

An International Magazine of Mechanical Music

Volume 18 Number 3

Autumn/Fall 1997

Edited by Graham Whitehead

The Music Box



Inside

Collectors Showcase

Museum of Timekeepers & Mechanical Musical Instruments

Phonon Reed Organs

The Evolution of the Music Roll

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The Music Box

An International Magazine
of Mechanical Music

The Journal of the
Musical Box Society
of Great Britain.

Volume 18
Number 3
Autumn/Fall 1997

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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:

An automaton barrel organ by Bruder with seventeen moving figures and twenty-two key action - 23 1/2 in. (59.5cm) wide.
Sold 24th July 1997 for £25,300.

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President's Message

To those of you who do not know me, I feel I ought to give a little of my history in the Society. I joined in 1979, was invited onto the Committee by Cyril de Vere Green in 1980 and have been a Committee member ever since. I held the post of Subscriptions Secretary for nine years and Advertising Secretary for the last six years. During this time I have only missed one Committee Meeting and two Regional Meetings. I have always felt that as a committee member one should live up to the title and be 'committed' to the Society.

All of our past Presidents have given total commitment to the Society and I hope to do the same. All of the committee members are available to give and take criticism. Please refrain from standing at the back muttering the words of wisdom that could help the Society, let us know what and how you feel and what you think. As you will see elsewhere in the journal, we are circulating a questionnaire in the winter edition, please fill it in to help us know what you want from the Society. We have tried various roads but there must still be some left that we have yet to try. Our main aim must be to halt the slow decline of the membership numbers and then gradually expand the Society by aiming at other needs.

We need long term members, people who feel they need to join our Society. It gives the membership and subscriptions secretaries much less work if the new member intends to remain in the Society for some years. Joining up the milkman, next door neighbour or paper boy, means that the drop out rate of new members is totally uneconomic. Once people have seen or heard some instruments and boxes and seen your enthusiasm, you are half way to recruiting another enthusiast. Not every one can be the 'custodian' of one or more musical boxes, not every one wants to be. The one thing we have in common is listening to, learning about, and most importantly, enjoying mechanical music. We must encourage new membership by supplying lists of books, Audio and Video tapes, and collections that can be seen by members. Some of these collections may be in themselves a collection of instruments from a group of collections that are assembled together just the once. The collections may be thematic or random. Mechanical music is to be enjoyed by everyone, not locked away as an investment.

Let us all share in their sounds. Do you remember the first box that caught your complete attention, the feeling of wonder it gave you as to its sound, appearance, workmanship or whatever. Everyone can feel that. Watch the group of faces the next time a musical box starts up and then tell me the wonder is not to be shared. I have loved mechanical music for nearly twenty years, and this is endorsed by the many friends all over

the world that I have made as a member of our Society. To those of you that have enjoyed it with me, thank you.

I must thank Arthur Ord-Hume, our immediate past-President for his advice and assistance to me, and the support he has given to our Society during his term of office.

I look forward to my three years of office with enthusiasm. I hope you all feel the same way. Remember, the Society belongs to all of us, and only as long as we want it, will it continue.

Ted Brown, President ■

SOCIETY TOPICS

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Autumn Meeting
September 12th - 14th 1997**

**The Crown of Crucis Hotel,
Ampney Crucis, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 5RS**

Friday 12 September 1997

Gather at Ampney Crucis mid afternoon onwards.

Following the evening meal members are encouraged to display any boxes they may have brought along with any they may wish to sell.

Possible time scale for this, 8.00pm onwards.

Saturday 13 September 1997

Registration - 9.15 to 9.45am.

Members requiring a Soup and Sandwich lunch at the hotel at £4 per head should leave their order plus cash when registering.

9.50am prompt.

Quite a Novelty - Arthur Cunliffe.

An informal talk on musical novelties from the late Victorian age to the present day.

10.30am.

Short coffee break.

10.40 to 11.40am.

Reflections on Coming to Terms with Musical Boxes - John Powell.

A not too serious look at buying experiences and aspects of restoration.

Break for Lunch.

Either the ordered lunch or take your chance in the hotel bar. This can be crowded at lunch time.

1.15pm.

Depart by road for Keith Harding's Museum at Northleach.

It is suggested that members use their own vehicles for the relatively short journey from Ampney Crucis to Northleach. It may be beneficial to join together and use the minimum number of cars. There is ample parking at Northleach.

2.00pm onwards.

Members will be split into parties of around 20 to tour the museum. Whilst the first party visits Keith Harding's the second group may wish to visit the

Cotswold Museum which is close by..

7.00pm.

Society Dinner followed by professional entertainment from "Ale an' 'Earthy." A well known and highly recommended group.

Sunday 14 September 1997

9.30 to 11.30am.

The whole of this period will be devoted to a series of 10 minutes talks. We are required however to have cleared the room by 11.30am which should allow up to seven contributors to present their talk.

Talks arranged to date:-

Three boxes of bits - Arthur Cunliffe.

A look at a musical clock.

The Jager and Brommer Street Organ - Paul Bellamy.

Reymond Nicole and his early overture boxes - Roy Ison.

A look at a very early box.

My favourite Organette - Ted Brown.

Weird Drive Motors or You are not going to believe this - Lyn Wright.

John Turner will present a talk on his visit to look at mechanical music in America.

There will be a coffee break around 10.20am. More talks if time allows.

Sunday Afternoon

Depart.

Alan Pratt has kindly offered to conduct the Society Raffle on the Saturday evening. This will no doubt be as popular as ever. Please be generous and bring items for the Raffle. If possible, let Alan know what you intend to bring beforehand. We have had some marvellous prizes in the past, including a musical box!

Please Note:

It is eleven miles to Northleach from Ampney Crucis. Turn right out of car park. On reaching the new road works, turn right on to the A429. Signpost Stow/Burford. At cross roads straight on following signposts for Northleach. This is the Fosse Way.

Not far from Northleach is the Roman Villa at Chedworth. This is a fine example of a Roman Villa and is well worth a visit if you can find the time. You will see signposts to Chedworth from the Fosse Way.

Members are requested to settle their hotel bill and remove luggage from their rooms before the talks commence on Sunday morning. This gives the hotel staff time to get ready for guests arriving later in the day.

Those arriving before Friday might wish to journey into Cirencester where an Antiques Market is held every Friday in the Corn Hall from 9.00am to 3.00pm. Turn right out of The Crown of Crucis and follow signposts to Cirencester. At the ring road, go half round the roundabout towards town centre. Straight on at traffic lights and follow signs to a large car park. Walk towards the town centre and look for the Information Bureau and the National Trust Shop. You are there!

There is an excellent tool shop in the main street. On leaving the car park, go through a tunnel to you right to join the

main road. The shop is called Tabwell Tools (01285) 655268, and is on the opposite side of the road.

Friday is also market day. There are a large number of stalls down the centre of the main street.

Finally, this schedule may change in detail nearer the event, but the main topics will remain the same. I hope you will enjoy the meeting. ■

Christmas Meetings

There will be two one-day meetings this year.

Saturday November 29th

Ted Brown is opening the Old School House, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham, West Sussex.

Saturday December 6th

John Turner and John Powell are holding a joint meeting at: Edelstein, 33 Water Lane, Middlestown, Wakefield WF4 4PX.

If you wish to attend either or both meetings please send a s.a.e. to Ted and John for full details of the day. ■

Spring Meeting Wymondham, Norfolk 3rd-5th April 1998

Local organisers: Hugh Morgan and Richard Bartram.

Outline programme to date includes; an exhibition of music boxes and disc players from local collectors and a possible visit to the Thursford collection of organs and fairground items. Full programme details in the next issue of The Music Box. ■

A.G.M. - 6th June 1998

Venue to be decided at the next committee meeting. ■

Autumn Meeting Ashford, Kent

18th.-20th September 1998

Local organiser: Paul Bellamy. ■

Chanctonbury Ring

The revival meeting of the Chanctonbury Ring took place on Sunday 18th May at The Old School, Bucks Green. Twenty three members were present and, at a meeting hosted by Ted Brown, a good day was enjoyed by all. Several boxes were brought and played by members, and the general format of future meetings was discussed. Refreshments were supplied by Kay Brown.

We intend to have about four meetings a year, the next one being held on Sunday 31st August. Please telephone Ted Brown if you wish to attend. It is hoped that members coming from other parts of the country will be looking at the possibility of having similar meetings in their own areas, and can get a few ideas if they attend ours. ■

A Message from the Treasurer/ Subscriptions Secretary

Members' subscriptions are currently received by the Society by cheque.

Some members have suggested alternatives and on behalf of the Society I have been reviewing these alternatives.

Payment by Credit/Debit Card or, for U.K. members, by Direct Debit from members' bank accounts are not an option which is available to the Society, because the Society has insufficient

numbers and I am not prepared to accept on behalf of the Society the levels of charges which would be made by banks for this service.

This leaves as the only practical alternative payment of subscription by Standing Order from members' bank accounts to the Society, but this would only apply to members with U.K. bank accounts. Standing Orders were popular some years ago and many members took advantage of this method of payment, but the disadvantage is that when the subscription changes most Standing Orders do not and this left the Society with administration costs in chasing up the balance of the subscription owing each year.

I am looking at ways in which it might be possible for the Society to generate the Standing Order authority forms which we will then send to members for completion if they so wish.

If any non U.K. members have bank accounts in the U.K. and would like to pay subscriptions by Standing Order if that option becomes available, please let me know at 32 Queens Road, Reading RG1 4BA.

Your membership number is shown on your address label, as below:

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R. Kerridge ■

G.B. Members

All British members will have received information on an auction in Guildford. The property being sold belonged to a late member, Jim Balchin. The auction house gave a donation to the Society and in exchange we accepted the already franked letters and then addressed them for posting. Because of the Society's policy, names and addresses of members were not released to any outside agency. ■

REPORT ON PAST MEETINGS

Society A.G.M. and Auction Saturday, 7th June 1997 at Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill, Near Warwick

This year's AGM was extremely well attended with more than 70 present. Holding the Society Auction on the same

day is certainly an added attraction, but it is good to see so many members coming along to make their views known on the future of the Society.

In his final message as President, Arthur Ord-Hume paid tribute to the work of all members of the Committee and for the support of members at the events throughout the year. He sounded a note of caution about the future, however, for, despite a reasonably sound financial state, the Society was still suffering from a small annual reduction in membership.

At this point in the meeting, Ted Brown, the new President, having thanked the outgoing President for his efforts over the last three years, pledged himself to the continuing success of the Society. Among measures already planned is a Members' Survey which will be going out with the subscription reminders later in the year. The purpose of the survey is to discover what members think about the Society at present, and also what you think we should be doing in the future. It is hoped that every member will respond.

After the formal meeting a buffet lunch was served and, once again, the weather was good enough to take lunch outside amid the gardens of Ashorne Hall.

The auction this year had attracted over 200 lots, ranging from small workshop supplies and parts up to cylinder and disc musical boxes, plus a couple of street organs. Christopher Proudfoot, our auctioneer, conducted proceedings with his usual blend of humour and efficiency, whilst David and Daphne Walch performed a minor miracle in receiving, cataloguing and arranging the lots with their customary skill. In the absence of our Treasurer, Robert and Jackie Hough handled the finances.

The day was rounded off with a concert on the Compton cinema organ by Craig Boswell, the resident organist at Ashorne Hall.

Throughout the day there was the buzz of conversation as members exchanged views, renewed friendships and generally enjoyed talking about mechanical music. What better way to spend a day? ■



Arthur Ord-Hume hands over to new MBSGB President Ted Brown (right).

MBSGB – RHINE TOUR May 1997

Our continental tour this year took us to some of the wonderful mechanical music collections in Germany and, at the same time, gave the opportunity to enjoy the delights of the Rhine and Moselle areas.

Once again, our departure point was the home of Alan and Daphne Wyatt where we gathered for a 7.15 a.m. start. This was to be a long day of travelling, for we were to reach Koblenz by 8.00 p.m. A smooth crossing to Calais and an uneventful journey in air-conditioned comfort left us eager for dinner at Hotel Hoegg.

The next day (Saturday) we were off to Linz where they were holding a Street Organ Festival. The MBSGB party were given a civic welcome in the Town Hall by the Mayor of Linz before setting off



Organ grinders collect outside the Rathaus in Linz before dispersing around the town.



A welcome to MBSGB members from the Mayor of Linz.

to experience the sights and sounds of this historic city. Later in the day we visited the Linz Mechanical Musical Museum for a conducted tour of its many fine examples of mechanical music.

Sunday was a relaxing day with a tour of the Moselle region finishing with a visit to a small winery for lunch and wine tasting.

Monday morning was an opportunity to explore Koblenz in its unique position at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers, before setting out for Rudesheim where we were to be based for the next four days.

Rudesheim is a tourist centre for those wishing to explore this lovely stretch of the Rhine, with its vineyards sloping down to the river overlooked by the many schloss and castles which mark the somewhat turbulent past of this area. But for us the highlight of the



Weber Maestro – just one of the instruments in the Linz museum.



Enjoying the wine tasting.



Siegfried welcomes us to his museum.



An unusual exhibit at Bruchsal.

town was the visit to Siegfried's Museum of Mechanical Music. Siegfried Wendel is a larger-than-life character, known to many MBSGB members, who has assembled an amazing collection of mechanical music which is housed in a lovely old house at the top of the town. Our visit started with wine at a small bar adjacent to the Museum where Siegfried told us something of the history of his collection. We then spent more than two magical hours listening to the instruments as Siegfried regaled us with stories about each piece. His knowledge and enthusiasm, coupled with wonderful sounds, make a heady combination!

Over the next two days we visited two collections at Speyer with its massive exhibition halls filled with all kinds of mechanical history including cars, aircraft and, of course, mechanical music.

Our final visit was to Bruchsal where the magnificent Museum Mechanischer Musikinstrumente is housed in Schloss Bruchsal. With more than 400 exhibits it was only possible to see and hear a small number, but each was a delight to the eye and ear. Disc and cylinder boxes, automata, orchestrions, organs - the selection seemed endless. The final instrument was a carousel organ by Gebr. Bruder of Waldkirch which provided a fitting and stirring end to our visit to Bruchsal.

Thursday was a free day when Society members explored the area, taking the cable car to the hill overlooking Rudesheim or travelling by one of the numerous Rhine ferries to some



Siegfried with one of his exhibits.



MBSGB party with the Bruder organ.

of the interesting towns along the river such as Boppard, St. Goal and Bacharach.

And so it was time to return home. On Friday we travelled to Bruges for an overnight stay and an opportunity to enjoy this historic city. For the energetic there is the climb to the top of the central tower to see the carillon; for others a quiet boat ride around the city's canal seemed more attractive. Either way, the brief stay in Bruges provided a pleasant conclusion to a busy but fascinating week.

Our thanks go to Alan and Daphne Wyatt for all their efforts in organising the trip and for their generous hospitality at Landbeach. In all, 47 members and friends took part in this tour which was voted by many as "the best yet".



Some of the clock collection at Bruchsal.

NEWSDESK

The Euronef

Anything with the prefix 'Euro-' spurs palpitations in the breast of Euro-man. Have we not suffered enough with Euro-bureaucracy, Euro-beef, Euro-money and, most dubious of all, the Euro-MP?

So word of the Euronef savours of something to make our lives that much harder. Not so! The Euronef is a rather interesting project which could result in the creation of a brand new late 16th century style *nef*.

The *nef* was a sort of conversation piece or table decoration and the surviving examples, none of which is complete, all appear to have emanated from the workshops of the finest Augsburg craftsmen, notably the hand of Schlottheim.

Modelled after a galleon and usually made of valuable metals, the *nef* was a riot of mechanism. Surviving pieces suggest that they incorporated a clock, a clockwork *tableau vivante* or automaton scene, a mechanical organ and a working flintlock cannon.

One can imagine the impact made by such a piece at the dinner table as it advanced majestically along the table, probably towards the principal guest, rolling gently on its progress (thanks to special 'wobble-wheels' in its transportation system), playing music and displaying a moving parade on its deck. And then, at a certain moment, the music would stop - and the cannon discharge with a flash and a bang!

