

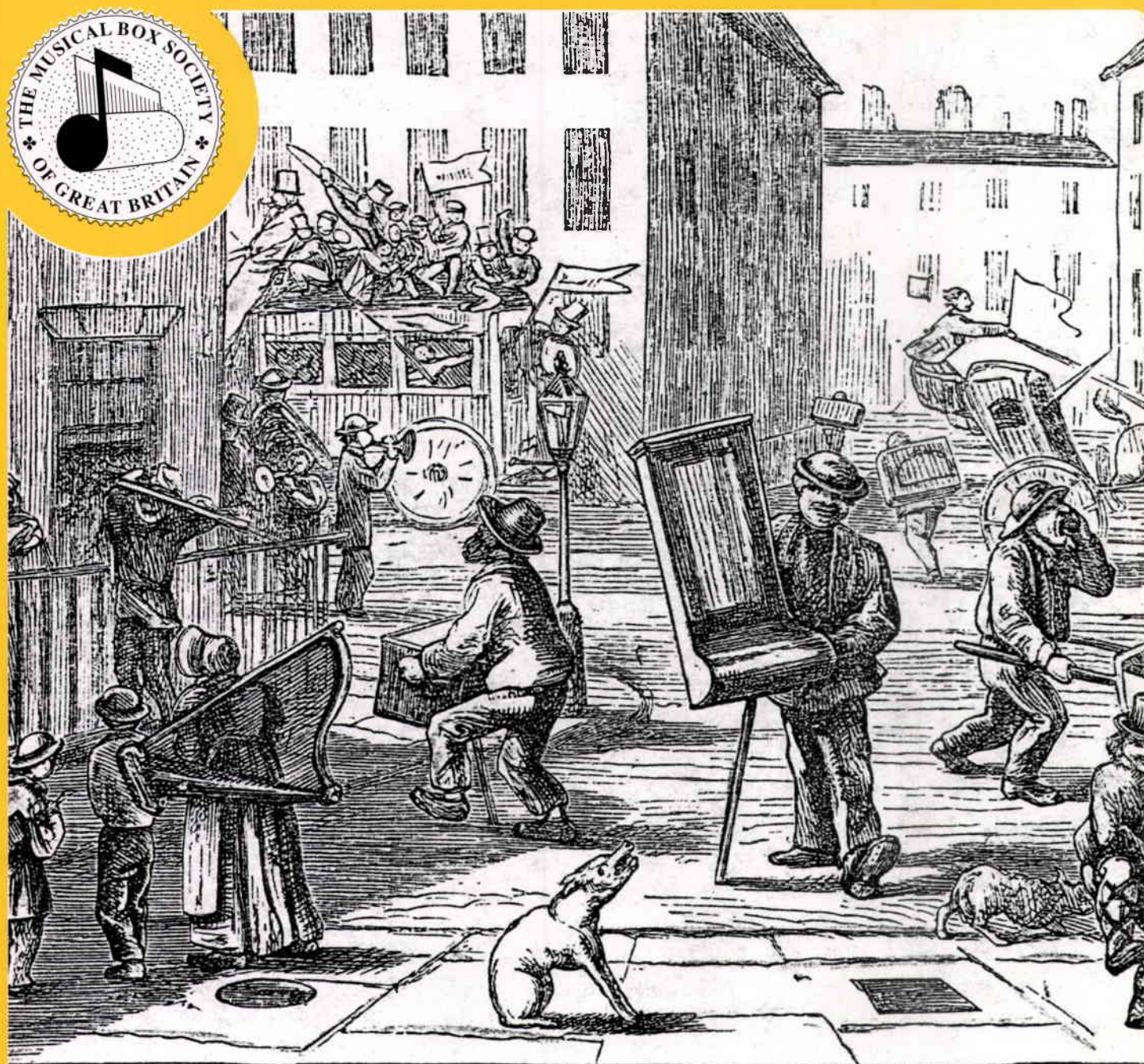
The

Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

Volume 19 Number 3 Autumn 1999

Edited by Alan Pratt



A Quiet Street in London.

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

ISSN 0027 4275

Price £6.00. Available free to members on subscriptions.

Congratulations
to the
Music Box Society International
on their
50th Anniversary



The President, Officers and Members of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain send warmest congratulations to MBSI on reaching their half century.

Best wishes for the Philadelphia meeting

In preparing this issue of *The Music Box* I was struck by the level of meetings activity which the Society is currently enjoying.

Attendance at our regional meetings has been growing steadily over recent years and local events around the country are frequently fully subscribed. You will see that there are no less than four Christmas meetings on offer at the end of the year.

One of the pleasures of any hobby is the ability to share your interests with like-minded people. Our meetings provide a forum where one can learn from the acknowledged experts, see and hear instruments which you could never hope to own, and indulge in the pleasure of simply talking about

mechanical music.

This level of activity must be a sign that the MBSGB is in a healthy state, but we should not become complacent because of this. With so many things competing for limited spare time, it has become more difficult to attract new members. We are not alone in this. In the latest issue of *Hillandale*, the magazine for our gramophone collecting colleagues, similar views are expressed. They too have well attended meetings and yet find it difficult to recruit new members.

In an attempt to make ourselves known to a wider, and probably younger, audience we now have our website. This means that anyone with even the slightest interest in mechanical music can find out about the subject, and that an active

Society exists to serve them. Try us on www.mbsgb.org.uk

The growth of electronic information technology, where people can learn about almost everything without leaving their homes, may eventually lead to a renewed interest in occasions where you can meet real people and hold proper conversations, rather than an exchange of e-mails.

So whilst we hope that our website will introduce us to more people, let us not forget the role that we can all play in securing the future of the Society. If you know someone with an interest in mechanical music, bring them along to one of the meetings, and share your enjoyment of mechanical music. ■

Alan Pratt



Alan Pratt

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 19 Number 3 Autumn 1999

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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.

The Society and its Editor are unable to accept and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in such contributions. No representations, warranties or endorsements of any product or information contained herein are given or intended and full verification of all products and information appearing in this Journal must be sought from the appropriate contributor.

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Front Cover

Our cover illustration comes from "Good Words" of October 1st 1868.

The accompanying text reads:

Street Music in England

It is the end of the day, it is lawful to rest for a moment and listen, and they do listen – the men and the women clustering in groups on their doorsteps, and leaning from the windows above, and the children – oh! the children! I look down the alley, and suddenly it is flooded with the light of the low sun; it smites the murky atmosphere into purple shades, and broad, warm, yellow light upon the pathway, and glitters like gold leaf upon the window-panes; and the children – the children are dancing all down the alley, dancing in long vistas far

down into the sunny mist, two and two, three and three, but all dancing, and dancing in time; and their faces – many poor pale faces, and some rosy ones, too – their faces are so happy, and the whole alley is hushed, save only for the music and the dancing of the children.

I bless that organ-man – a very Orpheus in hell! I bless his music. I stand in that foul street where the blessed sun shines, and where the music is playing, I give the man a penny to prolong the happiness of those poor people, of those hungry, pale, and ragged children, and, as I retire, I am saluted as a public benefactor; and was ever pleasure bought so cheap and so pure? ■

*I bless that
organ-man –
a very Orpheus
in hell!*



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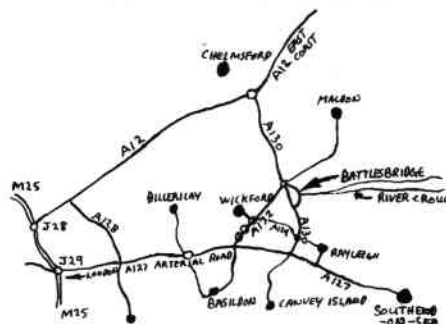
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President's Message

As you all know, I'm not normally known for long 'messages'. This one will be the exception. I have three important items of news to convey to you.

Firstly, there will be a meeting in Bruschal, Germany, in October to which all societies interested in mechanical music have been invited for discussions on forming an international association of societies, an umbrella organisation of mechanical music enthusiasts. The seed of the idea was first formed in 1994, so when I took over as President it was already sown and growing. Initially, when we received the framework of the idea the committee and I felt it was in need of thinning down from many good ideas to a few very good ideas. As your President, I have conveyed this to other society presidents and we all appear to be of a similar mind. We want to participate in anything which furthers the aims of our society and increases knowledge of mechanical music without losing our individual identity. The basic ideas are that all available information be translated and placed on CD Rom, produced as articles in our journals, disseminated, and as much of the myth and mistakes removed so that the information is as correct as possible. Printing errors and incorrect facts are still unfortunately quoted years after first being put into print or, worse still, after updated reprints. This idea should eradicate this problem and make available a vast wealth of otherwise inaccessible material in languages we can all understand. I say this because much is in German, in a now unused form that can only be translated by experts who can understand the old language, its print and its unusual noun formation. All members are invited to contact me for details.

Secondly, I want to express, on behalf of us all, sincere congratulations to the American Society "The Musical Box Society International" which, this

year, celebrates its 50th Anniversary at the Philadelphia meeting. The contributions made by their members have done much to keep the interest in mechanical music alive. Our two societies have always worked closely together and enjoy each others enthusiasm for a common cause. Well done America!

My third and final point refers to the leaflet enclosed in the journal regarding Associate membership. It is one of those things that kept being put on the back-burner because of little problems that could get in the way.

I removed as many snags as possible and presented the package to those present at the AGM. As the members were mostly the old regulars (I use the term affectionately), and there were some of our new members attending, we were able to discuss the problems, advantages and disadvantages, to end with a nucleus of ideas which have gone together as a proposal. Briefly, a full member can join up one associate member who can then have a membership card. This can prevent embarrassment on limited number tours or visits when card holders take precedence. Members have always been able to bring a guest, but now Associate members can also bring a guest. I know most of you will be quite happy to continue as you are. This idea is really to enable a couple to be able to bring (officially) another couple along, one on each membership card, and not have to just hope that vacancies are still left after all members have applied. If you will fill in the form and send it to me, I can present it to the members at the Autumn Meeting where it can be voted upon. If agreed upon we could have Associate membership available by January.

A digest of the minutes of the AGM is included in the journal for your perusal. ■

Ted Brown

Annual General Meeting 1999

Precis of the minutes of the AGM held at Athletic and Working Mens' Club, Kettering on June 5 1999. There were 73 members present. Various apologies for absence were received. The minutes of the last AGM were taken as read and adopted. One query about the publication of the tune sheet book was quickly resolved.

