano Make:
Makers Address:
.....
.....
Type of Piano: Hand wound or automatic
Mandolin or Tremolo:
Serial Numbers:
Size of Barrel:
Markings on Barrel:
Number of Keys:
Number of Bass Notes:
Tuning Scale (stamped above tuning pins):

List of Tunes:

1.
2.
3.
4.

5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Any other information, history or stories about it:

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.

Valuable information

Francis A. Cozzarelli writes from the USA:-

I recently registered my Ch. Ullmann cylinder musical box in The Music Box Register. The agent for the registrar, Mr. George Worswick, has provided me with very valuable information in my attempt to identify the tunes (the tune card is missing). His assistance included helping me locate the gamme number, providing a complete listing of all Ullmann boxes on the Register in format No. 3 and a copy of all the Ullmans that have tunes listed. I would encourage all members to take advantage of all that the Register can offer.

I would also like to mention that a note in the column "Projects and Wants" by Kevin McElhone resulted in responses to me about Ullmann boxes that were also very useful.

My membership in MBSGB has paid off in valuable dividends, in spite of the fact that the great distance has prevented me from attending meetings. ■

Congratulations

N. T. O'Shaughnessy writes from Hampshire:-

As a new member of the MBSGB I really must congratulate those concerned with the organisation of the Spring Meeting of the Society over the week-end of 29th-31st March 1996.

This was the first meeting of the Society that I have attended and I was very impressed with all aspects of it. The organisation was impeccable, the content

impressive and the company friendly and enjoyable, as a newcomer I did not feel in the least left-out.

Freddie Hill's presentation on bird organs was interesting and educational and got the week-end off to a good start.

What can one say about Ted Brown, he must be unique, and his collection of music boxes etc. outstanding. I thought that Saturday was very enjoyable, entertaining and educational, and would be hard to beat.

Peter Hoyte's collection was something else; never have I seen such an array of interesting memorabilia in such an outstanding location, I did not know where to look first, and at what.

So, full marks to the organisers of the week-end, Ted Brown and Alan Pratt and many thanks to the owners of the collections Freddie Hill, Peter Hoyte and again Ted Brown. The Society is extremely fortunate in having such talented people as members.

I feel sure that all other members attending this week-end will endorse my opinions, as many expressions of astonishment were overheard. ■

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