The three surviving *nefs* are all very incomplete. One, dated 1585, is in the Museum of Art and History, Vienna, the second is in the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris and the third is in London at the British Museum. Between the three of them, all of which are different in structure

and detail, it is possible to understand 90 percent of their workings. The music, for example, is provided by beating-reed regals which must have produced a majestic, if rather raucous, tone.

Now the European Government in Brussels has come up with a scheme to fund a research programme so long as it is supported by three leading museums in the European Community member-countries.

Because to attempt a restoration of any of the pieces is quite outside the interests of conservation and preservation, the proposition is to analyse all three and build a new one to replicate the best and most complete features of each. Master-minding the project is John H. Leopold who recently retired as Keeper of Clocks and Watches at The British Museum but is still to be found there working on an important catalogue project.

Leopold, one-time assistant keeper of the Groninger Museum, and the directors of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna are enthusiastically planning the new *nef* for which Jan Jaap Haspels of Utrecht has prepared construction drawings. It is proposed to build the piece at Camberley, Surrey, in the workshop of Ian Hammond who has already proved his mettle in the making of the replica Vallin clock and several other extraordinary and unique musical clocks.

However, there is an unexpected problem. The French museum, while supportive of the scheme, seems to favour a reconstruction of its specimen rather than ensure its correct conservation. Bernard Pin, a prominent Parisian restorer of clocks and automata, is proposing to rebuild this extremely rare piece.

When, in 1931, excavations of the

ruins of Aquincum to the west of Budapest revealed parts of a Roman pipe organ which had survived since the third century AD, the extreme rarity of the piece should have secured its future. However, having survived almost two millennia unharmed by the hand of man, the parts are now forever spoiled having been 'restored' by a Budapest organ-restorer in 1959.

Building a brand new *nef*, especially if it is to be paid for by the minions in Brussels, sounds a jolly good idea. Restoring an existing one is not an idea which should even be considered. This is no sleight on the reputation or capabilities of M. Pin but a plain statement of fact. France must preserve its *nef* for future study, not destroy it in a short-sighted rush for short-term kudos.

Top price for a Triola

Over the past years, *Triola* semi-mechanical zithers have been returning ever-increasing prices in the sale-rooms with hammer prices around the £1,600 mark

At the Society auction in May something of a record was set when two instruments were offered for sale. One, a perfectly standard *Triola* in good condition, was battled for by two members and finally went for £1,900 - the highest price ever netted for one of these unusual roll-playing pluckers.

Strange to say, the second instrument, which was an early model of a different design to the later production style but was possessed of a superior-quality sound-board, did not reach its £600 reserve: the bidding stopped at £500.

It goes to show that there's never anything you can take for certain in this business! In 1968 your News Editor paid all of £12 for a *Triola* with a case of 50 rolls.

Guineas back in the saleroom

The same auction drew some nostalgic sighs from the old lags who remember that, until a dozen or two years ago, London auction houses dealt in guineas rather than pounds.

Society auctioneer, Christopher Proudfoot, fostered some hilarity when, in response to a hopeful call in guineas, he held sway and shifted from pound increments to the old currency. Younger bidders, and one or two visiting members from overseas, looked suitably distressed...

But the real laughs came when a clutch of bags of old pennies came up for offer. The first, it was decided, were *Polyphon* pennies. The next were *Symphonion* pennies, then *Britannia* pennies and finally *Kalliope* pennies.

The bidding reverted to shillings - even half-crowns - amidst mounting laughter, but the shock truth only emerged after the sale was over. What was sold as *Kalliope* pennies turned out not to be so. They were ordinary public convenience pennies...

Carl Frei (1912-1997)

The world of mechanical music has lost one of its most significant figures of modern times with the death earlier this year of Carl Frei Jnr.

Carl Frei Jnr was born in Antwerp in Belgium on November 7th, 1912. There his father had formed a partnership with the organ-builders and restorers Eugene de Vreese and E. Fasano. In 1920, the Frei family settled down in the Netherlands' city of Breda.

Directly after World War I, Carl Frei Snr set up his organ business in that town. It was an organ firm in the broadest sense of the word: manufacturing new organs, restoring, altering or extending old instruments, composing and arranging music, and the actual programming on folding organ books as well as the pinning of organ cylinders.

Young Carl Frei - the only child - grew up amidst all this; from his eighth year he took piano lessons: he appears to have played the piano well although nobody in recent times ever heard him perform.

Unlike his father who had composed and programmed thousands of arrangements for the organs of the street, the fairground and, to a lesser degree, the dance-hall, young Carl Frei never wrote music. Once or twice he made an arrangement for organ of some popular melody, but his real interest in organs was predominantly technical. He was also a true master in the art of intonation and tuning.

In the 'thirties his father concentrated more and more on the composition, arrangement and notation of music while his son had the lion's share in the restoration of old instruments and the making of new ones.

On February 29th, 1940, Carl Frei married Catherine ('Toos') van den

Heuvel of Veghel (Belgium). Because his father had never taken out Dutch citizenship (he was, of course, a German by birth and upbringing), he and his son were summoned for forced labour in the Nazi war industry.

At the liberation of the South of the Netherlands in October 1944, the whole inventory of the Breda organ business was destroyed - instruments, parts, accessories and practically all the musical arrangements were irretrievably lost. This was a terrible blow, especially to the ageing Carl Frei Snr.

Without a penny to their names, the family once more set up an organ business in the native town of Carl Frei Snr - Waldkirch. Here they built up from scratch what was to become one of the most famous organ manufacturing businesses of post-war Germany.

The first years were spent in restoration: many instruments had suffered greatly during the war years. In 1948 the first new product was finished - an 89-key fairground organ. In the 'fifties, a number of new organs with 105 and, later, with 112 keys were produced, at first for German customers and later also for Switzerland, England and the United States.

Many pre-war organs, such as the *Lekkerkerker*, the *Tiet*, the *Golden Angel* and the *Schuyt*, were restored. By the end of the 1950s, young Carl Frei had completely taken over the business. His father spent his last years composing and arranging music up to his death in 1967.

In that year, Carl Frei Jnr became the formal owner of the business which up until that time had been in the name of his father only.

Carl Frei Jnr had only one child - a daughter Carla - and always regretted that after him there would be no successor. The dynasty ended on March 25th, 1997 when he succumbed to a fatal illness.

Carl Frei Jnr's most important contribution to automatic music is that he preserved, continued and extended the rich legacy of his father's craftsmanship. For some three-quarters of a century, the Frei dynasty has shaped and coloured first and foremost the organ landscape of the Netherlands and, beyond that, the characteristic Frei sound, not to mention music world-wide.

Since 1970, it was not just the various Frei street organs which increasingly brought Carl Frei Jnr to the Netherlands but also the Nationaal Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement in Utrecht which, following its move to the former Achter den Dom premises, had considerably increased space for housing larger instruments.

Here he worked on some of the finest historic Frei instruments such as the *Dubbele Biphone* and the *Schuyt*

Obituary

The death of Leslie Brown is reported in *Het Pierement*, the quarterly magazine of the Dutch Kring van Draaorgelvrienden, as having taken place on 16th November, 1996 at Elton Hall nursing home at Stockton-on-Tees.

Leslie was born on 16th July, 1909 and was aged 87. His record business 'Leslie Brown-the Showman's Record Shop,' 95 High Street, Stockton-on-Tees was in existence as long ago as 1965, a time when few recordings of street organs were available. He produced own-label 78rpm records of organs currently in England and his name was a byword amongst many record collectors.

Apart from English produced records, he sold imported literature and sound reproductions of mechanical musical instruments.

He produced an extensive up-to-date catalogue every year and his large and conspicuous stand at steam organ rallies was well known to enthusiasts seeking rare and new items.

Due to advancing years he ceased trading in 1991 but continued visiting rallies and meetings, even on the European mainland, often accompanied by his portable street organ.

He was buried on 22nd November in the churchyard at Durham Road at Norton.

as well as the *Dubbele Ruth*. And when, in 1974, Frei delivered his new 90-key street-organ the *Korsikaan* to Mr. Kors of Nijmegen it became another reason to increase his visits to Holland.

With the creation of the *Korsikaan* the son had once again proved to be fully worthy of the best and most inspired products of the father.

(We are grateful to the Nationaal Museum, Utrecht, for supplying the information from which this notice has been prepared - News Editor.)

Neville Rose

One of our sister societies, the Fair Organ Preservation Society, has lost one of its most influential members of recent times.

Neville Rose (1923-1997) was secretary of the group for 14 years in the 1970s and '80s during which time he made it his business to forge close contacts with other related bodies, the MBSOGB being one of them.

An avid and enthusiastic correspondent who loved fairgrounds and fair-organs, Neville advanced the FOPS in its standing at home and abroad.

Swiss chalet at Bonhams

An amusing auction report in *Clocks* magazine comments on a recent sale at Bonhams in which a Swiss chalet-type musical box fetched £1610. The

piece, standing 46cm high and incorporating a French striking clock movement, included a pair of doors which opened to reveal a courting couple on a balcony.

However, the report described it as 'a cylindrical musical box' which therefore elevated it from the merely interesting to a position of the greatest possible rarity. No cylindrical musical box has ever been reported. Its mechanism must be very, very unusual...

Hong Kong sale of treasures

Three weeks before the end of British sovereignty and the province was returned to Chinese ownership, Hong Kong's Hotel Furama Kempinski was the setting for a dramatic auction of clocks, watches and mechanical music by Antiquorum HK.

Of great interest to the mechanical-music collector, one of the many automaton watches in the sale was a gold quarter-repeating pocket watch playing music from a *barillet* movement via a stack of six tuned steel teeth. This was estimated at between US\$28,000 and 32,000.

A truly magnificent rectangular silver gilt and enamel pearl-set singing-bird box with a centre-seconds watch movement in the front was a highlight of the sale. Made by Jaquet Droz & Leschot in London and with the serial number 1293, it was dated around 1780 and completed later for the Chinese market.

Unusual was the singing-bird mechanism which was built within oval plates with a circular 'pill-box' brass bellows assembly. The *sur plateau* musical movement, however, was built on a rectangular base with 20 tuned steel teeth playing 'above and below' the disc.

The oval enamel painting on the lid of the bird was 'Playing at Thread the Needle' after the painting by William Hamilton RA (1751-1801) and engraved by Bartolotti.

The shape of the movements in this piece suggest that they were blanks destined to be mounted in the oval gold boxes of the type for which Jaquet-Droz was so renowned. The existence of the pair virtually rules out the possibility that original gold boxes were subsequently lost. The most plausible explanation is that they were left in stock and much later finished and cased around the mid-19th century. The bird, by the way, had eight controlling cams for its movement and song.

Other items in this glittering sale included musical snuff boxes, scent bottles and flasks.

This was also the first major sale since Antiquorum 'aligned itself to the buyer's premium rates in vigour at other major international auction houses.' The words are theirs, not ours. The invidious practice of imposing both

buyers' and sellers' premiums is one of the least attractive aspects of auction houses today. Initially a tithe, it now starts at 15 percent.

Now that even the smaller auction houses such as Tennants, Bonhams and other provincials have leapt eagerly onto the bandwagon, auction is increasingly becoming a bad place

to buy and a dubious place to sell. It also establishes an artificial price and valuation. By the time they have topped the selling price and tailed the vendor (adding in the cost of cartage, insurance and storage), there does seem to be an awful lot of money which disappears down that crack in the middle... ■

— Register News —

A landmark has been reached in registering well over 5,000 cylinder musical boxes. My thanks to all who have supported this project and made the whole thing possible especially the various restorers and repairers who found the time to send in information.

Would the member who bought the early Nicole box, serial number 20514, at the recent Society AGM, please contact me giving as many details about the box as possible. If the gamme number can be found, it may be possible to find the tunes from the Nicole file. In any case the box should be registered.

My thanks to Keith Harding who recently made his workshop records available so that all the boxes that have been through his hands could be placed on the Register. Details of ownership and location were not given so security has in no way been compromised.

New members of the Society may not know that Keith Harding and Cliff Burnett were among the first in recognising the importance of preserving and restoring musical boxes. When they opened their shop in London, they investigated and developed the idea of repinning cylinders and restoring boxes. This pioneering work made it possible to bring many a cylinder box back to life that otherwise would have been scrapped. Cliff also took a great interest in refurbishing disc machines. Their work continues to this day.

Recently, concerns have been expressed about the number of "over restored" boxes turning up at the auction houses. These boxes have been polished with brass work and combs shining like mirrors. Cases have been finished with modern spray polishes and have too great a shine. Of course the serious collector will avoid these boxes like the plague as it is virtually impossible to correct this type of work. The aim of all restorers should be to make any instrument like it was on the day if left the manufacturers workshop - no better - no worse.

To attack parts of a musical box with a high speed buffing mop spells disaster. Remember this sort of treatment will lead to a substantial reduction in the value of the item.

Members who have all or most copies of The Music Box going back into the mists of time will find John

Powell's booklet "The Music Box Subject Index" most useful. So much time can be saved by finding an article straight away. Added to this, it is interesting to see how many topics have been covered in previous issues. If you have not got a copy, may I suggest you obtain one straight away - No, I am not on commission!

Anthony Bulleid is undertaking more research into the area of makers and the tune cards/tune sheets used. His first article on the subject has already been printed in the News Bulletin of the Musical Box Society International.

May I ask members to support Anthony in his work by sending him good clear photographs of the tune sheets/cards adorning your cylinder boxes. Do not assume he will have an example of that type of card already. There may be significant differences in layout or style that requires recording.

To send in a photo *without* noting on the back, the mechanism serial number, along with any other numbers found, is of very limited use. If unsure about the name of the maker, please add a question mark. A sensible guideline would be if any information is there, list it!

The late Jim Colley wrote to me shortly before he died, on the subject of updating what we know about tune cards. He held strong views about this, believing it was the most important forward step to be made. I totally agree with his views. Errors made in the early days seem not to have been corrected and subsequent "finds" have not been included in any new comprehensive list.

A query that keeps on being made is why do some musical boxes seem never to have had a tune card/sheet pinned to their lids? In many cases the lids appear to be quite original and show no signs of pin holes. Could it be that the box either had a loose card or was sent out without having one at all? The latter notion seems very unlikely. A very limited number of boxes were sent out with a tune card holder that was fitted to the rear of the case. Often these were for interchangeable cylinder boxes. Could it be that the case makers were responsible for placing the cards on the box and some got lost? I am sure a few letters to the editor on this topic would be welcome. ■

Docti Homines

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

The Keyframe, Journal of the Fair Organ Preservation Society, Number 2, 1997.

The preservation of the FOPS archives has been a recurrent point of debate over the past year or so. The society finally decided to loan its documentation to Sheffield University, one of the 'new' centres of learning opened as recently as 1905. However, there the matter fell into difficulties for the university demanded a considerable sum of money to ensure the 'restoration' of the archives meaning, no doubt, cataloguing. This is a procedure common to loaned material: donated material becomes the University's responsibility. Therefore, being somewhat over a barrel, the FOPS has decided that its archive is thought 'not to be worth spending such large sums of money on' and so the lot has now been donated. This is because the FOPS itself has no facility for attending to its historical material.

The society now has 408 organ-owning members with 218 currently on the organ-availability register which means that their organs are available for public events and fund-raising.

No fewer than six members have died since the last issue suggesting an all-too frequent problem of an ageing membership. Among these is reported the passing of Neville Rose, secretary, and Harry Lee, one of the greatest advocates of traditional music for the fairground organ.

Pulling up old linoleum in his family shop revealed more than dusty floorboards to G. F. Webb of Lymington. An aged copy of the *Southern Daily Echo* for Monday June 9th, 1913 contained a report of a court case at the Isle of Wight Petty Sessions before dignitaries who included Lord Tennyson and John Oglender. The case centred on one William Ball, showman of Freshwater, who 'caused to be played a steam organ to the annoyance of residents contrary to the bye-law'. The report is tremendous stuff and includes exchanges such as: 'Do you recognise that a roundabout without an organ is a very tame affair?' and 'Some people [have] no ear for music'. The poor fellow, already with a track record of previous convictions, was walloped £1 with 19s. costs. At the sentence he roared the equivalent of 'Goodness me! That's a bit steep, your Honour!' and asked how he was expected to get his living if he was treated in so unfair a way!