Ted Brown, our President, presented his report which outlined the activities of the society during the year. He noted that the society was now well established on the internet due to the efforts of Bob Ducat-Brown, Keith Reedman, Kevin McElhone and Alan Pratt. Thanks are particularly due to Bob for making the site available to the Society. Ted then informed the meeting that the society was in the throes of producing its first book and he was very optimistic about our future.

The Membership and Correspondence secretary noted that 37 new members joined the society last year and there seemed to be increased public interest in our activities.

In the report of the Subscription secretary, Richard Kerridge noted that the present membership stood at 508.

314 from the U.K.
4 from Europe and the Near East.
81 from the U.S.A.
9 from Canada.
30 from Australia and the Far East.

Roy Ison reported as Meeting Secretary that events for the remainder of this year were all organised and in the year 2000 the following meetings would be held:- 7 - 9 April 2000. Meeting at the Saracen's Head Southwell. Notts.

June 2000. Our AGM and annual auction at Kettering.

Autumn meeting.

A venue on the Hampshire - Sussex border.

Find us on
www.mbsgb.org.uk

society news and topics

Richard Kerridge our Treasurer gave details of a very successful financial year. Profits for the year were up by £592 and funds now stood at £24,756. This sum did include the legacy left to the society in late 1998.

Alan Pratt gave his first full report as Editor of the journal. He thanked all contributors especially the regulars. He asked for contributions from those who had never written before. Alan drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that the society was now on the internet and the home page is to be found on www.mbsgb.org.uk As a result of this we were being well promoted all over the world. Alan was given a special vote of thanks from the meeting for his work as editor.

In the Archivist report, Kevin McElhone gave details of what had been received in the past year. He said cataloguing was continuing and a 20 page listing of the archives had been produced.

The Auction Organiser felt that 1998 had been a great success as £1,300 had been raised for society funds. David Walch thanked all who had helped in any way to bring about the success of this venture.

It was agreed by the meeting that subscriptions for the year 2000 remain at £24, a sum which has remained unchanged for four years. It was also agreed that the next AGM be held at the same venue in Kettering.

In the election of officers, Hugh Morgan was elected to serve as a committee member. All serving committee members were re-elected.

In Any Other Business, the idea of establishing Associate Membership of the society was discussed at length. Finally, it was decided to refer the matter back to the committee for further consideration.

The question of registration fees for those who gave talks or put on displays in meetings was then

discussed. Some felt that these members should not be asked to pay a registration fee. In the end it was decided that only those from outside the society who came specially to give a talk should not be asked to pay any fees.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a special vote of thanks for the President and serving members of the committee was called for in recognition of their hard and unpaid work for the society. The response from the membership was most gratifying.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 12.08.

Full copies of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting are available on request from:-

*The Recording Secretary,
c/o 6, Kingscote Road,
Dorridge,
Solihull,
West Midlands.
B93 8RA*

Chanctonbury Ring

The May meeting of the Chanctonbury Ring again went very well with Anthony Bulleid dispelling a few more myths and expanding our knowledge of metallurgy. We heard the 14 note McCarthy Babe pipe organ played by Richard Kerridge and the 31 note Raffin organ of Daphne Ladell.

The main topic was 'Unusual Tune Titles' but as usual the clock beat us by the time we got to the upper end of organettes.

The next meeting on the 22nd August will include Medleys, Spanish, Russian, Swedish and other more unusual tune titles to be found over here, showing some of the very good arrangements. Never put a tune to one side until you have at least played it. Let Ted Brown know by the 12 August if you would like to come. This time you bring a packed lunch and we supply the drinks and strawberries and cream.

Update on our Tune Sheet Book

This will be ready in time for the next journal along with the prices. A limited number will be hard bound and will have a page giving the list of those subscribing for this copy. It will be more expensive than the soft cover edition, and members interested

in being involved in this edition need only to confirm by letter to the President before the 1st October. (address on Officers page).

Prices will be in the November journal. This edition will then be bound and dispatched by January 2000. ■

Ted Brown

*Tune Sheet
Book Update*

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A Dutch Treat The MBSGB visit Holland

The highlight of our mechanical music tour this Spring was undoubtedly the visit to the museum at Utrecht - but more of that later.

The weekend of our visit coincided with the Queen's Birthday celebrations, so hotels in the major tourist areas were fully booked. Because of this we stayed in Waalwijk, a delightful small town within easy reach of Amsterdam, Utrecht and the other places we intended to visit. The Hotel Waalwijk proved to be excellent and we were welcomed warmly after travelling from Landbeach via the Channel ferry.

Our first visit was to the Gaviolizaal Mechanical Music Museum at Helmond. The displays are dominated by a magnificent Mortier to one side of the hall and a Gaudin fairground organ beautifully restored to its 1920's origins. With its 1078 pipes in 17 registers it produces a truly stirring sound. The organs in this collection are presented in a café setting so that we could enjoy refreshments whilst

our guide Kathleen played a wide selection of the organs on display, including an excellent small Ruth. There was also a small museum of other mechanical music ephemera.

From here it was on to Amsterdam where the celebrations for the Queen's birthday were in full swing. We were on our way to the Pianola Museum in Westerstraat where we were welcomed by the

curator, Kasper Janse.

The museum is rather delightfully housed in what was once a police station with many of the extensive collection of rolls being stored in the old cells. They should be safe there! We were able to hear many of the instruments and Kasper's enthusiasm for the subject is quite infectious, although it was something of a squeeze to get the

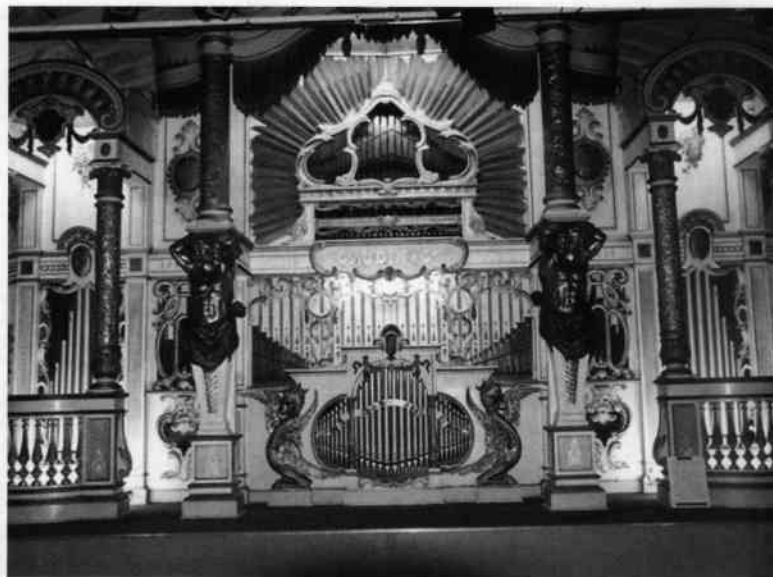


Fig.1. Splendid fascia of Gaudin organ.



Fig.2. A Restored Ruth organ.

*The highlight of
our tour was
undoubtedly
Utrecht*

society news and topics



Fig.3. Kasper demonstrates one of his collection.



Fig.3a. One of the original posters on display at the Pianola Museum.

30-odd people into a building already bursting at the seams with roll-playing pianos and push-ups!

Street organs now seem much less common on the streets of Amsterdam, but we did come across one not far from the Pianola Museum. The sound drifting along the canals is very evocative.

On Sunday we stopped at the world famous Keukenhof Gardens to marvel at the displays of bulbs on our way to Haarlem. About the only link with mechanical music that Keukenhof can claim is a rather nice organ which plays continuously at the entrance, but the floral displays are so spectacular that we could not omit this venue from our itinerary.

On the move again, this time to the Kinkels Orgel Fairground Organ collection in Haarlem. Housed in an old warehouse, the collection is a place for all the family on a Sunday afternoon. Presented, once again, in a café style setting there is much animated conversation against a background of continuous organ sounds. Smoking seemed to be a popular activity - don't the organs suffer from clogged pipes? However, the weather was fine and warm and with the main entrance doors open we were able to enjoy a relaxing drink and listen to the music in the open air.

The sound drifting along the canals is very evocative.



Fig.4. Dutch Street organ in action.



Fig.5. Welcome to Keukenhof.



Fig.6. Pluer organ.

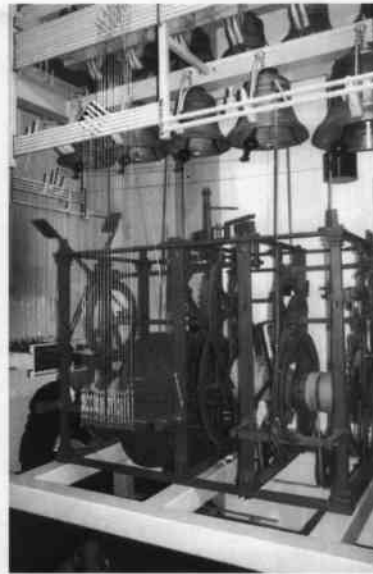


Fig.7. Carillon at Utrecht Museum.



Fig.8. Dr. Haspels demonstrates the Geo Pyke clock (top right).



Fig.10. Programmable barrel in the Dom Tower. The nuts securing the pins can be seen in the lower right of the picture.

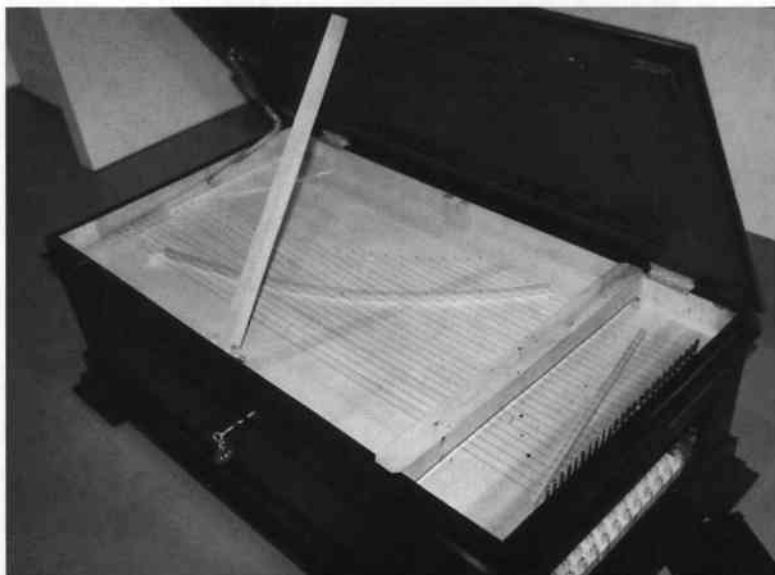


Fig.9. Automatic Spinet - 17th Century.



Fig.9a. Some of the bells in the Dom Tower, Carillon.

(continued from page 62)

Monday was our planned visit to Utrecht. The National Museum van Speelklok tot Pierremont is one of the "must see" collections of mechanical music in the world. This was the second visit for your reporter, but with more than 900 instruments to see, even two visits are quite inadequate to take in the scope of this collection. We were extremely honoured on this visit for, although the Museum was closed to the public, the Director, Dr. Jan Jaap Haspels, a long-standing friend of MBSGB, had agreed to open especially for us. And with Dr. Haspels as our guide we were able to hear each instrument at its best and learn a little of its background and history.

In the reception area is a fine small-scale carillon (small by comparison to the one in the Dom Tower which we were able to see later in the day, that is). As well as sounding the hours and quarters via a programmable barrel, Dr. Haspels demonstrated on the manual 'keyboard'.

From here we moved onto the Museum where many of the exhibits were demonstrated. It is only possible in this short report to give a flavour of all that we saw and heard. Notable among the clocks was the organ clock with automata by Geo Pyke of London dating from around 1750.

An instrument I had not seen before is the Automatic Harpsichord. This is a reconstruction of an instrument from the first quarter of the 17th century playing six melodies on 25 keys. A very sweet sound.

At lunch time we had the opportunity to go up to the Dom Tower in Utrecht to see and hear the famous carillon. Many towns had these bell towers which gave rise to the description "The Singing Towers of the Low Countries". Utrecht is the most famous and led by Dr. Haspels we ascended the hundreds of steps (perhaps it just seemed that many!) to the bell chamber. There are 51 bells in the peal, the largest weighing a mighty seven tons. The automatic mechanism has a programmable barrel with 58,000 holes into which can be fitted the operating pins -

each secured with a nut on the inside.

Dr. Haspels then gave a short recital ending with a rousing version of Land of Hope and Glory. Wonderful!!

Back in the Museum we resumed our tour. There is a particularly fine Philipps /Paganini orchestrion and we were able to see the standard of restoration with the front removed.

By contrast we also saw a small I. Bruder of around 1830 with automata. Moving on to the larger instruments, several of the Museum's fairground organs were played, each with its own distinctive sound, all of which are enhanced by the excellent acoustics within the building. The

whole museum is housed in what was originally a 14th century church - the Buurkerk. A wonderful setting for a truly outstanding collection.

During our day at Utrecht we saw and heard many of the instruments. Each of us came away with memories of our particular favourites. No report can do justice to the variety of instruments we heard nor to the pleasure of seeing so many fine examples of mechanical music. We must go back again - soon!

Our special thanks go to Dr. Haspels and all his staff for making this a memorable day and a fitting finale to our visit to Holland. ■



Fig.11. Dr. Haspel plays the Dom Tower Carillon.

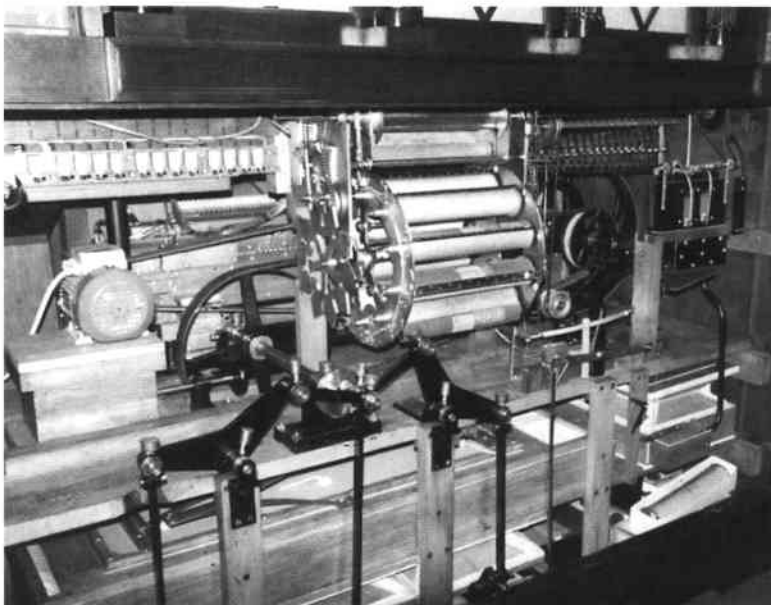


Fig.12. The 'works' of the Philipps / Paganinni showing the revolver roll mechanism.



Fig.13. Dr. Haspels plays the Bruder.



Fig.14. 105 key Carl Frei. Originally built as an 86 key dance organ this instrument has had several rebuilds.



Fig.15. The central nave of the Buurkerk.

New CD of Pianola Music by Rex Lawson

The Pianola Institute has just released their first CD on its own "Aeolus" label. The music is an eclectic collection of titles played by Rex Lawson using his 88-note push up player, recorded in the Djanogly Recital Hall at the University of Nottingham. The music titles are:-

1. Igor Stravinsky: Les Noces (arr. Stravinsky/Larmanjat)
2. Witold Lutoslawski: Variations on a theme of Paganini (arr. Lawson)
3. Sergei Rachmaninov: Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini (arr. Lawson)
4. George Frederic Handel: Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (arr. Lawson)
5. Charles-Marie Widor: Toccata from Organ Symphony No.5

(arr. Lawson)
Sir Arthur Sullivan/Sir Charles Mackerras: Pineapple Poll (arr. Lawson)

6. Overture
7. Belaye's Solo
8. Reconciliatio
9. Final

I enjoyed this recital as much for the music and musicianship as for the amount of work that has been put into editing and arranging the rolls together with their production.

The Stravinsky is interesting historically and well played. Items 2 to 9 are all Lawson arrangements which are all on the whole successful, the best probably being the Rachmaninov and Pineapple Poll. The amount of work needed to take the music from the score, invent your own computer programme and arrange the rolls is simply staggering, and represents hundreds of hours of work, an outstanding achievement. The rolls were produced on one of the original Aeolian perforators owned

by Mike Boyd of the Universal Music Roll Company; the Stravinsky was kindly loaned. Again the amount of work needed to get the perforator working, stand over the machine for hours on end, check every roll for accuracy, label, stamp and box the finished article, is a work of art in its own right and should be applauded.

One of the most interesting offshoots to the CD is that the rolls, apart from the Stravinsky, have been available for some time under the Perforatour label so that interested pianolists can practise the roll, listen to the CD and improve their technique under Rex's tuition.

The Pianola Institute is to be congratulated on this production and copies of the CD can be obtained from Mike Davies, *The Granary, Fenny Compton Wharf, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV33 0XE*. The price of the CD is a very reasonable GBP 10 including post and packing. ■

Malcolm Cole

Improve your pianola technique

MEETINGS**Annual General Meeting**

For this year's AGM we moved to a new location - the W.M. & Athletic Club in Kettering. This proved to be a light and airy room with good parking and refreshment facilities.

A précis of the formal part of the meeting appears elsewhere in The Music Box.

Members had been encouraged to bring along their musical boxes, and after the formal meeting there was the opportunity to hear them. This musical interlude was enjoyed by everyone and we should ensure that we include something similar on future occasions.

We were pleased to welcome

our American Vice President, Ralph Heintz, to this meeting, which gave a rare opportunity to have our two Vice Presidents together in one place.

The Society Auction, run impeccably as always by Christopher Proudfoot, attracted over 200 entries ranging from books and bric-a-brac through to several very nice examples of cylinder and disc boxes. 74 members and guests attended.

Autumn Meeting

Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon, September 3-5th

Details of this meeting, together with a booking form, were included with the last Music

Box. The two speakers on Saturday morning will be Ted Brown and Arthur Cunliffe.

Christmas One-Day Meetings

This year we have four meetings on offer - they seem to be getting more popular so don't delay in booking your places.

Saturday, 20th November

Roy and Mary Ison at Lincoln (01522 540406 for details).

Saturday, 27th November

Ted and Kay Brown at The Old School in Sussex, where the usual festive theme will be in place. Carols will be played on as many instruments as possible. It will go on all day from 10.30 - 4 p.m. with morning coffee, hot lunch and afternoon tea. Contact Ted Brown with numbers for refreshments by 18th November latest. The list must close at 40 and will be in strict order. Telephone 01403 823533 for details.

Saturday, 4th December

Alan and Daphne Wyatt at Landbeach, Cambridge (01223 860332 for details).

Saturday, 11th December

Harold Smith at Sadington Hall, Leicestershire. There is only room for 20 members here. Call Roy Ison on 01522 540406 to book a place.

Spring 2000 Meeting

April 7-9 at The Saracen's Head, Southwell, Notts.

Local organisers are Dorothy Robinson and Roy Ison. Arrangements to date include a visit to The British Horological Museum at Upton Hall, a viewing of a working church barrel organ at Ossington Church, followed by a short demonstration of bell ringing. There will be an opportunity for members to take a ride on a vintage bus into Newark, well known for its variety of shops, including several antique centres. During the weekend there will be an opportunity to see and hear a Compton cinema organ. More details later.



Fig.1. A Presidential line-up! Ted Brown flanked by Christopher Proudfoot (left) and Ralph Heintz (right).

Presidents galore!



Fig.2. Viewing the Auction lots.

Annual General Meeting 2000

June 3rd -again at Kettering.

Autumn 2000 Meeting

Location - Hampshire. Local organiser is Barry Wilson, assisted by Brian Chapman. Attractions to be included are a visit to Hollowcombe steam attraction with a possibility of an organ grind by members, a viewing of Peter Hoyte's collection and display of cylinder boxes, disc boxes and other mechanical music from local collectors - a meeting not to be missed! Further details in later editions of The Music Box.