The presence of a number of pages of tape, CD and video reviews reminds us that there are more recorded fair-organs on electronic media than ever before. And now the FOPS has its own web site as well. Have a look at it on <http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~fops>.

Het Pierement, Journal of the Kring van Draaiorgelvrienden, 44e jaargang, No. 3 July 1997.

The death of Carl Frei Junior is the lead story here under a box reading 'The Last of the great Waldkirch street-organ-builders is no more'. Wim Snoering's fulsome tribute, itself a biography of the great man and his achievements, occupies two full pages.

Gerdy Bijveld completes a sad tale of 'lost' Dutch street organs. Under the heading 'Where is the organ-man' he charts the systematic loss of instruments overseas. Organs such as the 60-key *De Vrees*, Carl Frei's *De Vier Kolommen*, *De Lange Cap* and *De Mondorgel* are just a few of the dozens of instruments which have been sold abroad. One may conclude that over the years the chance to reap immense rewards by selling instruments to wealthy Americans and, later, rich Japanese was not one easily turned down. Many bore the name of the late G. Perlee, the famous Amsterdam organ-renter/repairer/builder.

Tuning street-organs is the subject for a whole text-book. Here J. Brink concludes a two-part article on practical tuning which, having explained briefly the concept of the job, gets down to the useful bit in explaining the tuning systems of organs of differing makes. Tables explain the two slightly different markings used by Gavioli based on A (Gavioli) = C (the rest of the world). He ends, neatly, by saying that tuning is the real art of the organ-builder.

'Metamophose' is the title of an interesting article by Rein Schenk in which he looks at the life of an organ by Antwerp builder Emile de Vreese and styled *De Grote Vreese*. This fine dance-hall organ, originally by Mortier, has changed over the years. The story of its difficult life is told in words and pictures showing stages such as accompanying evangelists in Rotterdam and playing the streets in Delft.

Jan van Dinteren contributes a useful lengthy paper on the restoration and renovation of a pair of Gavioli organs. The archive pictures of the Louis Hooghuys factory are continued here with some fine old illustrations of trumpet barrel-organs, military band organs, dance-hall instruments and street organs.

Under the title 'The Unknown Bursens', Maarten van der Vlugt describes and illustrates some of the lesser-known products of this firm made between 1938 and, apart from a gap during the war, 1948. Several new names appear - those of Alphonse Bursens & Co and Bursens & Opdebeeck of Violetstraat 21, Antwerp.

More pictures from the MBSI Chicago convention follow in a paper by the same author. With the rather mystical title 'A Triple Highpoint', Rompke de Waard writes about and illustrates a newly-resurrected organ by Gavioli, the 89-key *Phoenix*. The work of Henk Veeningen, the style and decoration of this instrument is breathtaking.

Pierre Beckx is a name which appears occasionally on instruments, more commonly as 'P. J. Beckx-de la Fai, Tegelen, *Orchestrionfabriek*'. A respected importer, wholesaler and retailer at the end of the 19th century, Beckx comes under the scrutiny of Jo Jongen and

Mark Stikkelbroek who relate the story of this family in a brilliantly-researched paper.

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes, Journal of the Association des Amis des Instruments et de la Musique Mécanique, No. 22, 2^{ème} trimestre, 1997.

Opening this issue is the financial statement for the year to the end of 1996 which shows that, as with every other society, the principal drain on funds comes from printing its quarterly magazine. Last year this amounted to 70,320 francs.

There is an extensive report on the annual general meeting held in Lyon this March including reference to an outburst from one member 'Ritournelles & Manivelle's revealing an incipient rift perhaps?

Editor François Pinçon explained the policy of the journal and proclaimed that he would not publish material which was lacking in interest, unrelated to the subject or controversial. Come now, M. Pinçon! What's wrong with a good bit of controversy? Perhaps the call should be 'Polemists unite!'

Naturally, considerable space is devoted to the loss to the French society caused by the death of founder Claude Marchal and Philippe Rouillé presents a factual tribute to this great man.

Everybody's on the Internet these days. Visit the AAIMM on <http://www.cnam.fr/museum/>.

At the Exposition Internationale in 1878 there was an extraordinary exhibition of automata by one Pierre Stévenard. This created enormous interest at the time yet has been virtually forgotten by historians today. His figures rivalled those of Vaucanson and Jaquet-Droz. Here a contemporary report on this unusual man is presented with illustrations.

Étienne Blyelle describes a most unusual duplex cylinder musical box with bells arranged at the right-hand sides of the two cylinders. In *Sublime Harmonie* format, this Sainte-Croix product is not all that it seems for it is not a true 'duplex' but two complete musical movements in one case. One cylinder plays four airs on 220 teeth and the other six airs on 123 teeth plus ten bells. Altogether quite a piece!

After five pages devoted to gramophones we return to mechanical music with an excellent profile of the Flanders organ-builder Decap which sets out the history of the business and brings it right up to date with an organ which permits that most distressing of all modern human exhibitionistic failings - karaoke.

The opening of the new Museum at Mirecourt is described (see the previous issue of *The Music Box* for details) and there are also details of another museum in the South of France run by Thorsten Brix - Musée de la Musique Mécanique at Crillon-le-Brave.

News Bulletin, Member magazine of the Musical Box Society International. Issue 136, May/June 1997.

President Frank Metzger devotes his column to the twist in the saga of the planned NAWCC/MBSI joint museum

project, now scrapped. The MBSI Charter says that the establishment of a museum is the first of the society's purposes: some have questioned whether in so doing the publications side of the MBSI would suffer and here Metzger assures doubting members that this is an unfounded doubt. It seems a lot of time and effort has been wasted by a lot of people partly though a failure to define the project at first concept. The MBSI's museum sub-committee should not allow itself to make the same mistake twice.

Japan has become a significant centre of mechanical music in recent years with a high density of both collectors and museum attractions. In a paper by Don and Jackie Day relates the history of the musical box in the land of the rising sun. Is there a coincidence in the fact that the first recorded musical-box collector in Japan was a Tokyo dentist and university professor? The article describes some of the leading museums as well as restorers and collectors. There is a special story devoted to Kazuo Tashiro who builds 15-inch Regina disc musical boxes and arranges music for them. And if you own a Libellion book-playing mechanism, then Takao Kato is the man to get to know for he is making new music at Kama Fukuoka City.

Nancy Fratti describes how to pack up a musical box for 'shipping'. In this she advocates putting a piece of 'Scotch tape' on the comb to prevent the teeth from sustaining damage. This is a dubious piece of advice and is dependent on the quality of the tape. And tape removal is also likely to remove teeth unless done very carefully. Far better to place corrugated paper above and beneath the teeth and secure it with strips of mashing tape.

Mechanical Music, Journal of the Musical Box Society International. Spring, 1997.

With a break from current practise, this issue has a monochrome cover picture and starts with a paper by Larry Karp on a Regina he has found which has felt dampers like those used by Polyphon and Symphonion in their very earliest production boxes. A tempered copper 'comb' with felt pads stuck to it is screwed on top of the comb and is moved against the musical comb by the starwheels so as to damp residual sound.

A multi-tone motor horn playing a cadence and invented by a Frenchman named Etienne Teste is described by Ron Bopp who asks if he was related to Joseph Antoine Teste. Unusually, the core of the trumpet body contains a ratchet-advanced cylinder provided with slots so that each time the horn bulb is squeezed a different note combination results. A three, four and six-note model has been found. It is called the *Testophone*...

Writers Don and Jackie Day describe the Japanese musical-box industry with cameos on Sankyo Seiki, and other makers.

Walter Moore describes the overhaul of a Flutina organette, a 24-note instrument produced originally by Ch. F. Pietschmann & Söhne which later became the Berliner-Musikwerk-Instrumenten-Fabrik. It subsequently became the Euphonika Musikwerke-Fabrik in Leipzig, but that was after this

instrument had ceased production.

Coulson Conn relates his experiences with musical boxes and automata and Don Barr takes a closer look at Violano-Virtuoso 'fingerheads' and finds that they are not all the same. He identifies two clear variants.

Anthony Bulleid announces his goal of building up a comprehensive record of known tune-sheets for cylinder musical boxes and starts with illustrations of 24. Arthur Ord-Hume then tells the story of an unusual Viennese musical picture clock he found when he visited Chicago last year. Unusual feature was a *tableau vivante* in the picture.

Kevin McElhone writes on barrel-playing organettes, concentrating here on the Autophone Company's products rather than the Czech street organs. He identifies seven variants of the so-called 'cob' organs of which the most common is the Gem Roller Organ. Finally Joseph Schumacher writes on manivelles with animated figures and other hand-cranked toys.

Pianolabulletin, Journal of the Nederlandse Pianola Vereniging. Number 79, June 1997.

The old-established business of Gerhardus Alexander Goldschmeding began in Amsterdam back in 1872. It expanded steadily, becoming a major agent for pianos and organs, player-pianos and music-rolls. It handled harmoniums by Mannborg among others as well as American organs by Estey, and subsequently formed a music-teaching school for harmonium-players. With branches in Rotterdam, Haarlem, Hilversum and Goes, it had the distinction of surviving the war: today it is a radio and hi-fi outlet.

The story of this fascinating company is told by Jo Jongen who dwells, rightly, on the rich years of Ducanola, Simplex and Symplettia.

A fascinating, and yet annoyingly unattributed and undated advertisement headed 'Music Means Health' announces that one Dr. Gustave Gayer has invented a new word - Melotherapy. Simply expressed this says that music has peculiar curative powers; it works on the body through the mind. The advertisement goes on to present a choice of three pieces of music each which are guaranteed cures for insomnia, dyspepsia, neurasthenia and hysteria.

The notice, which bears no product name, then goes on to tell us that 'every home should have a Playerpiano, just as one would have a family physician... The next time you have an attack of indigestion, make yourself comfortable and have a friend play something on your Playerpiano...' So not only do you need a 'Playerpiano' but you need somebody else to play it for you! No musical choice is offered for curing that most debilitating human condition which prevails to this day - sick advertising syndrome.

This magazine remains a high-quality, well-printed journal and is a credit to the Nederlandse Pianola Vereniging.

The Library of Mechanical Music & Horology, 24 Shepherds Lane, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6SL. July 10th, 1997 ■

Record REVIEW

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Le Ludion: 20 ans d'amour et printemps. *Lud.96.* 22 tracks, total playing time 67 minutes 9 seconds. *From:* Le Ludion, 2 rue Fermat, F31000 Toulouse, France. Price on application.

There are many street organ recordings available today, yet without doubt this particular one fits into no known category. It is totally individualistic and will either be loved for what it is - a concert of music - or decried because the organ competes with the human voice.

If street organs were originally to be sung and danced to, then this should adequately demolish the arguments of the latter.

Le Ludion is the business name of Philippe Crasse and Eve Bernard-Chaillet who founded their business making 'Limonaires' twenty years ago. From mere copies of existing instruments, they have evolved a style and tonality of book-playing portable organ which is as distinctly French as a good Camembert. Those who visited the MBSI conference in Chicago last year would have had the pleasure of seeing Philippe and Eve playing and singing with one of their organs in the conference hotel foyer.

On this record there are 22 songs representing the work of three arrangers on three organs. The instruments comprise a 27-note single-rank, a 32-note 57-pipe two-rank, and a 32-note 77-pipe three-rank organ. The songs are sung by four singers, one male and three female, each as a soloist with one instrument.

The recording was made at Le Ludion's 20th birthday party last October so there is some audience noise and the acoustic is clearly 'open air' with all that entails. The music selected is entirely French and highly individual-istic as is the organ accompaniment frequently expressed with great clarity and poignancy using, perhaps, single minims or the thinnest and most drawn-out threnody.

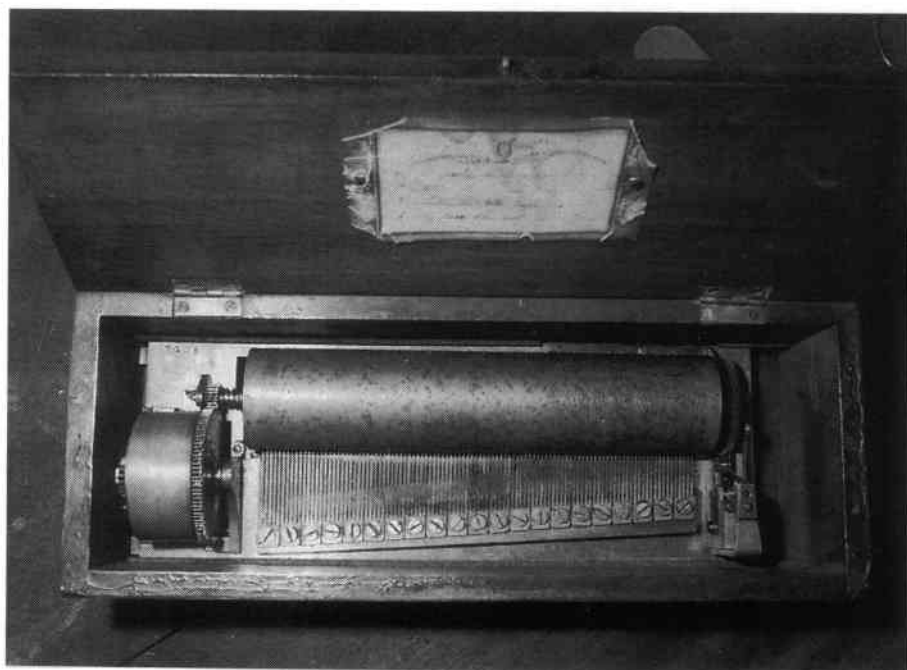
Several pieces are organ solos without the intrusion of the voice.

The overall conclusion is that this is extremely clever music arranged with total sympathy for the artist and the medium. It is a recording which will grow on you and open your mind to a type of music uncommon to us in Britain and America. A booklet accompanying the disc illustrates and describes the organs as well as providing information on the artist(e)s and arrangers.

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

July 10th, 1997 ■

Collector's Showcase



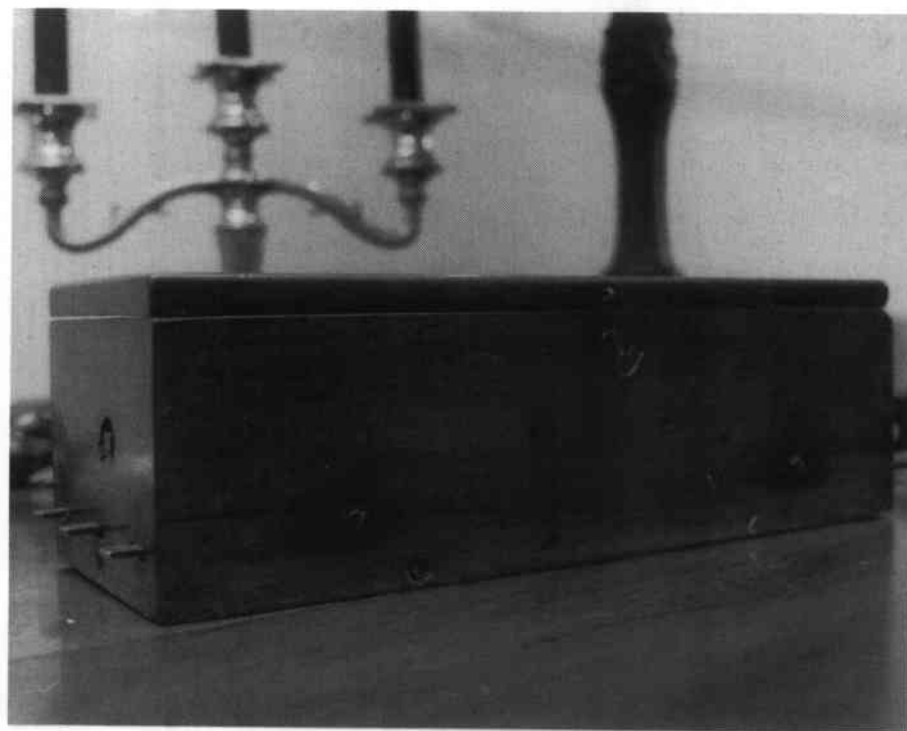
Early Key Wound Musical Box

by Brian Chesters

The accompanying photos show the open and shut views of an early key wound musical box bought by myself about a year ago. The movement is contained in a plain case of rosewood or similar which appears to have suffered little damage in the whole of its long life. The patina is in keeping with a box that has never been re-polished but has been cherished.