It is good to see such a lively meetings programme being planned. The opportunity to meet with fellow members and enjoy mechanical music is one of the main reasons the Society exists. Try to support a meeting near you.

The National Vintage Communications Fair

Takes place at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, on Sunday 24th October 1999. Details from the Organisers on 01392 411565.

Forthcoming Events in the Netherlands

The VDDL, the Dutch Society for Fairground and Dancehall organs, is organising two events which may be of interest.

Sunday, 26th September

12 noon to 5 p.m. Large organ rally in the centre of Oosterhout, Netherlands. At least 29 organs will be playing.

Sunday, 10th October

The VDDL will have a swapmeet for all kinds of mechanical music instruments. This will be held in the RBA building - St. Genovevastraat 24 - 5694 AG Breugal (nr. Eindhoven) opening hours 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Price hfl. 25.00 per table. Entrance hfl. 2.50/adults, children free.

For more information call 0031-499 471486

OFFICERS OF THE M.B.S.G.B. AND THEIR DUTIES

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*A reminder of
our web
address:
www.mbsgb
.org.uk*

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society:-

2686 Paul Tuck, London

2687 Dean Organs, Bristol

2688 P. E. Robinson, Sheffield

2689 Ian Barnes, Leicester

2690 R. Croncher, Sussex

2691 Doug Fleischmann

2692 Mark Buckland, Cumbria

2693 A. E. Cuff, Wiltshire

2694 A. J. Reid, London

2695 Peter Rohrer, Basel,
Switzerland

2696 K. R. Stroud, Kent

2697 Mrs. V. Honeywood,
Suffolk

A Taste of Waldkirch

By Nicholas Simons

Once every three years all roads lead to Waldkirch, deep in the Black Forest. Organ enthusiasts from around the world travel to the cradle of the German mechanical organ industry for a two day festival to celebrate the town's pre-eminence in this field.

Here is the place to see the cream of German organs, presented in superb condition and playing music by the worlds greatest arrangers. This year was no exception, with 104 organs of all sizes presented and at least 66 enthusiasts from Great Britain and 50 from the U.S.A. making the journey. In addition, one intrepid British organ owner, Brian Wells of Oxfordshire, brought his newly rebuilt 89 key Gavioli organ all 700 miles to Waldkirch, at a speed of 45 mph, complete with his showman's living wagon. Also in attendance was the man responsible for the rebuild, Andrew Whitehead of Stratford upon Avon, but his attentions were not required as the organ behaved impeccably throughout the festival. MBSGB member Paul Bellamy was also in attendance, presenting his locally built Jager and Brommer street organ and his Hicks piano sporting a newly pinned barrel by Paul himself. This type of instrument is little seen in Germany these days and always drew a large crowd when played.

I did not see any modern versions of the traditional Black Forest clock containing a small barrel pipe organ.

200 Years Of Organ Building

The theme of this year's festival, the sixth, was to celebrate 200 years of organ building in Waldkirch. This started in 1799 with the church organ builder Mathias Martin moving to the town and the tradition continues unbroken to this day with four organ builders currently being based in Waldkirch. The town is justly proud of its heritage and for the festival all historic sites of organ workshops etc. are labelled with plaques stating who lived or worked there and when. This is ideal for an "organ crawl" by the enthusiast!

Special events this year were the unveiling of a new Festival Organ and a concert including world premiere performances for mechanical organ and string ensemble.

A Trip To Triberg

By a strange coincidence my family's annual holiday coincided with the organ festival so we had the opportunity to travel around the area and see the sights. Not far from Waldkirch is Triberg, the centre of the Black Forest clock making

industry. Roads around Triberg and the town's mainstreet are populated by dozens of clock shops, some boasting over 1000 clocks in store. Clocks range from cheap souvenirs up to very expensive quality timepieces costing thousands of pounds. I even saw a do-it-yourself Black Forest clock kit. Although there were many clocks featuring small cylinder musical box movements I did not see any modern versions of the traditional Black Forest clock containing a small barrel pipe organ.



Fig.1. Triberg Museum, Weber Orchestron

At the top of the mainstreet is the Schwarzwald Museum. This is a fine museum covering many local aspects, including clockmaking, mechanical music, costumes and semi-precious stones. It has a wide ranging collection of organs and orchestrions and has a more enlightened attitude to these than other public museums, in that most are playable by the public.

Each organ is played by means of a coin box for 1 DM or by museum staff for a similar fee. The large Heizmann barrel orchestrion costs 5 DM for a complete rendition of the Poet and Peasant Overture but is worth every penny (pfennig?). The list of organs is as follows;

Very large barrel orchestrion by Heizmann, Imhof and Mukle orchestrion, 'Lucia', Weber orchestrion, 'Euterpe', Weber orchestrion, early cabinet style, type not known, Hupfeld Clavist, cabinet model, Blessing orchestrion, cabinet style, Blessing, 'Bauernkapelle'.

This last instrument is a remarkable 'one off' orchestrion, clearly built to special order. It consists of a normal sized roll playing electric piano but the roll is orchestrated to play a full sized accordion, drum kit and band-master. The accordion and drums are played by two life sized automata who also have moving facial expressions. The band-master (mistress?) is a young girl who beats time and also changes her expression with the music.

In addition to the orchestrions there are about a dozen smaller hand-cranked street organs including a very nice Gavioli Uniflute which can be played by the visitor if he asks nicely!

The Kurt Neimuth Collection

The well known Berlin organ collector died a few years ago and left the bulk of his collection to the Triberg Museum. A new extension, covering three floors, has been built at the back of the existing building, in which to house the new exhibits. Unfortunately, it was not possible to have this open in time for the Waldkirch festival but it is now planned to open in September 1999.

The Organs Arrive

Friday is organ set-up day with the town centre roads closed to traffic and most of the large static organs arriving during the day. Most enthusiasts have arrived early and spend the day renewing old acquaintances, watching the organs arrive and relaxing in the street cafes. Missing this year was the large Ruth model 38 (96 keyless) of Romy Maier and its position in the market place was taken by Hoefnagel's Ruth model 36 (78 keyless). This organ was most impressively presented in an enormous trailer complete with

hydraulically powered slide-out back and lifting canopy. Its musical repertoire was extensive to say the least, ranging from classical overtures and operatic selections to modern popular numbers. I didn't hear any tune played more than once during the whole weekend.

The music played by a mechanical organ is just as important as the quality and condition of the organ itself. Here, the British organ owner could learn a lot from his continental counterpart. The Ruth and Bruder organs appearing at Waldkirch play music of the highest quality, much of it arranged by



Fig.2. Triberg Museum, Blessing Bauernkapelle. Picture courtesy of Schwarzwald Museum, Triberg



Fig.3. Hoefnagel's Ruth model 36.

*...a very nice
Gavioli Uniflute
which can be
played by the
visitor if he asks
nicely!*

Gustav Bruder, considered by most to have been the world's greatest arranger for mechanical organ and orchestration. His daughter still lives in Waldkirch and could be seen through the festival enjoying her father's musical arrangements. Much of the music played during the festival was of a classical nature with arrangements contemporary with the organs. This was enjoyed by the crowds equally to music of a more popular vein. There must be hundreds of old music books hidden away behind the large British organs that would be enjoyed by enthusiasts, but unfortunately very few of the owners of these organs are either enthusiasts themselves or musically knowledgeable.

The static organs appearing this year were mostly by Ruth and Gebruder Bruder, being represented by Ruth models 33 (52 keyless), 35 (67 keyless) and 36 (78 keyless) and Bruder models 111 (43 keyless) and 107 (52 keyless). Rare, for Europe,

was a very early band organ, probably by De Kleist, playing Wurlitzer style 150 rolls. This had been found in Spain by the French organ builders Le Ludion. The "Long Gavioli", an 89 key organ owned by the city of Utrecht, was positioned outside the Elztalmuseum for the duration of the festival and played long into Friday evening during the social gathering.

Mobile organs represented over 150 years of Waldkirch organ building, ranging from early Ruth and Bruder barrel organs to today's Jager and Brommer roll playing organs. Jager and Brommer is a very active young company building church organs as well as fair and street organs. Their hand-cranked street organs have a very distinctive style and exhibit excellent craftsmanship. They play the standard 20 note roll and the new 26 note extension of this designed by MBSGB member Ian Alderman.

The Festival Organ.

In order to celebrate 200 years of organ building the festival committee had commissioned a new organ to be built. This was a collaboration between the four organ builders of the town;

Jager and Brommer,
Paul Fleck Sohne,
Wolfram Stutzle and
Rainer Pitt.

The organ was traditional in construction, using hand cranked feeders and cardboard book music, and played the Gebruder Bruder 111 scale (43 keyless). Its sound was superb and could easily be mistaken for an original Bruder organ. More controversial was the appearance of the organ. It had been designed by the famous German modern artist Otmar Alt and was just a bit different to your average organ! It is a remarkable achievement by all concerned to