The three controls extend through the left hand side of the case. The movement has a smooth brass bed plate with an 8 inch cylinder playing four airs. The sectional comb is in groups of five teeth and appears to have sustained no damage or repairs. The dampers are in need of attention but despite that, the sound is delicate and sweet. This quality is further enhanced by the fact that the first two revolutions play parts one and two of "Cherry Ripe," a delicate piece which, in this box is played with a few arpeggios utilising most of the teeth.

When I first saw the box in an auction in Chester, I thought that the end treble tooth was missing. However, on further examination the last group of five teeth are complete on a piece of steel that would have been big enough for six. Thus appearing that one had broken off. Further, the cylinder has enough space at both the treble and bass ends for two



or three more teeth.

The mechanism is removed from the case by unscrewing the base board and removing the four retaining bolts and dropping the movement out of the bottom of the case. The only number visible on the box is the number ??? on the top left hand side of the bedplate. 90% of the tune sheet remains with the simple lyre

symbol in the top middle. However, I noted W. J. G. Ord-Humes comment that the lyre is the single most common symbol on a musical box tune sheet.

I would guess the age at 1820 to 1835 but would welcome any other comments on the age and particularly would welcome any help in attribution. ■

*The museum of timekeepers and
mechanical musical instruments in
Oberhofen, Switzerland*

by Hank Waelti



Wichterheer House, Oberhofen, Lake of Thun, 16th century.

The picturesque and touristic region of Thun with its many attractions like castles and museums etc., is now further enriched with a unique exhibition of clocks, watches and – as one might say – their younger relatives, mechanical musical instruments.

A beautifully restored mansion which dates from 1518, belonging to an old vinery estate, makes an excellent frame for all the old treasures on display. The doors, wooden beams, pillars and also the cobblestones of the pavement in the vine cellar also date back to 1518. To keep humidity to a normal level, the

pavement in the room where the organs are on display is covered with transparent glass plates.

The estate – its history goes back as far as 1300 – is located on the shore of Lake Thun, approximately 300 metres south east of the well known castle at Oberhofen, which in itself is well worth visiting.

With good taste and feeling for the essential, the items for display were carefully selected, mainly from two collections: H. P. Hertig, Oberhofen, whose ancestors were clockmakers in the 17th and 18th century and who has



"Funk" Wall clock, Berne, 1760.

been collecting for about 50 years, and Kurt Matter, Thun, who has been collecting mechanical music for 20 years.

The timepieces and musical instruments blend very nicely together and fit



Chimney clock, Vienna, 19th century with "grande sonnerie" and musical movement.



Street barrel organ, Jos. Kamenik, Prag, (19th century).



Musical automat by Phalibois, Paris, 1860. An old couple, enjoying a snuff.



Mantel piece clock of Richelieu's home, (19th century).

perfectly in eight rooms of different size and styling.

In 1993 a foundation was formed when the two collectors and a few enthusiasts of timepieces and mechanical music decided to show their treasures to the public. This foundation has its own collection of many precious pieces which were either donated or are on loan.

The museum is managed by a society of people who are fond of these technical marvels of the "good old days." They support the museum financially and all their jobs as guide, cashier, repairer and organiser is done voluntarily. Financial support is also given by the state of Berne and some private sponsors.

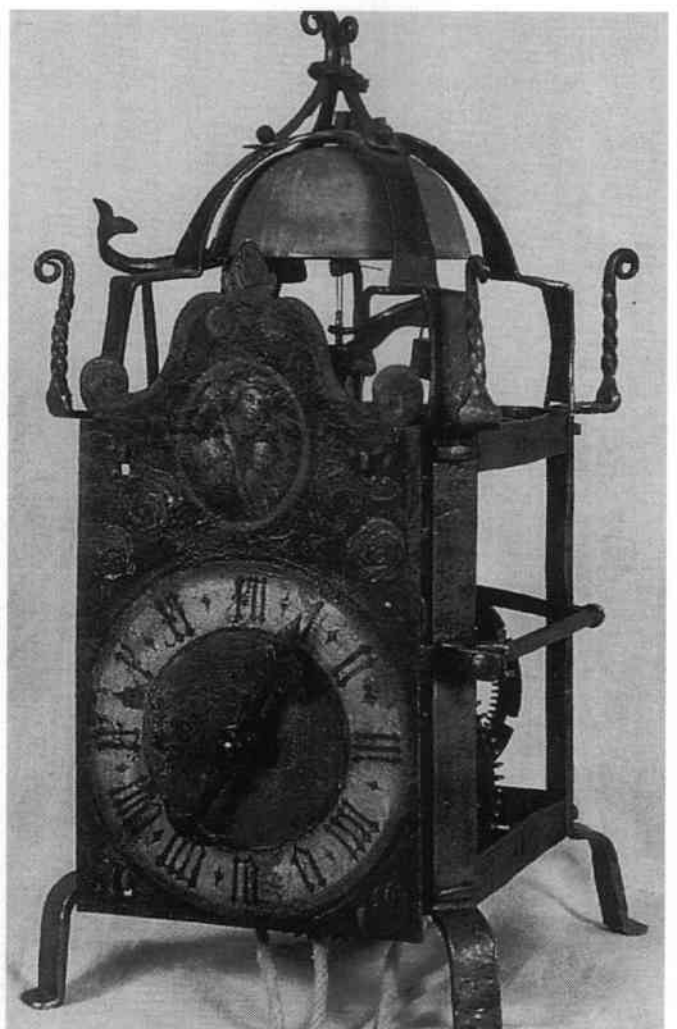
The timepieces: As a complement to

other famous museums of this kind, like La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle, Oberhofen gives more room to clocks and watches of the "common people" – gothic wrought iron clocks and wall clocks with wooden wheels as well as pocket and wrist watches of all kinds and systems.

Also of special interest to the visitors



Carousel organ, (1895).



Gothic iron wall clock, (16th century).



Pocket watch, "Haas à Berne," 1720, verge escapement.

are the two typical workshops – an ancient one with furniture, tools and equipment from the 18th and 19th centuries and a modern one, well equipped to repair and maintain items from the museum or even for private customers and collectors.

Volunteer watchmakers and specialists may be observed at work by the visitors and an extensive library with rare books and publications about watchmaking and mechanical music are also available to the public on request.

Mechanical musical instruments: The

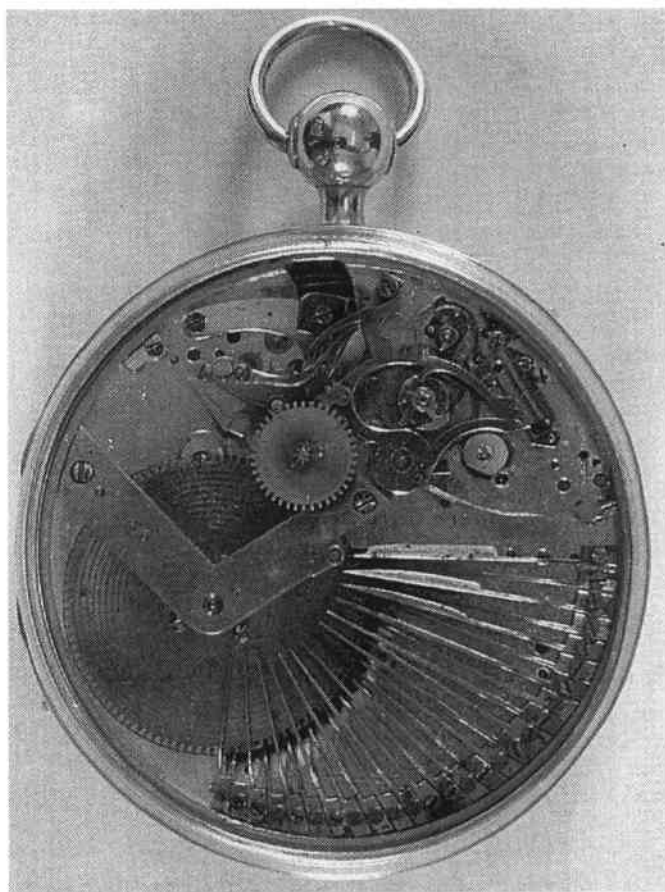
oldest instrument on display is a serinette from 1810 and a flute playing clock with automaton musician figures (Black Forest, 1850) demonstrates the link between clocks and mechanical music. So does a pocket watch with musical movement (A. L. Breguet, 1800). Also much admired by visitors is an automat by Phalibois (1850) representing an old couple, sitting on a bench, enjoying a snuff.

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the cylinder musical box, a variety of them are in a special exhibition.

Also souvenir articles of all different kinds (and tastes), containing musical movements, are on display.

A good selection of organettes is also at hand, ready to be demonstrated, (Ariston, Mignon, Euphonia, Sonora, Intona). Besides a Fratinola (Piano, Xylophon, Mandoline, Cymbal) is an old Kleptar orchestrion with a huge cylinder and a clown automat from Vichy, Paris in front.

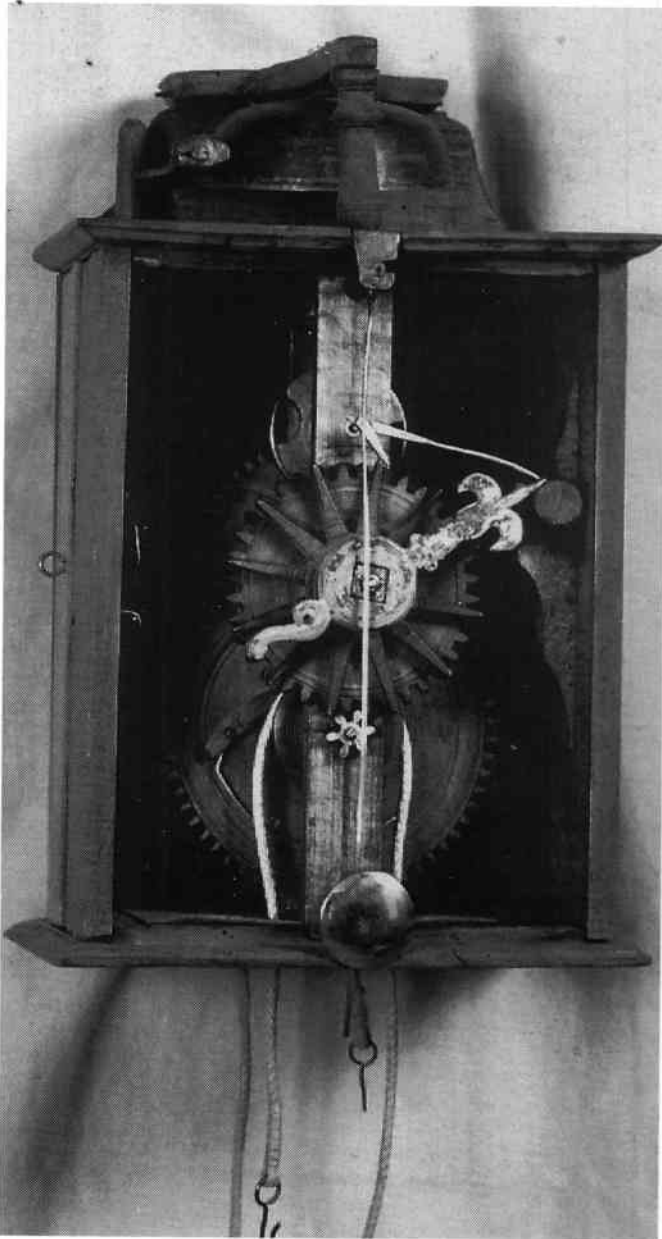
The organs are presented in the vine cellar, a high ceiling room where a dozen excellent barrel organs may be played –



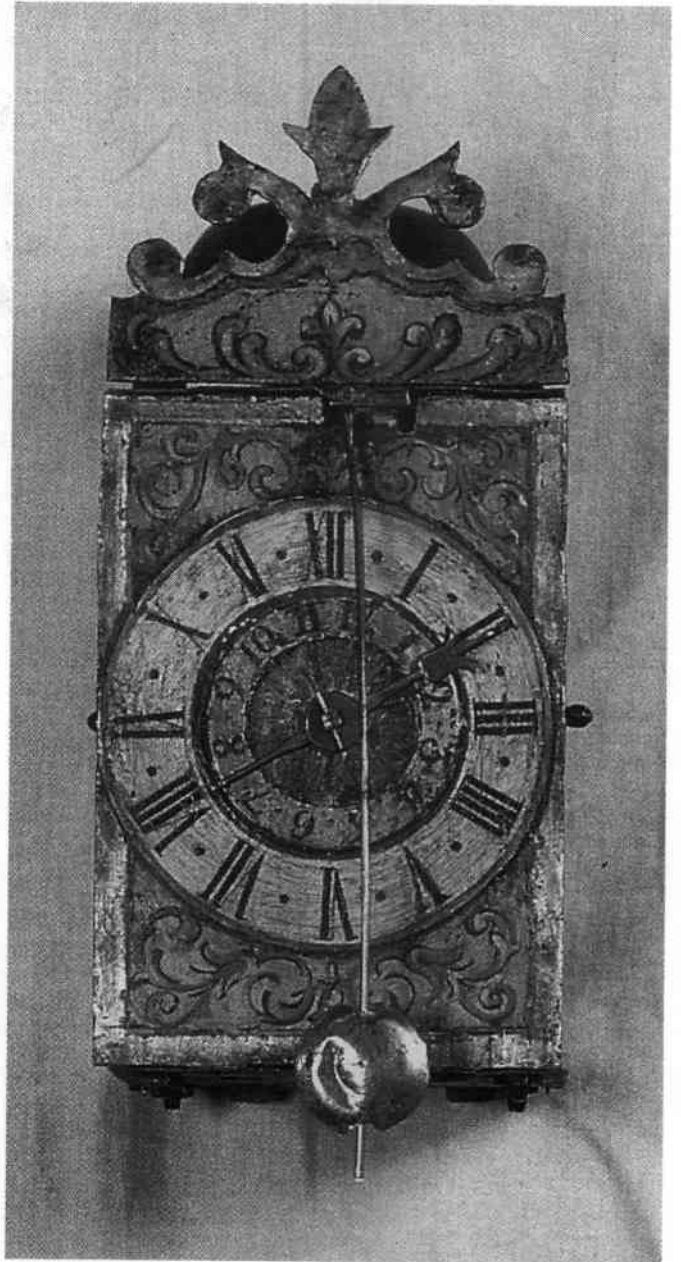
Pocket watch with musical movement and bells, Abraham-Louis Breguet et fils, Paris, 1800.



Barrel organ, Bacigalupo, Berlin, 1910.



Wall clock with wooden wheels by Christian Hertig, around 1700.



Iron wall clock, around 1700, Simmental (Ct. Berne).

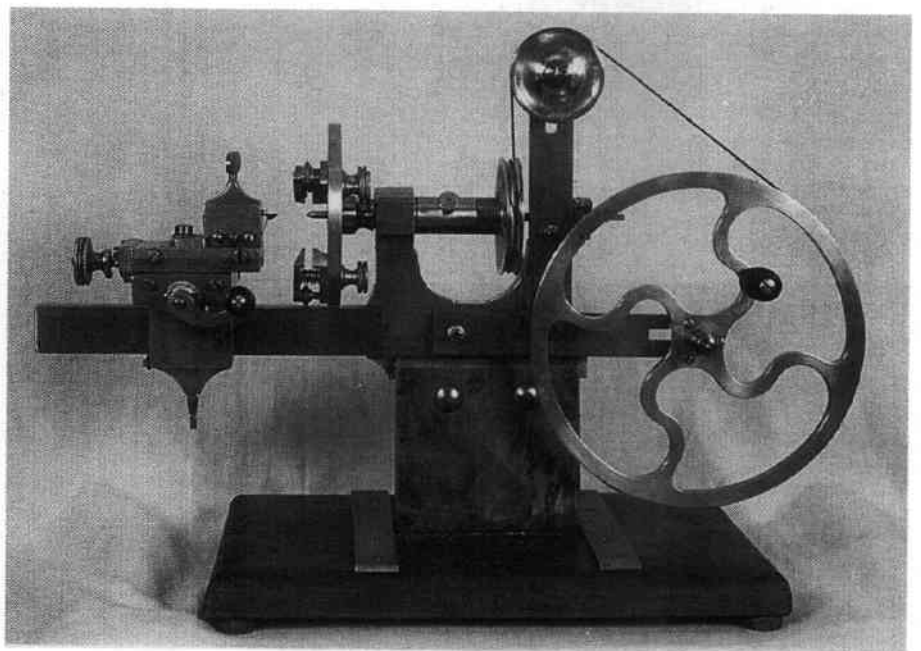
including three carousel organs. Names like Cocchi Bacicalupo and Graffigna, Joseph Riemer, Franz Kolb, Wilh. Bruder, A. Ruth, Kamenik, Zenisek, Lubich and Hrubes are represented.

The museum is in its second year now, and during the seven months it has been open it has been very successful. Over 10,000 visitors in the first five months of 1995 was more than anyone expected.

In general, the visitors as well as the 80 volunteers were very pleased. The costs for rent, insurances, electricity, water, telephone etc., can be covered and part of the initial costs of furnishing has been paid back. So with the help of all the enthusiasts involved, the future looks bright.

Museum of Timekeepers and Mechanical Musical Instruments, CH 3653 OBERHOFEN, Switzerland.

Opening hours mid-May until mid-October: Tuesday to Saturday 10-12am and 2-5pm (closed Monday). Sunday 10am-5pm. Entrance fee to all MBSGB members reduced by 20% when presenting memberships cards.



Watchmaker's lathe, (18th century).

Phoneon Reed Organs

by Kevin McElhone

I do not know of any of this make of instrument in the U.S.A. and so this may well be the first time members have heard of this make of organ. Several English makes of instruments are not to be found in American publications and I hope the following will put that right.

These were the only larger size of player reed organ made in England by an English company, the nearest other instrument being the 31 note Maxfield organ. Most of the organs made by Malcolm & Co. played a 61 note organ roll which was made specially for these instruments, although I do not know whether they actually punched their own rolls or contracted out for them.

The 61 note organs were usually Ebonised, that is painted black with no decoration besides the name transfer and carved fret-work. Some examples had applied machine carved mouldings and a few have survived with nice veneered cases. There were at least two types of carving used above the keyboard, one was rectangular, one was more swirls and curves. They are quite common today and while

popular with collectors, as they are much cheaper than the Aeolian Orchestrelles, they do appear to have a much smaller supply of original music rolls surviving to play on them. I am still working on the catalogue of these 61 note rolls and would appreciate any list of titles or copies of original catalogue material that you could send me (costs re-imbursed if requested).

However, the organ I would like to mention is one which I have recently come across which is a little different from the rest. It is 44½" wide, 22" deep and 51" high and plays standard 58 note Aeolian style organ rolls or standard 65 note Pianola rolls. There is an original switch with instruction plate to select 58/65 note rolls which turns off the unwanted tracker bar holes and the take up spool is adjustable by a twist and slide action which then locks into position at the smaller 58 note width. There is of course also

a small 'chuck' adaptor to insert in the top right of the spool box to enable 58 or indeed 61 note rolls to be loaded.

The case is a much later, rather neat, almost Art Nouveau style in that it is very plain and angular with very little carving of any sort. There is a wooden and also a glass spool box door in a wooden frame, but the instrument works on suction and therefore can be played with both doors open. The one single piece Keyfall very neatly slides into the organ on four rollers, just above the stop rail. There is even a normal piano style of music stand which folds away into the instrument in the same way as they do on normal pianos. The pedals have a very short stroke, but seem adequate to power the instrument indefinitely on full organ plus vox humana if required. The organ has a set of five very small wheels, (the fifth one is underneath the centre front of the pumping pedals frame), rather than castors which means it moves left/right on them, but has to be lifted away from the wall for maintenance.

It is quite easy to get into the back

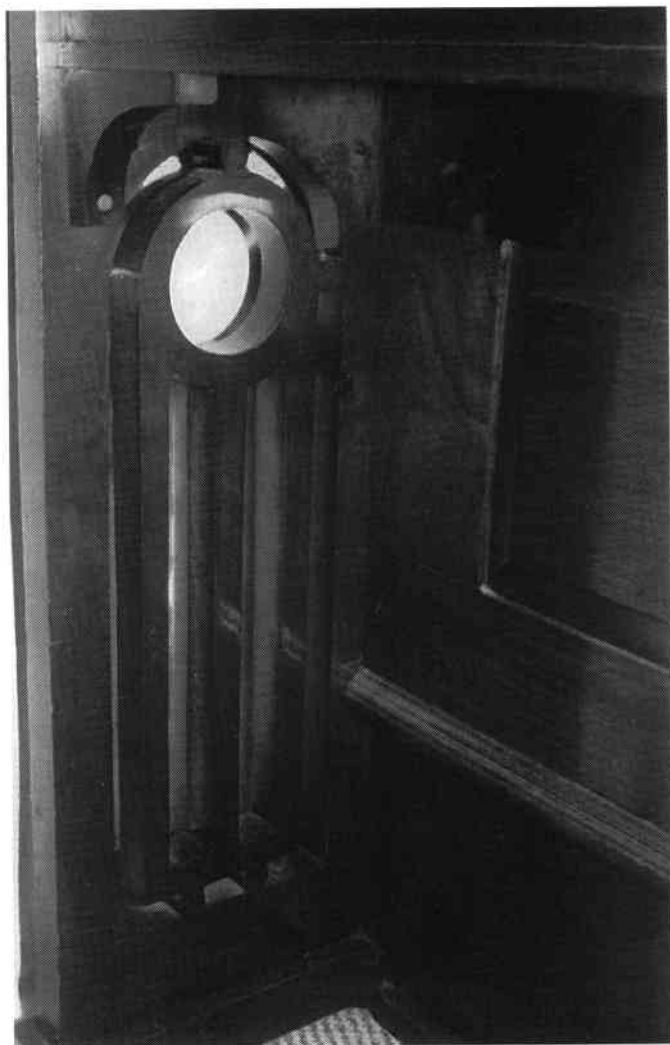


Fig. 1. End view, showing flat case and unusual style of fretwork.



Fig. 2. Front view, showing stool and music stand (unusual on player organ).



Fig. 3. Closer view showing 65/58 adaptor in spool box and no holes in panel under keys to let sound out.

of the organ as there are two inspection doors the full width of the instrument which undo quickly by turning two turn buttons on each allowing them to hinge open. The left hand knee swell is full organ and the right is the swell, as you would expect in any "American Organ." The swell, however, moves two flaps as one set of reeds faces towards the front and others face towards the rear.

The number of reeds in the organ is a little confusing. The keyboard has 61 keys for playing manually, with a treble and also a bass octave coupler. When you look at the front set of reeds there are in fact 65 which of course are all played from the music roll. It was not possible to examine the back set, but I will presume the same number here.

The stops are as follows:-

Reroll, Bass Octave Coupler, Principal 4ft (Loud), Piano 4ft (Soft on same set of reeds), Diapason 8ft (Loud), Echo 8ft (Soft on same set of reeds), Bourdon Bass 16ft (13 notes only), Vox Humana, Clarionet 16ft (half set from note 28 up to 65), Dulciana 8ft (Soft), Dulcet 8ft (Loud on same set), Vox Celeste 8ft (Loud), Melodia 8ft (soft on same set as Vox Celeste), Tempo.

There is the usual Phoneon clock style tempo speed indicator at the right hand end of the stop rail which appeared to be reasonably accurate. This is about 1½" diameter and a clock hand moves round pointing to the current set speed. What was strange was that there was only a solid piece of casework in front of the front set of reeds rather than a piece of fretwork with lots of holes in it to let the sound out, perhaps backed with material like other hand played reed organs or indeed the Bellolian.

The roll motor bellows are enormous, owing to the low pressure and there are 3 of them 8" high by 5" wide. The tracker bar is made of brass, as are the reeds of course and the casework is very dark, but I could not identify the pattern of the wood finish/ veneer. The top lid of the organ hinges up and is supported by a long wooden leg so that more sound can be projected forwards into the room if desired.



Fig. 4. John Malcolm & Co. plate.

It is really strange when playing it not to have a 4ft pitch reed available on the top 'half' of the keyboard, but to have 16ft instead, with 2 ranks of 8ft pitch reeds. The bass is fairly conventional with a short 16ft rank, and then one of 4ft and one of 8ft. The split for bass and treble stops is at notes 1 to 24 on keyboard for Bass and 25 to 61 on keyboard for Treble. There are, of course, additional notes played below bottom of keyboard and above top of keyboard when the roll is being used. I have wondered whether the unusual 16ft reeds in the treble are an attempt to get round a problem which most other makers of roll playing reed organs did not address, quite simply that 65 note pianola type rolls cut for use on a piano are too high in pitch and sound really dreadful played with even 8ft pitch, let alone 4ft. Have you listened to a cut down 65 note roll played on an Orchestrelle? I have several and some work, but some are a complete disaster, but this Phoneon model sounds better although not as good as proper organ rolls. A friend of mine has also suggested that 16ft pitch pipes are quite normal on many pipe organs so that may be another reason. I suspect Aeolian did not even consider this as their own 16ft reeds were enormous and the organ would not have kept up with their demand for wind supply.

The action is quite fast, even for single punched holes in the roll and the instrument is quite strident on full organ, but is very different in sound from any Aeolian organ, or indeed the Bellolian. I enjoy playing 65 and 58 note rolls on it of all types of music.

The only history that I have of this instrument is that it was found around 1970 in a high rise block of flats in Birmingham and belonged to an old lady. She had been throwing the rolls out as the instrument did not work and they were taking up space. Fortunately the organ was purchased by an enthusiast before they were all disposed of, who asked Tom Sheffield the organ builder to fully re-build it for him. The instrument is still playing very well, 25 years later, but there are 5 minor faults to be cured, probably 3 are down to dirt on reeds, but owing to the design of the instrument this will involve removal of the spool box to access the rear sets of reeds, which has been avoided by the current owner so far, but will be remedied over this next winter.

If any member knows of other examples of Phoneon organs I would be pleased to hear from them.

It would also be interesting to hear from other members with unusual examples of player reed organs as if you don't tell us we may never know that these rare and exotic machines have survived. ■

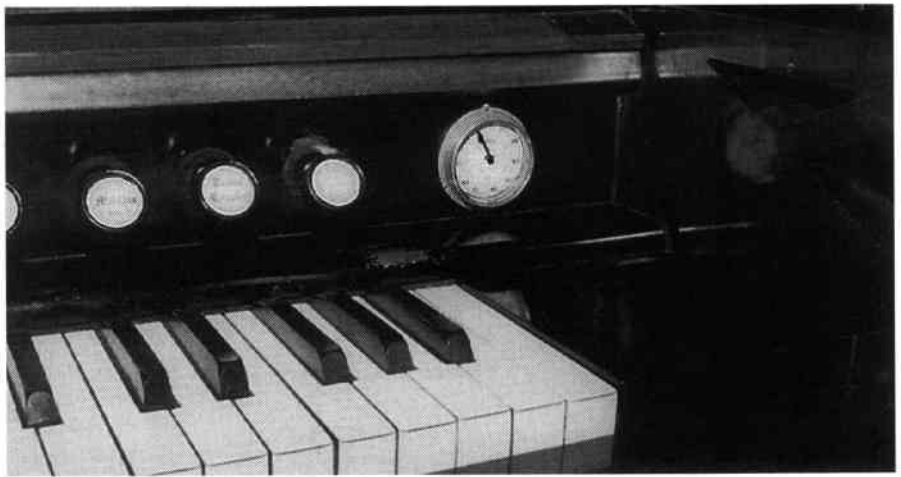


Fig. 5. 'Clock' tempo/roll speed indicator.

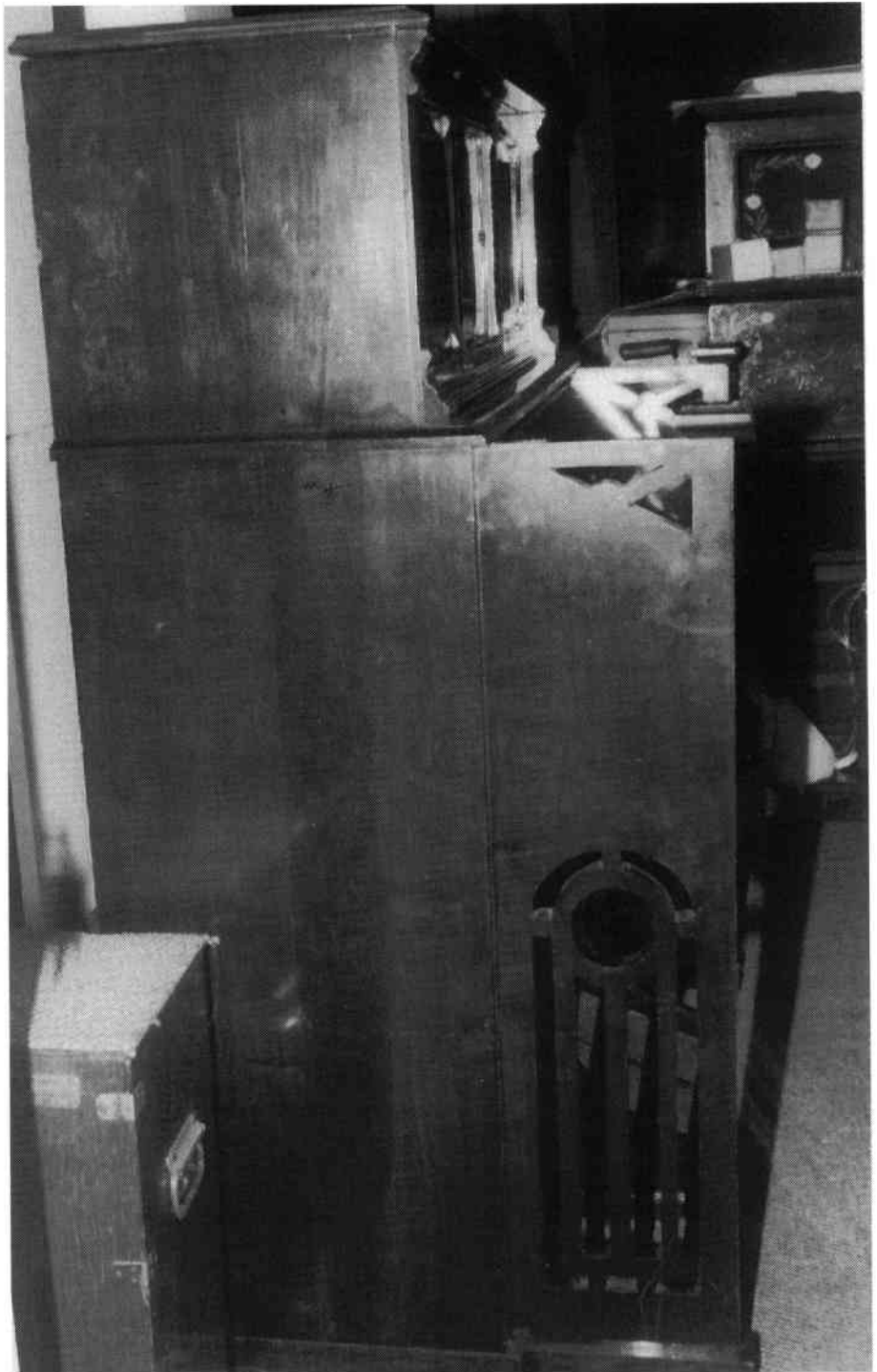


Fig. 6. End view, showing unusual case style.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MUSIC ROLL

by Charles F. Stoddard
(Inventor of the Ampico)

Introduction

Some 25 years ago, Arthur Ord-Hume received a communication from Al Werolin of New Jersey in which he wrote: 'While going through some old papers which my father had accumulated during the time he worked for the Ampico Corporation, I discovered a draft of a speech which Charles F. Stoddard, the inventor of the Ampico, delivered at a piano tuners' convention in June of 1927. At that time, Mr. Stoddard was Director of the

Research Laboratory of the American Piano Company in New York City. It may interest you to read since it contains a very clear and complete description of the Ampico roll making process. Mr Werolin's paper, long mislaid following a house-move, came to light recently and in the belief that this record delay in publication will not have tarnished its interesting content, here it is just as he wrote it.