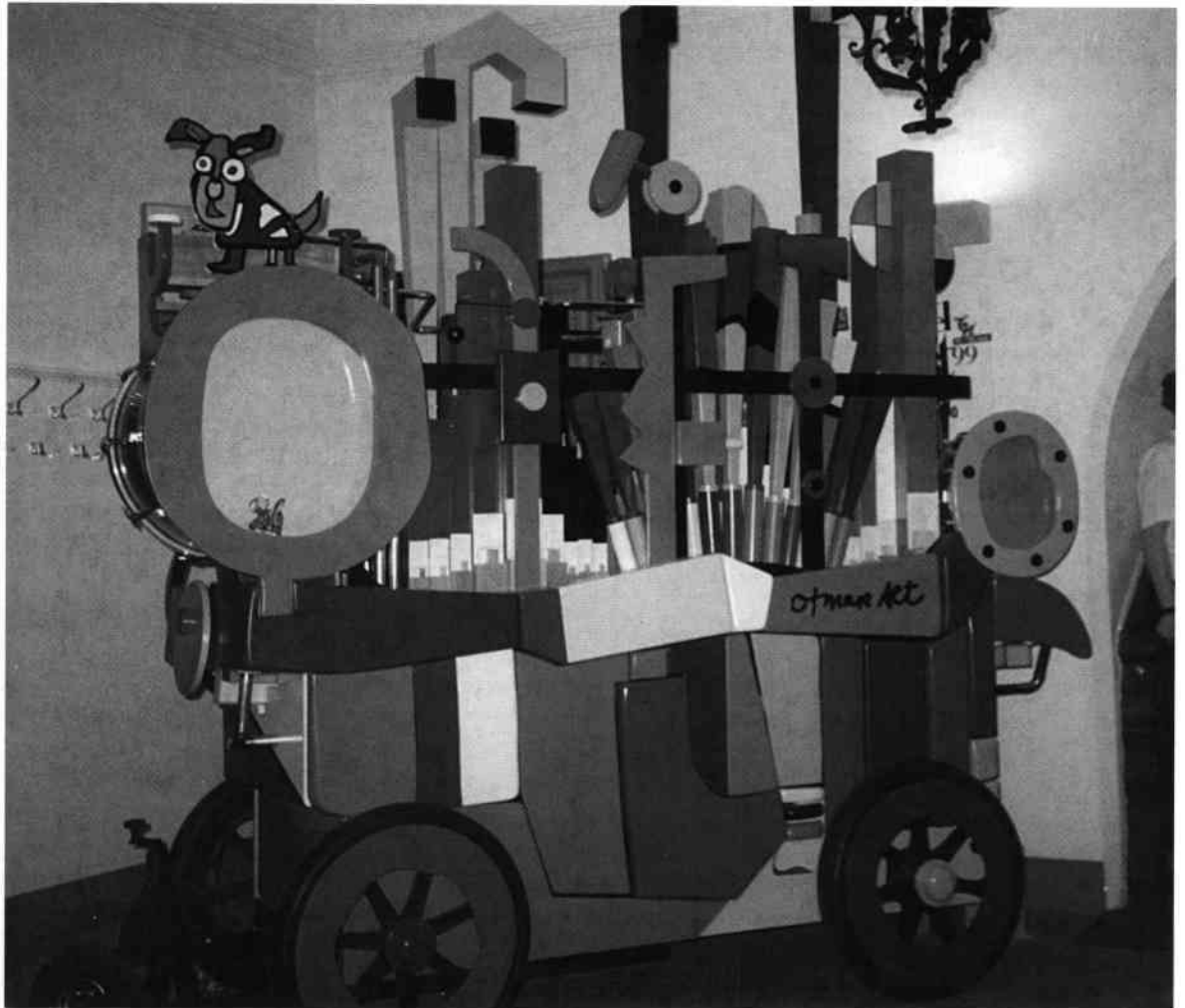


Fig.4. Festival Organ

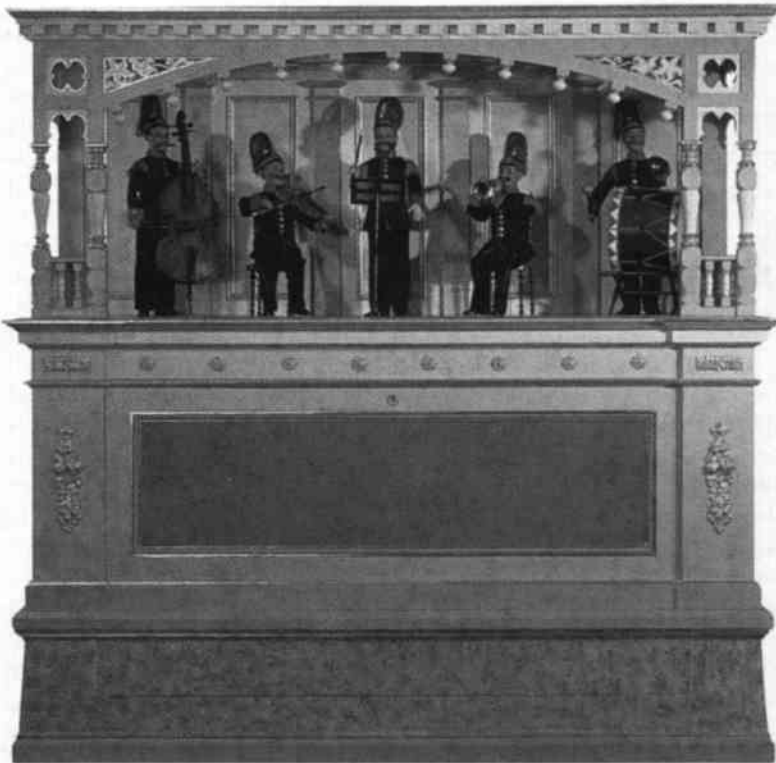


Fig.5. Book playing orchestrion. Picture courtesy of Elztalmuseum.

reconcile the requirements of building a functional organ with the ideas of the artist. Whatever ones opinion over the appearance of this new organ one cannot dispute the fact that it represents a preservation of the sounds of the past with an appearance which looks to the future. A fitting celebration of 200 years of organ building in Waldkirch.

Workshops Open Day.

During the Saturday all four organ builders mentioned above had their workshops open to the public. Of particular interest to the author was the work of Rainer Pitt who builds manually played chamber organs and clavichords. The workmanship was exceptional and the instruments are very competitively priced given the current exchange rate. Stefan Fleck's workshop (Paul Fleck Sohne) is housed in a very old wooden framed building that was once the workshop of Ignaz Bruder I (1780-1845). One wonders whether the history seen by the building has an effect on today's work. Certainly, Stefan and his brother restore classic instruments to very high standards and for the festival had on

show a recently completed Wellershaus organ.

The Elztalmuseum.

Like Triberg, Waldkirch has its own town museum, where the entire ground floor is devoted to mechanical organs. There are three main rooms, each representing a major dynasty; Bruder, Ruth and Weber. For the technically minded there is a room containing music arranging and cutting equipment including Gustav Bruder's own marking drum.

Unfortunately, the museum has a rather negative attitude to its collection. Playing the organs seems to be too much trouble. Hearing the organs only seems possible during a guided tour and even during the festival there were only four of these, but at least one was specifically in English. In addition to barrel and book organs by Bruder, Ruth, Limonaire and Gavioli there are three fine orchestrions by Weber. Firstly, a Unika which plays piano, mandolin and violin toned pipes. Secondly comes the Maestro, one of only seven left in the world and said to be the most

musically competent orchestrion ever built. Finally, and most splendidly, is the Automatische Kapelle, built for the Guesthouse of the Sun, Bleibach, Germany. This is an early book playing orchestrion which has on display five automaton musicians whose movements are controlled by special keys on the music so they can give a very lifelike performance. The trumpeter raises his trumpet to play and the bass player moves his bow in time with the bass notes being played.

The Festival Concert.

This was held in the Evangelische Stadtkirche and was so popular that about half of the audience had to stand. Ian Alderman's music rolls are popular in Germany and a number of his classical arrangements were played. A World Premiere was Ian's arrangement of the Quartet No 1, K 285 for flute, violin, viola and cello by Mozart, with the flute part being played on the street organ. Also being premiered was Three Songs in the Jewish Style for street organ and string quartet by Adrian Oswald. Another composition of Adrian's was a Dialogue between street organ and church organ "Go, tell it on the Mountains".

This was an enjoyable concert which demonstrated that the mechanical organ can have a place in serious music. Congratulations must go to Ian and his colleagues for all their hard work in preparation for this concert.

So another festival comes to an end and we have to wait three years for the next. I would recommend the trip to anyone interested in organs and orchestrions but remember to book your hotel at least six months in advance. My memories will be of sitting in the sun, talking shop with friends, doing nothing but listening to the best organ music and enjoying the taste of Waldkirch; that is Eis und Heiss, vanilla ice cream, whipped cream and hot raspberries in sauce. Delicious!

Playing the organs seems to be too much trouble.

Jean-Claude Piguet in his 1996 book *Les faiseurs de musiques* gives due credit to some of the Ste. Croix tune arrangers. Although they were by no means the pioneer arrangers of tunes for musical boxes, they were having to keep up with all the technical advances and the growing variety of types and sizes.

“That keeping up”, writes Piguet, “is the business of the transposers, or arrangers, or even composers as they call themselves. They are highly qualified professional musicians who have been conductors of orchestras and choral societies and composers of popular melodies, hymns and cantatas.”

In the 1875-1895 period, three musicians particularly contributed to the progress of mechanical music:

A. Bruschi, an Italian who lived in Ste. Croix in the 1870s and occupied never less than four rooms at the hotel de France. See Fig.1. **Henri Giroud** who spent 24 years of his life at Ste. Croix, and **Octave Chaillet** during the 1880s, who offered his talents as an arranger in Germany and the USA as well as in Ste. Croix.



Fig.1. Compositeur A. Bruschi rubber-stamped on a 41-tooth comb tune arrangement of *Still night, Holy night*. Thanks to Denis Margot.

“Bruschi and Giroud made their musical talents available not only to the makers but to the whole community. They taught music, helped to organise concerts, and directed musical societies including the Helvétienne which, under the baton of Henri Giroud, became one of the best societies in the Canton.”

Karrer

I am indebted (once again) to Luuk Goldhoorn who pointed out that the Vienna 1873 medal shown often on Karrer tune sheets was for Merit (Verdienst) whereas they were only awarded a medal of Acknowledgement (Anerkennungsdiplom). I thought this discrepancy could be explained away and so I felt it did not throw serious doubt on attributing the tune

sheet to Karrer.

Now I am indebted (once again) to Keith Harding, who sent me the tune sheet shown in Fig.2. A close look will show that the Vienna medal has now been corrected to the Acknowledgement version! It just shows.

There were several Karrers and their Companies and I am very glad that we label them simply as Karrer. This is particularly important for later boxes; serial 6484 has its usual A K (for Adolf Karrer) cast brass comb base, but its spring bearing is stamped E. Karrer-Hoffman. That is because after 1881 the firm Karrer & Cie was re-named E. Karrer-Hoffman to include the family name of Rudolf Karrer’s wife, Elize Hoffman. Serial numbers continued so it is quite in order to refer to the makers of serial 6484 simply as Karrer.

Polytype

Polytype was the general description given in the 1890s to large musical boxes which had sufficient comb teeth to render tunes in styles ranging from mandoline basse right through to sublime harmonie piccolo.

Baker-Troll offered three

There were several Karrers and their Companies and I am very glad that we label them simply as Karrer.