In about the year 1840 we find the first mention of the use of the continuous paper roll which later supplanted the pinned cylinder. Claude Felix Seytre of Lyons, France, appears to be the inventor of the perforated paper note sheet. This patent was dated January 24, 1842.

Until about 1850 the only mechanically operated keyboard instruments were organs. At this time, we find Hunt and Bradish in Warren, Ohio, taking out a patent on a little pianoforte controlled by a paper music roll and actuated by a crank turned by hand, so we may safely say that about 1850 was the earliest date of a piano player actuated by a paper music roll. This patent of Hunt and Bradish is accompanied by a drawing of a little piano with only thirteen strings which could be carried around easily under the arm. The illustration shows the crank, but as no monkey is shown I presume it was not carried under the arm or strapped over the shoulder.

The first music rolls which were laid out were merely perforated rolls with the notes exactly as they were shown in the sheet music, thus leaving it entirely to the operator to provide the musical expression. A great many thousands of players were sold which were operated by these crude mathematically laid out music rolls. How well do we all remember having a neighbour who owned one of those piano players! Those owners had a lot of fun trying to put musical expression into those mechanically played notes, but the neighbours suffered a lot of agony.

Generally speaking, the owners of those instruments had about as much idea of music as the old fellow in the country church orchestra who played the piccolo. At one of the vesper services at which the orchestra performed, this particular old fellow got the pages of his sheet music mixed so that he was playing the third page while the rest of the orchestra were playing the second page. A distinguished gentleman who sat in the third pew was so upset by the mistake that he could not repress his feelings and in his disgust said right out loud, "the damn fool piccolo player." After the orchestra had completed its selection,

the minister stepped to the front of the pulpit and asked the person in the congregation who called the piccolo player a "damn fool" please to stand up. The distinguished gentleman did not stand up, but a little deacon in the back of the church rose and said, "Preacher, may I suggest that you do not try to find out who called the piccolo player a damn fool, but that you try to find out who called the damn fool a piccolo player?"

It was a long time before it became evident that the general public were not musicians. They loved music, but they did not know how to give musical expression. Realising this, many inventors in the field of the player piano set about to construct various devices which would help the public to give musical expression to those mechanically played notes.

In 1891 R. M. Hunter of Philadelphia conceived the idea of putting a wavy line on the music roll to denote when the music should be played loudly and when softly. This was the first step in the long road travelled in the development of the marvellous present day players. From this important step the evolution of the music roll took a turn toward producing various effects automatically instead of leaving them to the discretion of the operator of the player piano.

Following Mr. Hunter by nearly ten years, F. L. Young of the Aeolian Company conceived the idea of the *Metrostyle*, which was also a wavy line running the length of the sheet and a pointer attached to the tempo lever, the index end of which reached up to the tracker bar. If the tempo lever were moved so that this index end of the pointer followed the line the various retards and accelerandos and other tempo effects were rendered in musical style.

Some five years later the *Themodist* was invented simultaneously by Mr. Crooks and Mr. Skinner. This improvement in the music roll consisted of inserting supplementary perforations on the edge of the sheet opposite each theme or melody note. These perforations controlled a mechanism which automatically brought out the melody of the piece.

While these later improvements were

going on in this country, Edwin Welte in Germany was attacking the problem in an entirely new manner. He was taking an actual record of a musician's playing and reproducing it entirely automatically. Mr. Welte's music roll contained supplementary perforations which controlled the force with which the different notes were struck. His achievement was by far the greatest step forward made up to that time in mechanically produced music. Simultaneously with the development of the Welte, there was a similar development made in this country which later was bought out by the American Piano Company and is now known as the *Ampico*.

Sometime after the *Ampico*, came the *Duo-Art*, which was also entirely automatic. These reproducing instruments were all operated by electric motors instead of by foot pedals.

With the advent of the *Ampico*, there came another improvement in the music roll, the development of a means for producing tonal effects which had been, up to that time, regarded by many musicians as not being within the realm of mechanism but were rather, as they liked to express it, "A manifestation of the soul of the performer." This invention consisted of arbitrarily extending the perforations of certain notes in order to carry their tones across from one harmony to another - thereby obtaining precisely the effect which the performer did by his subtle operation of the damper pedal. Numerous patents were applied for and granted to the American Piano Company on this method of obtaining these subtle tonal effects.

The next development in the evolution of the music roll came in the method of recording a musician's playing. Mr. Welte's method was secret, so we cannot know how it was done. The method used in the early days of the *Ampico* was covered by a patent granted about 1912. This consisted of placing electric contacts on the piano key which would indicate on a moving sheet the length of time it took the key to be depressed. We can readily see that it requires a much longer

time to depress the key when playing a soft note than it does when playing a loud note. So a long mark denotes a soft note and a short mark denotes a loud note, with various gradations between.

This Ampico process of recording like most of the others was kept a profound secret. Many people were sceptical about it being possible to record all the delicate shadings that a pianist gave to his playing and they regarded these secret recording processes as "the bunk." Only recently has the American Piano Company decided to break away from this great secrecy and to show what it is doing in the way of recording. There are some recent improvements in the process upon which patents have not been granted, and these of course must for a while be kept secret, but in the main, I will explain how it is done.

Any process of recording which goes in for extreme accuracy entails an unbelievable amount of labour and expense. I have in mind a very wonderful record of Lhevinne's playing of the *Blue Danube* waltz which took over five weeks to complete, and represented over 100,000 operations. This piece contains 7,915 notes and every note required thirteen or more operations before the record was ready for publication.

Generally speaking, the method employed in making an Ampico recording is a complete and thorough measurement of every detail of the playing, reducing the same to terms of simple figures. These figures, which show with great exactness just what the artist does, are then translated into side hole perforations which cause the *Ampico* to give forth exactly the same music as does the artist.

Two records are taken simultaneously of the artist's playing, one of the notes and the pedalling, and the other of the dynamics. The record of the notes consists of pencilled marks made on a moving sheet. The exact position of the pedalling is recorded as is also the speed with which the pedal is depressed and released. The dynamic record consists simply of measuring with great accuracy the amount of energy in the hammer just at the instant it strikes the string. It is right at this point where the secrecy of the *Ampico* method exists, but I may say that the accuracy of this measurement discloses differences in the pianist's touch ten times more delicate than the human ear is capable of detecting.

In the *Blue Danube* waltz, Shultz-Elver transcription, played by Josef Lhevinne, there are, as I said before, 7,915 notes, and the dynamic force with which Mr. Lhevinne struck every one of these notes was measured accurately.

The first operation on the note record is a check of each and every single note with the notes on the sheet music to eliminate wrong notes. We call the checking of each individual note with the sheet music one operation, so that in the note check-up of the *Blue Danube* waltz there were 7,915 operations. This took one operator about three days. While the notes are being checked, there are two operations going on in the dynamic record, one the identification of

the marks, and the other the measurement of them.

The two sheets are then put on a pantograph table, which makes it very easy for the operator to transfer the figures of the dynamic sheet, which show the loudness with which every note was struck, to the note sheet. This entails another 7,915 operations, making a total of 31,660 operations to this point.

The roll is then given to an operator who translates the record of the pedalling into extended perforations which, with the automatic damper pedal of the reproducing piano, control the quality of tone. This is one of the most interesting steps in the process of editing the roll.

Now we have a note sheet with a figure at the beginning of every pencilled mark telling exactly how loud that note was struck. Another operator then takes the roll and translates these figures into side hole perforations which will control the loudness of every note, so that the performance the *Ampico* will render is exactly as the artist played. This necessitates 7,915 more operations, and on this particular roll required nearly five days of the operator's time.

The producing of subtle tone shading through pedalling is a very important part of the playing of every great pianist. There is full pedalling and half pedalling. Half pedalling is a quick use of the damper pedal which does not wholly cause the strings touched by the dampers to cease sounding. The vibrations of a half-pedalled string continue long after the artist's finger has left the key. These vibrations mingled with those of the notes struck in a harmony immediately following create one form of what is known as tone colour. This is one of the subtle things that makes piano playing so wonderful. It is something thoroughly understood and constantly used by the great artists.

Extended marks on the side of the *Ampico* record show exactly where the damper pedals lifted the dampers from the strings and where they were returned. There are also indications which show exactly how fast the dampers were lifted from the strings or returned to them, and how deeply the dampers sunk into the strings.

To solve this troublesome problem of reproducing these subtle tonal pedal effects with a mechanically operated pedal mechanism, the *Ampico* uses a patented process of extended note perforations. We can readily understand that so long as a note perforation is extended, just so long will the key remain depressed and the damper be held off the string, and the string continue to sing or vibrate. If the record of the artist's playing shows that he "half-pedalled" in a given place, and did not damp out certain tones which had been sounded, the perforations in the music roll controlling these tones will be extended right through that part where the mechanical pedalling damps the strings. We must remember that mechanical pedalling is not "half-pedalling," but complete pedalling. The tonal effects obtained by this process of extended note perforations are identical with those

obtained by the artist. •

I have gone into an explanation of this detail at great length as it is one of the peculiarities of the *Ampico* record which is very often misunderstood. Many times in the record there are as many as eighteen or twenty note perforations being extended at the same time. This makes it appear as if the artist had held down that many notes with his fingers, which would be an impossibility. What the artist did do was to keep that many strings singing by the manipulation of his damper pedal, and in order to give precisely the same quality of tone as the artist did these perforations are extended as we see them in an *Ampico* music roll.

Up to this time no holes have been placed in the record, but it is now ready for the preliminary perforating. This is done by hand. A perforation about one fourth of an inch long is placed at the front end of all the pencilled lines indicating notes, except the very shortest, for which a much shorter perforation is used. A single round hole is placed at the end of each pencilled line. With these perforations merely at the beginning and end of the pencilled lines the record is now ready to go to the automatic stencil making machine. It must be realised that it has not yet been put on a player, therefore it has never been heard, although more than 71,235 operations have been done on it.

The automatic stencil machine finishes the stencil completely, and a trial cutting with it ready to be heard, in less than an hour and a half. In the old days much of the work of laying out a stencil like this was done by hand, and the *Blue Danube* waltz would have taken six boys about three days to complete.

The dynamic figures are copied from the original note record into this new trial roll which comes from the stencil machine to guide the editor in the next operation, which is a complete inspection of the roll to see that no errors of any kind exist. After all corrections are made in this proof roll and transferred to the stencil, another cutting is made and the piece is now, for the first time, ready to be heard by the artist.

The record submitted to the artist is a perfect performance, an exact duplicate of the one he gave when making the record. It is seldom that the artist requests any change. If a change is made, it is not a correction. Hearing the record, the artist becomes his own critic and if a change is made it is to meet his wish to alter slightly his own performance.

The record of the *Blue Danube* waltz contains about five times as many notes as the average record and it required considerably over 100,000 operations to bring it to completion, but the result fully justified the great effort.

Now we see on looking back that in the beginning the music roll contained only the notes and the person owning the player was supposed to put in all of the musical expression. The evolution of the music roll has carried it to a highly developed product which leaves absolutely nothing for the owner of the instrument to do but to insert the roll and turn on the switch. ■

Musical Box Oddments

by H. A. V. Bulleid

Number 74

The French composer André Messager (1853-1929) covered a wide musical field, meriting two pages in the multi-volume Groves. His name is not uncommon on tune sheets, being mainly associated with two ballets and a turn-of-the-century operetta . . .

Fleur d'oranger	1878
Les deux pigeons	1886
Véronique	1898

Fleur d'oranger, literally orange-tree flower, can also mean a bride's head-dress. It is sometimes credited on tune sheets to Fahrbach or to Coedès, presumably for their arrangements of the melody, in 1879.

Weill & Harburg

Notes about these good people were on page 122 of Vol. 15, Winter 1991, and included the drawing of their tune selector and tune indicator patent. Also

shown was their tune sheet, inscribed 20139. I gave that as the serial number but I was wrong, sorry. The correct serial number is 231 and it is stamped on several components. I am fairly sure the maker was Grosclaude who only started on his own in 1874 so would still have these low serial numbers. Its latest tune was composed in 1874.

I realised my mistake when I got hold of W and H no. 20173 which is shown in Fig. 1 together with its tune sheet in Fig. 2. The serial number of this one is 243, again stamped on various components and scribed on the bass lead. It is quite a classy mandoline box with 14" (35.6cm) cylinder playing eight airs on 100 comb teeth, tune 1 on dots, latest tune 1874. So it was quite likely made in 1875, the year of the W and H patent. (The number stencilled under the case is 240, which suggests

a batch of similar movements and cases which got slightly mixed up).

The bass edge of the bedplate is stamped 3 for spring parts and 27 for cylinder, which is shown together with the serial number in Fig. 3.

The PLAY lever is simply an extension of the stop arm, so lifting it lifts the stop arm pin out of the slot in the great wheel track and the mechanism starts, as shown in Fig. 4. For continuous play the lever is lifted further until it engages and is held by a peg on the side of the governor, see Fig. 5. To allow for this extra lift of the stop arm pin, the track in the great wheel is considerably wider than usual as can be seen in Fig. 4.

The principle of the W and H patented tune selector is simple: the finger engaging the snail cam teeth is mounted on the lower arm of a bell crank whose upper arm is the CHANGE lever. When resting on the bedplate in the tune-change position a peg fixed under the finger is out of contact with the snail cam, but when the lever is pushed upwards this peg turns the snail one tune, which can be repeated for selecting any tune. When left in the upper position the box repeats the tune in play. When moved back to the tune change position by a downward stroke, the finger and peg are sprung to slide over the cam without moving it. A small leather washer in the pivot holds the CHANGE lever firmly in either position.

I have seen several of these tune selectors at auctions but they are seldom in working order. The patent drawing does not show the spring arrangement. I got mine to work by adding a small coil return spring for the finger and peg. I am sure it is less elegant than the original but hope it will last better.

Most W and H boxes include both the patented features; and many of them (but not all) have glass lids which are irritatingly superfluous as they prevent access to the controls and to the winder.

An unusual and I suppose decorative feature on some of these boxes is the fitting of red felt washers, as generally seen in bell boxes, between the comb screws and their domed washers. I only believed they were makers original fittings when I saw them on other W and H boxes! After cleaning they look very fair and do no harm so now they are retained as restored originals.

Another oddity on W and H boxes is that the wood blocks in the case to which the bedplate is screwed are wrapped in glossy black paper.