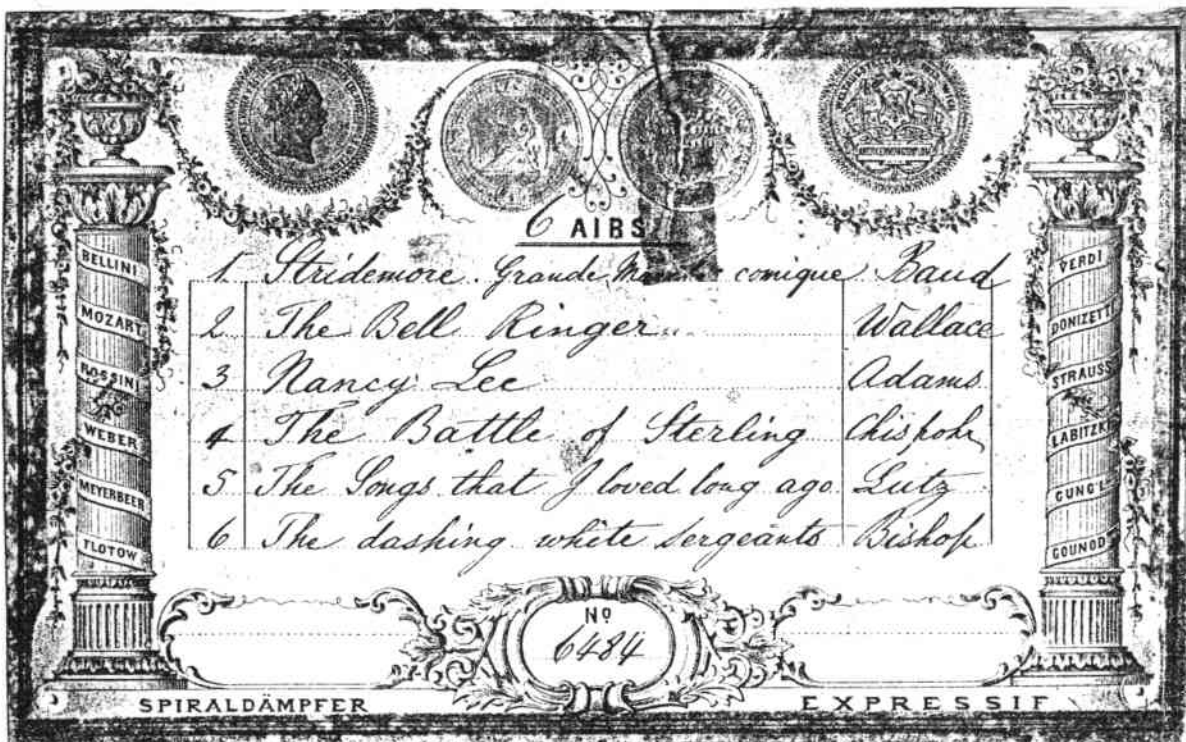


Fig.2. Karrer serial 6484, about 1883, with six bells not mentioned. At top right is the Vienna 1893 medal with panel inscribed Anerkennungsdiplom.



Fig.3. Harlequin design of tune sheet for Polyphone 49539. Photo and data thanks to Larry Greenfield.

Polytype models in their catalogue, as shown on page 136 of Vol.18. They had 18" (46cm) cylinders playing 6 airs on three combs totalling 175 teeth, with choice of 27, 31 or 36 lignes cylinder diameters (2.4, 2.75 or 3.2 inches; 6, 7, or 8 cms). The tune arrangements thereby lasted approximately 60, 70 or 80 seconds. So far not one of these boxes has

been placed on record.

In the extensive "Book of Tunes" Polytype arrangements are listed in section XII, as shown in Fig.9 on page 219 of Vol 18. Polytype is here described as Concerto Symphonique Polyphone (note the final e) and the arrangements are all for eight-air cylinders of length 19¼ (50cm, 18½ pouces).



Fig.4. Serial 49539 with large double springs and internal gear drive to cylinder, allowing 60 minutes continuous play.



Fig.5. Paillard s Gloria Polytype-Zither serial 12596. The CAUTION is mainly about handling cylinders for changing; but the top line reads: Never ship or even move this instrument with the cylinder in position.

Nine different styles are listed, spread over 37 tunes which carry numbers from 12365 to 12728. I am glad to say that eight of them appear, exactly as listed, on the tune sheet shown in Fig.3. This tune sheet belongs to serial 49539 and it spells out eight different polytypes giving them more prominence than the tune titles, let alone the composers! The tune numbers run consecutively from 12365 to 12372, which may have some dignificance.

Of course, the key question is - how can the one movement perform all these types? This box has three combs, of 72, 45, and 24 teeth, total 141. The first two are for sublime harmonie with additional teeth for mandoline including baryton or mandoline basse and the third is for piccolo. They thereby allow all the eight styles to be performed; their general layout is quite conventional though on an impressive scale as shown in Fig.4.

The governor cock is stamped No.705 above a Swiss cross. That is the mark of a Swiss patent which was assigned to Jules Jaccard of Ste. Croix in March 1889 and expired in 1890. It was for "Musique Longue Marche" and covered one of the many detail variants in long-play gearing and layouts.

When Larry Greenfield supplied extra detail on this box, I asked for his opinion on why it had such a strong impact on its audiences. He gave three reasons: the finely veneered and inlaid case being imposing to look at; the clarity, crispness and brilliance of the music; and the tune arrangements are varied and show off the quality of the box and the workmanship (with great pride) that went into this polytype.

More details on serial 49539 and its powerful performance are given on page 5 of the MBSI's Mechanical Music, Vol.38 no.1, Spring 1992.

Thanks to Mike Wallace of Seattle we have data on a very interesting Paillard multi-cylinder Polytype, serial 12596, probably made in 1891. The tune sheet on its lid is shown in Fig.5, and, surprisingly, is the same Harlequin type as in Fig.3. This box has five 13¼ (34cm) cylinders each playing

...the tune arrangements are varied and show off the quality of the box and the workmanship (with great pride) that went into this polytype.

musical box oddments no. 82

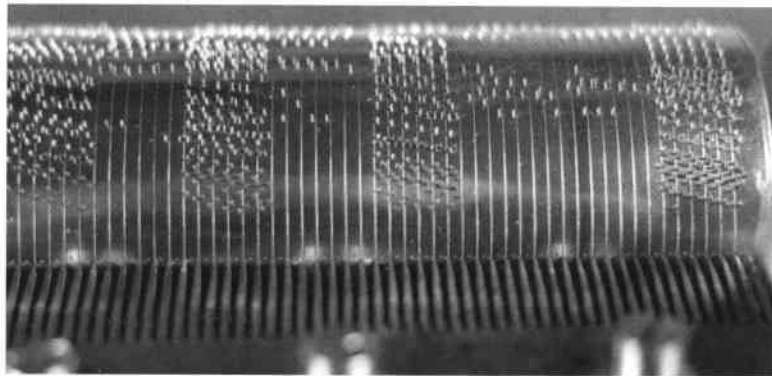


Fig.6. Treble end of serial 25479. Cylinder set to play tune 1. L'Epée always placed the lining-up dots on the tune just beyond halfway through the list, here tune 3 as can be seen near the tooth tips.

6 airs on 109 comb teeth. The two combs, of 55 and 54 teeth, are in sublime harmonie arrangement but with extra teeth added to provide mandoline and piccolo effects.

The governor cock plate is stamped Pat'd Jan 19 1892, which is the USA patent for Paillard's "Gloria" interchangeable cylinder system, first patented in 1889. It allows easy cylinder changing but involves extra gearing, and the cylinder assemblies have to be complete for the drive gear which is not needed as drive is through the great wheel. It is rare, having been knocked out by Paillard's far simpler Columbia interchangeable in 1894.

The serial, code and blank numbers and lettering on the five cylinders are:

Cylinder			
9	8695	GT	14
11	8699	GT	38
12	8701	GT	28
229	12236		2
250	12237		6

These numbers are depressingly disparate, but I think well worth noting as a means of identifying any stray related cylinders which may turn up.

The tune sheets for the cylinders are lost, but the thirty tunes are wide-ranging popular hits from Wagner operas, traditional melodies, Strauss waltzes, American marches and songs by Stephen Foster.

As usual with Paillard the sublime harmonie effect is well produced and the additional comb teeth permit sublime harmonie tremolo, sublime harmonie piccolo

harp and harmonique piccolo; so at least four polytypes are effectively played.

Comparing this Paillard Gloria Polytype 12596 with a tape recording of the Polyphone 49539 brought the general comment that it did extremely well, having 32 fewer teeth. And, of course, it has 22 extra tunes.

Not surprisingly, some makers produced boxes with all the

necessary comb teeth for Polytype, but applied them to all the tunes. Bremond did it on serial 20474 with combs of 45/57/45 making 147 teeth. An even better example is Langdorff serial 24835 made in 1892 with combs of 77/56/31 teeth total 164; its tune sheet is in my second book page 182 (and no.37 in the MBSI series). The result is at once imposing, florid and rather indigestible. So perhaps it was wise to have all these teeth but to apply different teeth to different tunes in different styles of Polytype.

We could do with more examples!!! with or without tune sheets.

L'Epée in 1865

L'Epée mandoline piccolo boxes are rare, so I think it is worth reporting on their serial 25479, made in or before 1865. It has a 10½" (27cm) cylinder playing 4 airs on 142 comb teeth, and its extra good mandoline quality comes from fourteen groups of teeth tuned to the

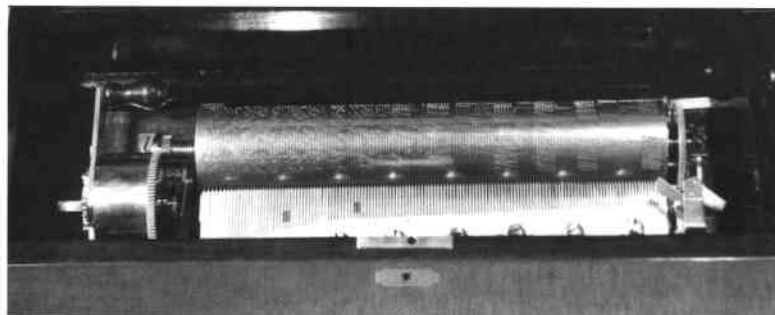


Fig.7 Close-fitting case of serial 25479, 18 by 6½ inches (45 by 17cm). The glass lid covers the winder in this early L'Epée conversion from key-wind.