Weill and Harburg tune sheets

Three designs of W and H tune sheets are so far recorded. I think the earliest is as Ord-Hume 77, a curved open arch above the tune list, with an angel and

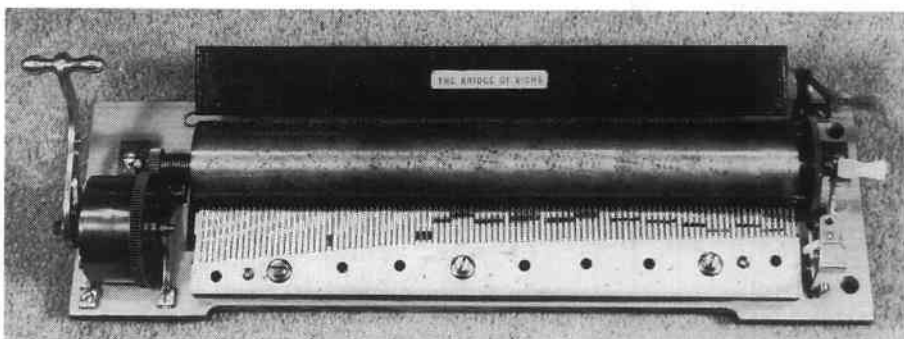


Fig. 1. W & H 20173, serial 243, with patented controls and tune indicator. The 440Hz *a* tooth is marked, also the thirteen groups of 3 to 5 teeth tuned to the same pitch, starting with 3 tuned to *a*, 880Hz.

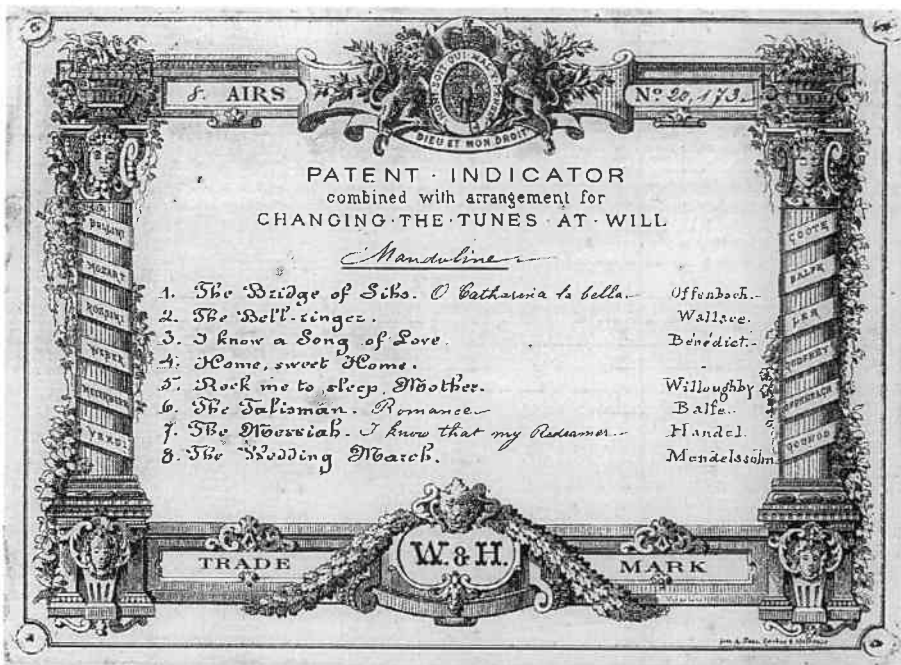


Fig. 2. W & H 20173 tune sheet, sepia on cream, litho A. Haas, with royal coat of arms at top centre as always seen on Bendon tune sheets.

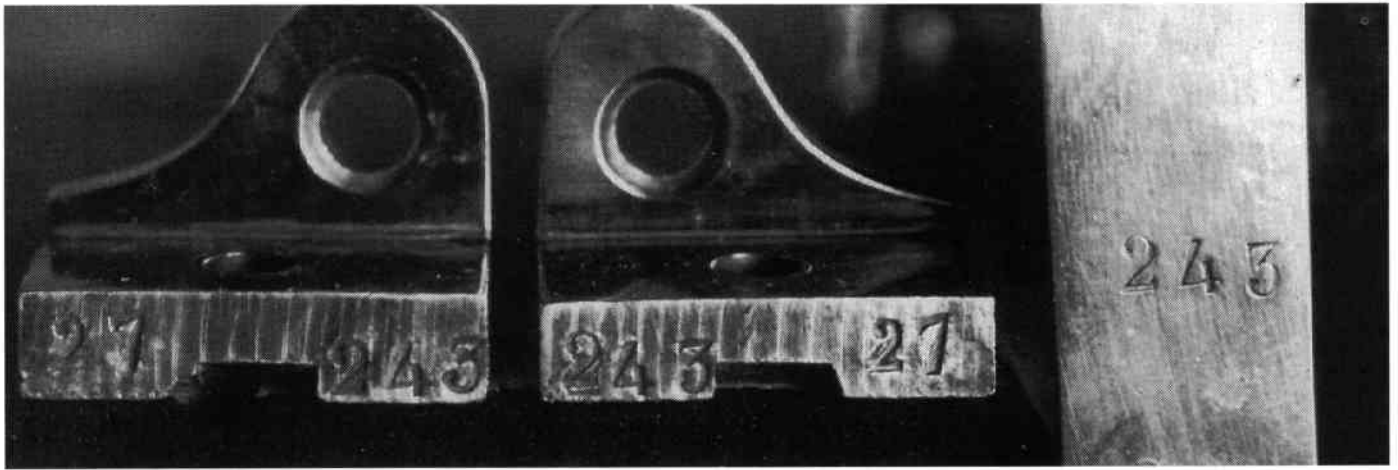


Fig. 3. Serial 243 stamped on governor and, with blank no. 27, on bearings.

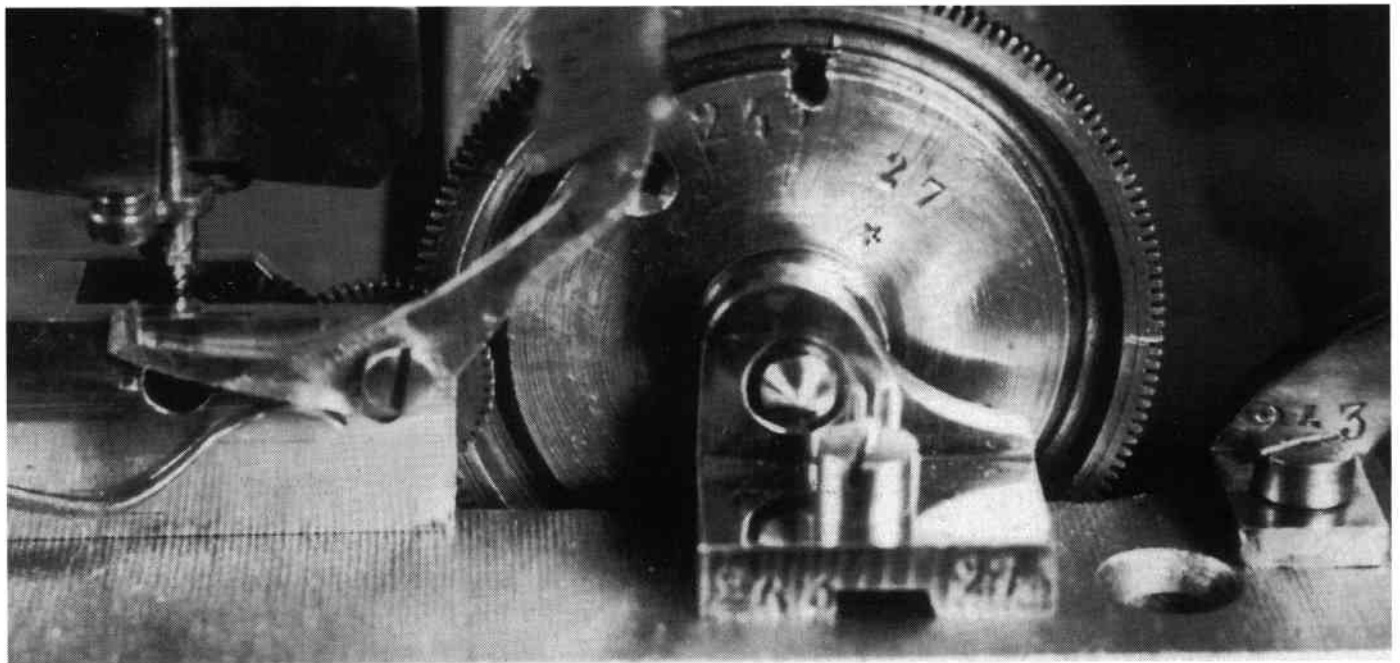


Fig. 4. Serial 243 stamped on great wheel and tune selector bracket. Blank no. 27 and a five-point star also on great wheel, below the widened track.

W & H monogram at top centre and no bottom border.

The more common type is that shown in Fig. 2. It is known on several W & H numbers from 20139 to 20236 and also on number 377.

A simpler type with a Bremond look-alike at top centre was found by Luuk Goldhoorn and is shown in Fig. 6. It has a 6" (15cm) cylinder, 84-tooth comb, W & H no. 20,105 and serial no. 333. It has the patented control levers but no tune indicator – despite the tune sheet claim! Tune 1 is on the dots, and the single blank number is 70.

The W & H tune indicator embellishments

As W & H must have known, it takes a lot of patience to get each tune neatly centered in the aperture of their patented tune indicator. But what must also have fussed them a bit was how to decorate the display panel with its narrow 2³/₄" (7cm) aperture. The panel could range from about 14" (36cm) as

in Fig. 1 to a minimum of about 4" as in Fig. 7.

Their plan was to add two circular or oval portraits or medallions, one each side of the aperture, or both below it when the presence of bells allowed more space between the cylinder and the back of the case. For hymn boxes they sometimes used portraits of Sankey and Moody – who also appeared on Ord-Hume 77 type tune sheet. Rossini, Verdi and other composers have also appeared, with other celebrities including Queen Victoria. So I think restorers are entitled to use anyone who was a celebrity before 1875.

On W & H 20173 the two ovals were obliterated and I have put off deciding how to replace them; hence the black, bleak look of the panel in Fig. 1.

Adverts in marquetry

With sellers like W & H advertising themselves so powerfully on tune sheets, one could almost expect to see their monograms added to musical box



Fig. 5. The small brass peg in the governor block and mating slot in the stop arm which provide the Weill & Harburg continuous play feature.

lids, ornamented in the finest marquetry style. But in fact this is quite a rarity – much to the relief of the many who dislike adverts on their furniture.

An example back in 1845, which surely did not go unnoticed, adorned a forte-piano overture box by F. Lecoultre, serial 21676. Its lid is decorated with a handsome marquetry design of deer heads which includes, in tasteful gothic lettering, the well-known B B & C of agents Berens, Blumberg & Cie.

Many agents, including B B & Cie., must have been useful contributors to the musical and general development of cylinder boxes. They would certainly have been quick to demand any improvements that other agents were exploiting, and much musical excellence stemmed from agents like Moulinié Ainé who specialised in the top-musical-quality area of Langdorff's output. It is annoying that they and some other agents kept the name of the maker a close secret: so credit to B B & Cie. who never obliterated the various marks of the Lecoultres.

Alexandre Soualle

From the 1850s this French maker ran a factory in North Paris. Among other products he made cartel musical boxes, correctly described on his tune sheets as *Musiques de Paris*. That means cartel musical boxes made in



Fig. 6. Another, presumably earlier, W & H tune sheet for their no. 20105. The latest of these early tunes is no. 4, in an 1850 arrangement by Wilson.

Paris, as distinct from tabatieres which were called *petites musiques*.

Soualle boxes are rare. Only one or two key-winds have been seen, and the few lever wound boxes recorded have the finger grip of the winder turned towards the cylinder. These boxes are generally standard types, but serial 3785 is rather special, a super-mandolin, with 15" (38cm) cylinder playing only four airs, its tune

sheet shown in Fig. 8.

The comb, with cast iron base, is stamped ADRE SOUALLE and has 220 teeth including several groups of eight tuned to the same pitch. The width of the tracks is just over .017", in line with normal Swiss practice. Tune 1 is on the track lines and lining-up dots. The bedplate is cast iron. All dampers are soldered, despite the anvils being drilled for pins. There are

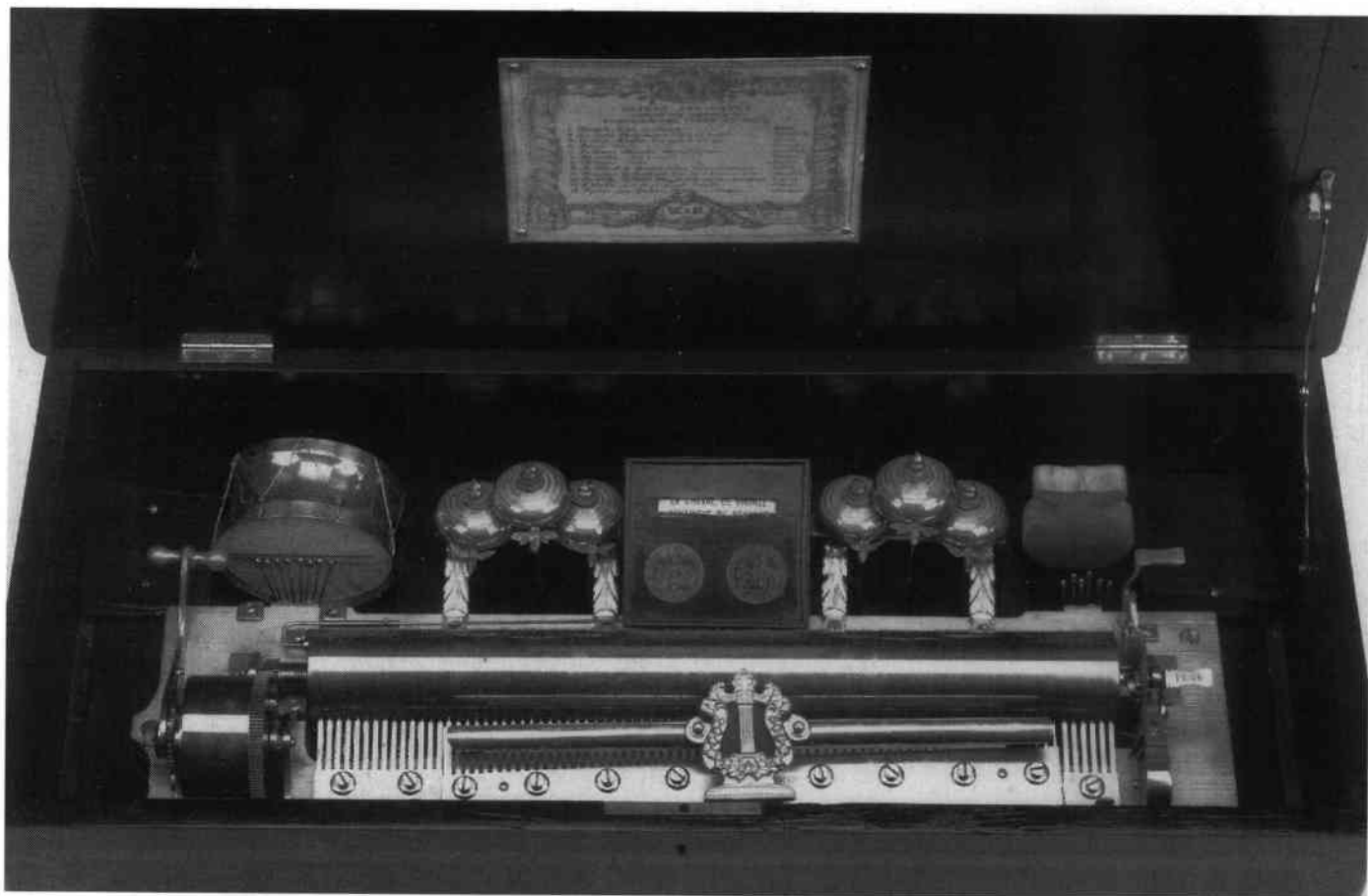


Fig. 7. W & H 20236, 18" (46cm) cylinder playing 12 airs. Two separate combs for the drum, bells and castanet. The zither is mounted from a wood block fixed in the case. Same tune sheet as Fig. 2, latest tune 1874. Medallion on the right side of the tune indicator (with its split indication!) portrays Queen Victoria on horseback. Photo thanks to Christie's, South Kensington.



Fig. 8. Black on white tune sheet for serial 3785, with printed MANDOLINE heading. A.S.V. stands for Alexandre Soualle: Villetaneuse. Tune 3, 1835. Tune 4, 1847 if Verdi's *Macbeth*; others not traced.

no blank numbers and no distinguishing marks.

An unusual feature is the medallion shown in Fig. 9, which is let into the lid just below the tune sheet. I sought an opinion about it from Philip Attwood, expert on coins and medals at the British Museum. He explained that numerous medallions of this type were made both officially and privately during the Second Republic (1848-1852) and early in the Third (1871 onwards). This medallion was almost certainly made privately as either a patriotic or an anti-monarchist gesture. Serial 3785 is therefore usefully dated at 1871 or soon after: the Franco-Prussian war ended in January 1871.

Its case has a domed lid which was in fashion for superior boxes at that period; and of course Soualle could not have reached serial 3785 by the end of the Second Republic.

Soualle boxes are in general so similar to the Swiss that he probably bought in Swiss blanks from Geneva; but he certainly made some items in his own brass foundry including cylinder end caps as shown on page 141 of Vol. 16.

The tune sheet of Soualle 4168 is on record as Ord-Hume 67; it has early tunes. The highest recorded serial is 4317 and it seems that Soualle stopped making cartel boxes in the 1870s and never reached serial 5000.

The "lyre and spray of leaves" tune sheets

Tune sheets with a 5-rod lyre and a diagonal spray of leaves at top centre come in several varieties; but I think they all have five panels of composers in each side border and ETOUFFOIRS EN ACIER in bold capitals between two blank panels in the bottom border.

The top border comes with the lyre, sometimes including a small 5-point star, and two distinct styles of the spray of leaves. On each side of it there can be 8 AIRS/8 STÜCK as in Fig. 10; or 8/AIRS; or these same pairs in white panels as in my second book, page 187-8.

All these tune sheets are in black on flimsy paper, some printed by A. Haas at Geneva or Mulhouse. The



Fig. 9. The *Republique* medallion on Soualle serial 3785, probably affixed in 1871 or 1872. It shows the head of Ceres, goddess of agriculture, as on French *Republique* postage stamps.

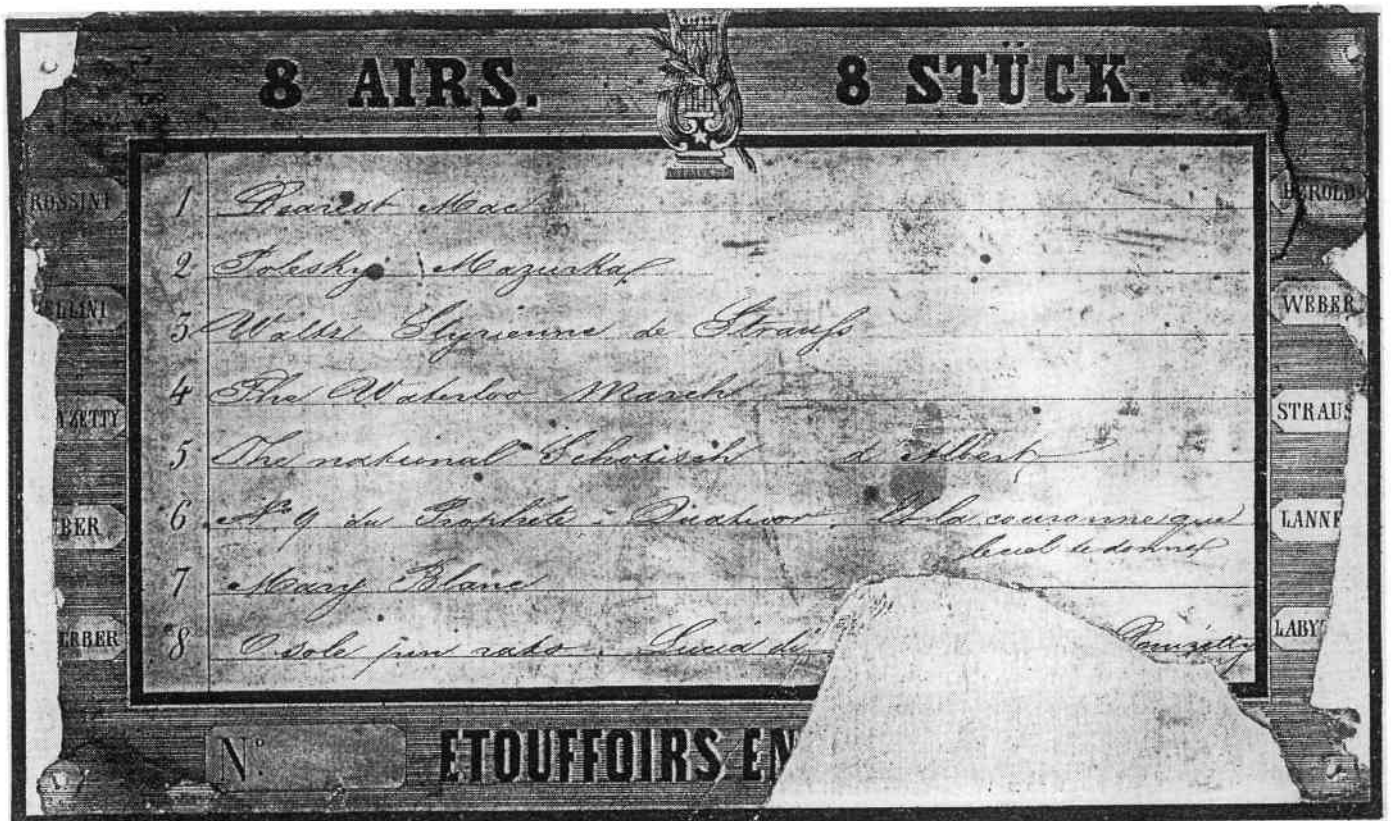


Fig. 10. The "lyre and spray of leaves" tune sheet of serial 635 with small star on the lyre and top border with both French (airs) and German (stück = pieces). Size 7 by 4½" (18 by 11cm). Latest tune probably no. 6, 1849.

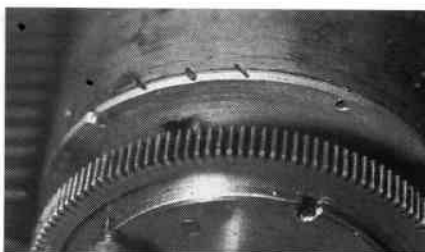


Fig. 11. Treble end of serial 635 cylinder showing pin hole in end cap (pin missing!) and hole drilled below it. The three lining-up notches emphasize essential accuracy.

printing includes the lines and the numbers for 4, 6 or 8 tunes. They are early tune sheets, and the annoying thing about them is that, so far, they cannot be accurately attributed to any maker.

The key-wind box belonging to the Fig. 10 tune sheet is serial 635 and has a 13" (33cm) cylinder with 95-tooth comb. Only 94 teeth are used, and even so the 8 pins needed by tune 8 for tooth 94 had to be pinned into the flange of the treble end cap. So eight holes about 1mm (.04") diameter and 1mm deep were drilled into the face of the end cap and about 1mm from the edge, into which these eight pin holes could be drilled – it was impossible to drill blind holes with the type of drill used. Of course it was vital to line up the end cap very accurately and this was emphasised by filing *three* notches from end cap to cylinder surface !!! see Fig. 11.

The comb is unusual, having a third dowel at the back, near the centre, Fig. 12. This is seen on Langdorff and Henriot movements.

The grained case, with inlay and stringing on the lid, is typical of the early 1850s key-wind period. It shows



Fig. 13. Gamme 81 and mystery large V on bass lead of serial 635.



Fig. 12. Extra dowel between nos. 6 and 7 of the eleven comb screws. Scribed 635, and cast number 12 just seen between the dowel and my figure 6.

no numbering nor clues to maker.

The cylinder lining-up dots are on tune 8, hinting at a Geneva maker. In the hope of a matching movement turning up and providing better clues about its maker, I have listed the distinguishing marks on this serial 635 . . .

Serial 635 and gamme 81 on comb base and bass lead, Fig. 13.

Also 635 on bedplate, great wheel and bass end cylinder cap, Fig. 14.

Blank number 7 on cylinder assembly; and scribed on governor block, very unusual.

Another peculiarity is that the snail cam steps are all oversize. Usually the steps vary by up to .001" but their average agrees with the nominal figure, generally .017". Here they average .0173", a very small but significant variation. It explains the loss of tooth 95 and the need for pins in the end cap! Eight-air tracks for 94 teeth with .0173" steps occupy 13" whereas the same for 95 teeth with .017" steps occupy only 12.9". Of course this could be an exceptional rarity due to a workshop error; but it could also be a useful clue if the same measurement is spotted again.

As you would expect, the box looks good and plays well.

Spare parts

Most of the eleven musical box sales catalogues shown on page 55 of Vol. 17 end with an illustrated list of spares. I think it is a certain fact that almost all these spares were made by local "cottage industry" until partly transferred into factory premises during the 1880s.

Of course they are all still needed, so what is their modern replacement? The answer is, up-to-date craft engineering using modern machinery.

An excellent example is the Horsham workshop, established in 1960, of Roy Connor who makes and supplies spares and assemblies for many of the leading restorers – in this country as well as Europe, America and Japan. He makes most spares in cost-effective

batches, and finished as far as possible; for example the worm for a governor endless is thread-milled but the fan bearing taper and the top and bottom bearings are left to be finished when their mating components are available. Then they are hardened and tempered and the worm thread polished in a special holder.

The diversity of the work is rather formidable compared with the above quoted catalogue spares lists which had to conform only to the one maker. In contrast Roy's field covers, for example, over a dozen different worm-wheel/ endless combinations on cartel boxes alone.



Fig. 14. Gamme 81 and serial 635 scribed on the bass cylinder end cap. As you would expect, and can detect, these two numbers were scribed by different hands on comb and cylinder.

The work entails a lot of gear cutting. A job in hand at my last visit concerned a great wheel safely on its arbor but with mangled teeth. These had to be cut well back, a brass ring made and shrunk on, and 156 new teeth cut to the old profile and truly concentric with the arbor bearings.

Like all engineer craftsmen, Roy designs many work holders and special tools to speed up the repetitive elements. With modern machine tools able to give speed and accuracy he rightly praises the craftsmen of 150 years ago who achieved such high standards with rudimentary tools and no power supply. But he enjoys the variety of to-day's restorers' demands . . . "any component from a singing bird to a 24½" auto-change Polyphon, plus occasional large bits for organs." ■



The first request for help comes from Peter Howard of MBSGB (replies to Kevin please) who has a Tournaphone organette which originally had TWO handles/cranks – one for forward and one for rewind. The rewind handle, flywheel and gearing is completely missing from his instrument, can any member supply a detailed photo of the interior missing parts for him to complete restoration, costs refunded.

A different member of MBSGB has recently purchased a very rare Non-Plus Ultra 23 note organette, but only has one very dilapidated, unplayable music sheet for it. He would like to borrow one or two books to copy, ideally including a test/scale so that he can complete restoration.

MBSI – from an issue last year there are two projects to find homes for 'Orphan' musical box cylinders and Barrels for street organs and pianos. In this way members with odd cylinders and barrels may be able to find someone who can play them and likewise members looking for the same, might be able to increase their repertoire. If you have any interest in this project please write to Angelo Rulli, editor of MBSI, 887 Orange Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55106-2051, U.S.A., who will pass on your request to the members co-ordinating these projects.

With summer holidays almost upon us I repeat my annual request for members to get two copies of a Mechanical Music guidebook or museum brochure from overseas for me, expenses reimbursed, but please contact me first to check what we already have.

What dilapidated old paper rolls/books, card or metal discs, for Organettes, Zithers, Musical Boxes and other mechanical musical instruments do members have, which they would like to get copied/re-cut as they are no longer in a stable enough condition to be played? If enough people write in about the same type of roll/book/disc then it might be possible to have a small number copied so that your instrument is no longer silent – let me know if you are interested.

I already have a request for new Zinc bands/strips for a 24 note

Clariophon organette, but no-one in the U.K. contacted so far is able to help – do you know of anyone who could make them?

I know suppliers of the following new music so far:– Aeolian 58 and 116 note, 14 note organette, 20 note Celestina, and Ariston 24 note card discs, so do let me know if you wish to be put in contact with other interested members.

Please keep sending in your audio cassette recordings of gem roller organ 20 + 32 note cobs without labels for us to identify. Three members have around 750 titles between them and are therefore able to identify all but around 300 titles with missing labels. There is a high 'hit' rate of identifying tunes so far, although there are currently about 25 titles on tape which we are unable to identify. If you have a large collection of cobs please contact me so we can exchange tapes.

In fact, while we are on the subject of un-identified tunes, there are frequently Cylinder Boxes, Barrel Pianos and Organs without tune lists. If you want them to be identified please send me an audio recording. I will then make up a 90 minute tape of un-identified tunes for future distribution to members who want to help and also for possibly playing at an Autumn '97 MBSGB society meeting. It is frustrating to have nice tunes but no title, especially if the instrument comes from a different country. I have a barrel piano made in Philadelphia, Pa. but can only identify four of the tunes, although I am sure other members have these tunes on other instruments already.

I repeat my continuing request for help compiling various catalogues, Ariston, Mignon, Ariosa, Intona, Phoenix, Amorette, Clariophon, Gem Cob 20 + 32 note organettes; Aeolian 46 note organ, Pianostyle 88 note, Cecelian 65 note, Schiedmayer Scheola Organ; plus ALL Polyphon discs not in Graham Webb's book, (a few were published recently, but there are many hundreds still missing) and also Symphonion discs, particularly the 9 and 11 inch sizes.

Thanks to Ed Schmidt who sent me a list of 28 Ariston titles of which 6 were missing from my list – every little helps!

A big thank you to Hans Schmidt from Germany who has sent me about 50 VERY useful photo-copies of Polyphon tune catalogue pages which are enabling SEVERAL HUNDRED more missing numbers to be filled in.

Also thank you to Luuk Goldhoorn from the Netherlands for help requested by Tom Valle in Norway about Polyphon records. It is amazing how people in different countries can be put in touch in this way.

Has any member ever seen a Celestina style organette which plays rolls the same 5" width as Celestina, but actually has 31 holes in the tracker bar? An English member has one of these but only one very tatty roll and would like to borrow another roll for testing. In fact I would like any member to write in if you are the owner of an unusual instrument and do not have enough music to enable testing/regulation to be concluded. I am sure this will be a useful service to members.

A member in England has written in asking if anyone has a copy of the Chordephon Zither catalogue which was being sold by the Stitching Museum in the Netherlands in 1988 which they would be prepared to sell or copy. He has written to the museum recently, but did not receive a reply so wonders if they are still open?

Another English member has a Maxfield 31 note organ, foot pedalled to create vacuum, but hand wound for roll transmission. He, as is frequently the case, has only one very poor condition roll – does anyone have some rolls they could lend for copying or know of a supplier of rolls for this unusual organ. ■



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Coaxial conundrum

Mr. Ralph Heintz, Vice-President, writes from the U.S.A.:

I was interested in the article "Coaxial Conundrum" by David Snelling, in the Summer issue of *The Music Box*. The mechanism described is, indeed, unusual, and possibly unique.

I would like to offer a comment, however, on the statement that enquiries of the Registrar elicited the information that only one other box with a coaxial mainspring had turned up in over 4,600 registered boxes. The statement obviously ignores the hundreds - perhaps thousands - of Mermod Freres boxes with coaxial drive systems. There are, in fact, more Mermod boxes with coaxial drives than with offset drives.

Unfortunately, the photograph with the article does not show the actual drive mechanism too clearly. One might deduce that the gear attached to the winding lever drove a jack-shaft mounted below the bedplate, which, in turn, drove the gear on the cylinder arbor; however, this would appear to drive the cylinder in the wrong direction. At any rate, it is a fascinating mechanism, and we will look forward eagerly to further information as the restoration progresses. ■

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