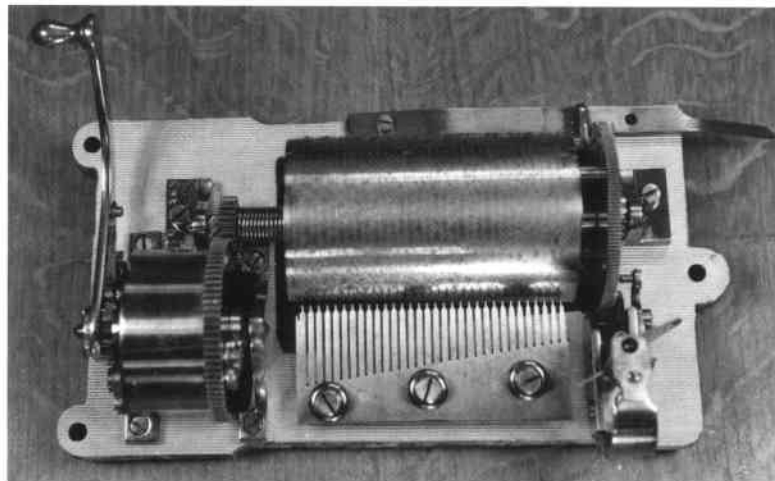


Fig.8. All nickel plated serial 59301. The cylinder is fatter than the spring barrel. The bedplate legs under their screw holes are integral with the iron casting, which has foundry number 85. Figure 3 is stamped on the main tune gap and the cylinder cap, presumably a reminder of 3-per-turn.

The result is at once imposing, florid and rather indigestible.

same pitch - two groups of 4 teeth, two of 5, eight of 6 and two of seven teeth. The 440 and 880Hz a teeth are nos. 25 & 26 and 47 & 48. The groups of teeth start at no.49. Fig.6 shows the typical helical of pins, and Fig.7 shows the movement in its case, with L. Epée's wood-knob winder of the early lever-wind period. That conversion did not involve lengthening the case.

The cylinder diameter is just over 2" (52cm) and it is pinned at .09" per second so tunes last about 65 seconds. Tracks are .018" wide and the track lines are on tune 1 with lining-up dots on tune 3.

The serial number is stamped on the cylinder bass end, great wheel and spring cover, and on the polished and plated cast iron bedplate with a large figure 2 stamped under the comb. There are not other markings, and no pitch lines on the cast iron comb case. The tune sheet has got lost; it would have been a simple bordered printer's type (as in my first book page 113) or a Thibouville-Lamy

sheet would be OK so long as it shows no medal later than 1863.

This box, with its sustained notes at the treble end and with strong piccolo emphasis, certainly comes into the super mandoline category. It gives a really masterly display of the mandoline effect and it also scores by offering a programme of contrasting tune arrangements. One is an exhilarating arrangement of the *Last Rode of Summer*. This is a very good example of how a box can benefit from fewer tunes, and thereby more comb teeth.

The box was kindly lent by Mike Doswell from his museum The Rye Treasury of Mechanical Music (located, as you will have guessed, at Rye, East Sussex.

Short Play

Cartel boxes with cylinders only 3 pouces long (3.2", 81mm) became very common in the 1890s. Makers listed them at the cheap end of their catalogues, usually with 1 1/4" (32mm) diameter cylinders playing six airs lasting about 35 seconds



Fig.9. Great wheel with three chamfered-exit stop slots. Gamme 4982 is scribed on the bass lead, cylinder cap and white metal comb base.

each. Some, regrettably, played eight airs with combs thereby reduced to 24 teeth.

As publicised in the 1897 Gueissaz catalogue, there were demands for more and more tunes per box, resulting in two-per-turn versions of the small six-air boxes, playing 12 airs with the same 32-tooth combs. Musical quality was found to be acceptable, and makers were left wondering how to provide even more tunes from these combs.

The answer was fairly obvious,



It gives a really masterly display of the mandoline effect...

Fig.10. Multi-coloured tune sheet of serial 59301, recording its gamme number. Composers and tunes are in red ink. Size 9 by 6 1/2 inches (23 by 16cm). A 12 by 9 inch version is on serial 69804, with 13" (33cm) cylinder playing 32 airs at 2-per-turn. Snail cam with 16 steps! Its latest tune is from Floradora, 1899, so serial 59301 must be around 1897.

musical box oddments no. 82

but I admit I was momentarily flabbergasted when I first saw it, on serial 59301. It has the same comb but cylinder diameter increased to 2.15" (55mm) and it plays three tunes per turn, as shown in Figs 8 and 9.

It is in every respect a well and accurately made movement. The bedplate is flawless, snail cam steps all spot on 0.17, and all details are of traditional design except that the great wheel is pinned to its arbor which was not common practice.

The case is grained all over with a gaudy transfer and three lines of stringing on the lid. It measures 15½ x 7½ x 5½ inches (40 x 19 x 14cm), similar to a Gueissaz case for 5½ pouces cylinder. The two control levers have finger knobs affixed sideways, convenient but uncommon. Under the case and on the tune sheet SWITZERLAND is rubber-stamped, presumably an early version of the 1892 regulation stamp. This is useful because the tunes range from earlies to 1887,

with only five in the 1880s, so the box was probably made in or very soon after 1892.

The cylinder, with tune 1 on dots and pinned at .1" per second, takes about 67 seconds per revolution so with the three tune gaps each tune lasts 20 seconds.

The 32-tooth comb has a tooth 440Hz at no.6 and 880Hz nos. 12 and 13. Their relative stiffness is 250, typical of the period. Volume and tone are fully satisfactory. But you cannot repeat any tune without also repeating two others.

The 18 tunes, which include four each by Strauss and Waldteufel, were eminently popular in 1892 and many still are. They are instantly recognisable, but some are not really suited to 20-second versions, having their second movement cut short with a perfunctory chord or twiddle. There must have been bruising encounters between tune arrangers and their employers.

So I think these boxes were

expected to be set to run right through their 18-piece repertoire, and this they do quite satisfactorily. They provide a musical pot-pourri, during which light refreshments can be taken. The TV equivalent is the medley of moments culled from the archives to celebrate twenty-five years of this or that.

Yes. Even now, though perhaps less than in 1892, the programme shown in Fig. 10 provokes an interesting discussion on the tunes. And if you miss one, it comes back after six minutes. A full winding makes the box run for about 13 minutes, giving each tune twice and a bit to spare.

Pop song thoughts from 1891

It is occasionally educational to read contemporary comments on smash hits. This one was composed by H.J. Sayers and sung powerfully by Lottie Collins, and the comment is in Fig.11.

They provide a musical pot-pourri, during which light refreshments can be taken.

THE "TA-RA-RA" BOOM.

(By Our Own Melancholy Muser.)

I AM shrouded in impenetrable *gloom de-ay*,
For I feel I'm being driven to my *doom-de-ay*,
By an aggravating ditty
Which I don't consider witty;
And they call the horrid thing "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!"

Every 'bus-conductor, errand-boy, and *groom-de-ay*,
City clerk, and cheeky crossing-sweep with *broom-de-ay*
Makes my nervous system bristle
As he tries to sing or whistle
That atrocious and absurd "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!"

So I sit in the seclusion of my *room-de-ay*,
And deny myself to all—no matter *whom-de-ay*—
For I dread a creature coming
Whose involuntary humming
May assume the fatal form, "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!"

Oh, I fear that when the Summer roses *bloom-de-ay*,
You will read upon a well-appointed *tomb-de-ay*:—
"Influenza never lick'd him,
But he fell an easy victim
To that universal scourge—"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-av!"

Fig.11 A comment by Punch in 1891 reproduced with thanks in 1999.

Geoff Alford

On 28th May 1999 Geoff Alford died of a heart attack whilst visiting friends in Germany. Geoff was unique in the world of the street organ and will be widely missed.

Hand cranked street organs became more accessible to enthusiasts during the 1980's with Raffin and Hofbauer building new roll-playing instruments more within the means of organ enthusiasts who either couldn't afford or house a larger fairground organ. With these new organs there developed a more sociable side to organ owning, the organ festival. After a number of half-day organ grinds organised by the MBSGB, Geoff decided it was time for the UK to have its own organ festival, modelled on the successful continental festivals. Llandrindod Wells already had its own Victorian Festival and agreed to host an organ festival in association with this, and 1987 saw the first British Street Organ Festival. After a few years, Geoff brought his festival to his home city of Hereford, where he was later to become Mayor.

During this time the street organ scene in the UK was growing rapidly with the growth of its own society, BOGA, and a number of British organ builders adding hand-turned organs to their range. Organ festivals are now held throughout Britain, many of them modelled on Geoff's ideal of the social weekend amongst like-minded friends. Also, during this time, Geoff regularly contributed his Organ Grinder's Chat to The Music Box.

If one man could be said to be the energy behind all of this development then it was Geoff Alford. He leaves behind a legacy of wide ownership of street organs and an environment where organ owners can socialise, and enjoy their music together. ■ Nicholas Simons.



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P. O. Box 210, Route 4 - Whitehall, N. Y. (U.S.A.) 12887-0210
518-282-9770 (Mon-Sat, 9am-7pm) - Fax: 518-282-9800 (24 hrs.)

When visiting the house of a well known member the other day, I was delighted when he offered to demonstrate a particularly fine disc machine. The demonstration proved to be rather short as the mainspring was nearly wound down. My host, having taken note of the advisability of separating winding handles from machines in case of theft, then spent the next ten minutes trying to remember where he had hidden the handle. Now, I am totally in favour of removing handles from machines, but forgetting where one has put them is taking matters a little too far.

Security should concern all of us these days and the taking photographs of each and every item in your collection is of paramount importance. A series of photographs of boxes, tune cards, inlays and outstanding features all help in the identification of stolen property or help to assess value in the event of a total destruction claim. All insurance companies welcome moves by policy holders to protect their property and some now make this a condition of the policy.

First, keep full written details of and notes about each item. Secondly, take a series of photographs and order duplicate copies of prints. Next, place a set of these photographs with another member of the family who resides at a different address. Those members who have no family could consider using a bank or building society document storage facility. The chances of both properties being "trashed" during a burglary or destroyed by fire at the same time are pretty remote.

If the worst happens,

evidence is still available and memories restored to some extent.

Photographs sent in for inclusion in the Register are not only useful for identification, but help enormously in research. The old adage "one photograph is worth a thousand words" is very true. Up to June 1999, just over 400 boxes have photographic details attached to their record cards. The majority of these boxes have a series of prints. Surely this must become a treasure chest of extra information in the years to come.

The largest file on makers in the Register deals with Nicole Freres. Details of many Nicole gamme numbers are now on record, but I would like to add as many more as possible. May I ask members to make an extra effort to send me in details of any Nicole box you may own along with a listing of the tunes played and the gamme number. Recently, four additional gamme numbers were added to the list which helped to fill in some of the gaps in the listings. Even if some of the information duplicates what is already there, it is always useful to cross reference.

In over twenty five years spent compiling the Register there have been moments when the whole idea seemed to impossible and of doubtful value. On other days, the hours and hours spent writing up cards and typing at the keyboard seemed worthwhile, especially when undertaking the sort of searches for information that only a computer can do.

Recently, browsing around the Register, it quickly became apparent how few single air boxes were made. Some play the air in full without ornamentation whilst others play the basic air on the first turn and variations on the other turns. Movements of this type are always housed in very good quality boxes as one would expect. One would also suspect that the majority of

these boxes were made to special order. Without doubt the people ordering these boxes would be well off and capable of appreciating music and the skills of the music arranger rather more than the average purchaser. Take for instance the Ducommun-Girod box serial number 5401. (R-2596.) It plays Beethoven's Grand Opera on 3 turns. Surely that must have been specially ordered. No other box on the register features that programme.

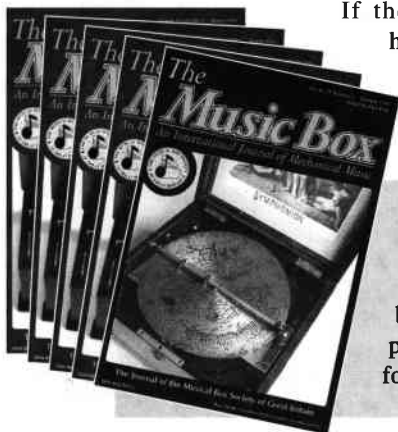
There are a small group of boxes that play a single air, nearly always an overture, on either 3 or 4 turns. The manufacturers appeared to prefer the description "developments" rather than turns. The arranger always tried to make the change period when the change tune cam was doing its job, to coincide with a natural pause or phrase the music. That must have been a difficult task. Langdorff S/no. 10971. (R-1323.) plays the overture to William Tell on 3 developments, and Metert S/no. 1264. (R-434.) plays the overture to La Muette de Portici on the same number of developments. Moving to 4 developments, Nicole Freres. S/no. 41446. (R-751.) plays the entire overture to Masaniello.

Later, L'Épée tried the idea of presenting a single air, but this time pinned on an interchangeable cylinder. S/no. 146. (R-1013.) tries this, but as the cylinders were only 4.5 cm long with 37 teeth in the comb, I suspect cutting down manufacturing costs were the real motive for producing such boxes rather than musical excellence.

Not quite all the single air boxes have been mentioned here, but with probably under 10 being listed on the register out of 6,700, it is very obvious that the single air box is a very rare bird indeed.

Should any member wish me to search the register for a specific fact or for any evidence, please write in and I will try to answer your query.

Recently, browsing around the Register, it quickly became apparent how few single air boxes were made.



MUSIC BOX BINDERS

In response to demand from members, we are shortly to receive a fresh supply of binders for Music Box magazines. Each binder takes up to eight issues plus an extra position for the index. This keeps one volume neatly together and in good condition for future reference. Details of cost etc. in the next issue.

Dear Sir,

Members may be interested to learn of the developments that have taken place since the publication of my article on Jardine's first cinema organ

The first surprise was the amount of interest expressed by people living outside this country. Nearly all of these people could not understand why the instrument was allowed to be destroyed and thought it should have been saved because of its historical importance.

Many letters from organ enthusiasts were received and some from older members of the public. One remembered how when the bass notes of the organ were played at full volume, the seats in the cinema actually shook.

The firm of Jardine is still in existence mainly in the organ repair business. They have been able to tell me a little more about the final fate of the organ at Hapton. Apparently not all of the organ was lost as was first thought, as some pipes were removed either for scrap or to be re-used a day or two before final demolition. There may have been as many as two or three ranks saved.

Later some of these pipes were obtained by Jardine's still having the name "Hapton" chalked on them. One 16 foot contra posoune pipe is to be used in a rebuild of a church organ in the near future. Jardine's also believe the nameplate did survive and must be out there somewhere!

In the meantime, Accrington library is to put on an display about the organ in August this year along with information about our society. They have kindly offered to

distribute our membership leaflets to all who express an interest. Later in the year, the exhibition will move to Burnley library.

For those interested in orchestral organs, it seems as though Jardine's third organ, built in 1921, still survives although much altered. The organ was originally build for the Waterloo Picture Palace in Blackpool and was installed in May 1921. The company also owned the Palace at Accrington. In 1935, it was re-built in the Sacred Heart R.C. church in Blackpool and is still there to this day. The original two cinema cases have been kept. The church authorities are seeking a heritage or E.U. grant at the moment for the instrument.

I hope this extra information will be of interest.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Dear Sir,

My wife and I have assembled a rather large collection of more recently dated musical boxes. This collection started by being offered an immaculate Swiss chalet for £1 at a car boot sale! We know, from experience, present day, cheaply made chalets are quite expensive in Switzerland, so I bought it. I was pleased to find that the chalet played two tunes. I then became interested (my wife states a little obsessed) in all kinds of musical boxes.

We acquired our first serious box in Paris – a plain box which plays three tunes manufactured by Reuge. Our second is a lovely box by Reuge which plays 15 tunes on five cylinders. Both were new.

Third is an old one with no maker's name and plays two tunes – Lohengrin and Zigeunerbaron

No.34/117 on tune sheet – 34 teeth – automatic stop.

We purchased an upright piano box with a wind-handle movement of French origin which plays "After the Ball" and "Bi Dorena Where Ear (?) Qualité Excelsior on label.

We have now amassed 18 Swiss chalets all sizes and designs – some with very ingenious start mechanisms. Three cake stands, three guitars, one mandoline, four grand pianos, various novelty lighters, one box with pair of dancers with loose legs, one gondola with light and doll, one wooden toilet roll, several Japanese black and one cream lacquer boxes, one Japanese photograph album, three musical alarm clocks, five musical powder compacts and 20 assorted boxes, some with large barrels and two tunes. The boxes are mostly wood (some marked "Tallent"), a few plastic (maybe bakelite), one metal. We cannot resist these boxes when offered for less than £5. We enjoy finding our which tunes they play and I now spend many happy hours repairing broken ones.

Can any member provide information regarding the dates Reuge absorbed the smaller makers and when their trade names ceased to be used?

We realise these boxes are at the very lower end of the collectors scale, but would appreciate any help the Society members could offer and would be interested to hear of any members who have any similar boxes in their collection.

Geoff Mason.

Editor's Note: Collecting musical boxes does not have to be expensive. Simple boxes and novelty items can give great pleasure.

Jardine's also believe the nameplate did survive and must be out there somewhere!



Keith Harding
MUSICAL BOXES
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classified advertisements

Acknowledgments

In our piece on Jardines Cinema Organ (Music Box 19/1) we failed to mention the sources of the photographs used. These were reproduced by courtesy of Lancashire County Library, Accrington (Figs 1 & 2) and Lancashire Evening Post (Fig.8), and we gratefully acknowledge their co-operation.

Looking for something special - or have some items for sale? Remember, Music Box goes to over 600 enthusiasts worldwide.

For as little as £5.00 (£9.50 for non members) you can reach these people with your Sales & Wants.

Closing date for the next issue is 25th October.

CLASSIFIED SALES

Dumb Organist (manufacturer J. W. Walker (London) 1859). Hand cranked barrel with six tune capacity (second barrel available). Documented history, some restoration work required. Telephone 01275 844961 for details.

Selling discs polyphon 91/2", Amorette, Intona. **Ariosa** with discs, **Ariston** with discs; **Concert** with cobs, folding harmonium, roll/disc cupboard, new boxes for pianola, organ and organette rolls. What are **you** looking for? I will **help** you find it. Contact Kevin McElhone, Archivist, on 01536 523988

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Working Musical Box 13" cylinder, one tooth damaged, lever wind, bells in sight (6), probably six airs, plain restored mahogany box, £350. Phone Mrs Carter 01902 333324

CLASSIFIED WANTS

Organette music wanted. Any Dolcine card music any condition. 14 note Melodia and Clariona music (on spools) All other organette music, bands, spools, discs, any condition considered. Contact Ted Brown 01403 823 533

Wanted

Barrel Pianos/Organs

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Alan Wyatt on (01223) 860332

WANTS (cont'd)

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Wanted

Disc Box 11 1/2" any model considered;

Gem cobs, any metal or card discs, empty organette cases, incomplete mechanisms. Also want larger organettes and those with added bells, drums and twin reeds.

Contact Kevin McElhone, Archivist, on 01536 523988.

To fill this space call

01403 823533

Deadline dates for Display Advertising Copy

1st April; 1st July;

1st October; 1st February

Editorial copy **must** be submitted at least 8 days prior to above dates

Posting of magazine:

27th February; 27th April;

7th August; 7th November

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE: 15th July

Minimum cost each advertisement £5.

Members: 16p per word (bold type 8p per word extra)

Minimum cost each advertisement £9.50

Non-members 32p per word

(bold type 16p per word extra)

CASH WITH ORDER PLEASE TO:

Advertising Secretary Ted Brown, The Old School, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 3JP Tel: 01403 823533

NOTICE

The attention of members is drawn to the fact that the appearance in The Music Box of an advertiser's announcement does not in any way imply endorsement, approval or recommendation of that advertiser and his services by the editor of the journal or by the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Members are reminded that they must satisfy themselves as to the ability of the advertiser to serve or supply them.



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