

The Music Box

Volume 19 Number 5 Spring 2000
Edited by Alan Pratt

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



- News
- Meetings
- Restorations
- Collector's Showcase

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Your New Year Resolution



Alan Pratt

Well, here we are in a new century. We survived the change into the year 2000 despite all the predictions of the gloom-mongers.

In the Music Box editorial office it's business as usual with the publication of this issue - rather a good one, I think, with some interesting articles covering a wide range of interests. For this, of course, our thanks go to the respective authors for their efforts in sharing their knowledge and experience with us all. And thanks too, to all members who contributed to these pages, whether by way of feature articles or simply Letters to the Editor or snippets of news.

It's in this last context that I want to make a special plea. Not everyone is able to contribute articles. I am always full of admiration for the work of members reported in these columns. The painstaking research to establish exactly what has to be done to bring a near-ruin back to life; the need to work out the way in which a replacement

part can be made, often using general purpose equipment which itself must be adapted for the purpose; and the hours expended recreating an instrument which will continue to bring pleasure, not only to the craftsman concerned, but to those who may be hearing mechanical music for the first time and who may otherwise know nothing of these wonderful sounds.

But The Music Box is about more than the instruments themselves. It is about meeting and sharing. It is about events where we can see and hear something which we may never own but which adds to our enjoyment of all mechanical music.

News is a vital element in our magazine and for this we rely upon you. If you know of any event or exhibition which is of interest to you, then tell your fellow members about it so that they can share the pleasure. Or perhaps you have a prized item in your collection which has an interesting background, or which simply gives joy to you and your

family. Collectors Showcase, an occasional feature in The Music Box, is a chance to share something from your collection with other members.

As Editor, I am always seeking feature articles and am happy to hear from any member if he/she feels that a little help is needed. But I also want to hear from you with the lesser, but just as important, smaller items of news or views.

There has been a definite increase in members' activity in relation to meetings, so perhaps this will lead some of you to put pen to paper - or, more likely, get one or two fingers going on the word processor!

And finally, a word of thanks to all of you who sent Christmas greetings. They were so numerous that to reply individually would keep me busy until Easter! Every card was greatly appreciated and I would like to send my sincere thanks for your kindness.

Don't forget - I want to hear from you. News, views, even criticism! ■

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 19 Number 5 Spring 2000

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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contents

Society News and Topics	110
Hick of a Problem <i>A restoration project by Paul Bellamy</i>	116
More on Tomasso <i>By Alan Pratt</i>	119
Merritt Gally's Orchestrone <i>By Nicholas Simons</i>	120
Musical Box Oddments no. 84 <i>Anthony Bulleid continues his series</i>	124
The Music Box & Windows 98 <i>Part 2 - Creating an inventory by David Snelling</i>	129
Projects & Wants	132
Collector's Showcase	133
Register News	134
Letters to the Editor	135
Classified Adverts	136

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Website: www.mbsgb.org.uk E-mail: mbsgb@kreedman.globalnet.co.uk

Front Cover

Our cover picture is of a Swiss fusee musical clock base circa 1810. The comb has 30 sections, each with three teeth, and the 14" cylinder is pinned with six airs. No makers marks are visible but it carries the serial number 11265. It is housed in a gilt metal case which has been more recently fitted with a lid with inkwells! Is this the first known musical inkstand? This instrument featured in the recent auction at Phillips (*full report on page 115*).

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

President: **Ted Brown**The Old School, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 3JP
Tel: 01403 823533Joint Vice President: **Ralph M Heintz**

725 University Avenue, Los Altos, California, USA

Joint Vice President: **Christopher Proudfoot**c/o Christie's, South Kensington, London SW7 3JS
Tel: 0171 321 3272Subscriptions Secretary & Treasurer: **Richard Kerridge**

32 Queens Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4BA

*To whom all subscriptions and subscription enquiries should be addressed.*Membership & Correspondence Secretary: **Alan Wyatt MBE**

MBSGB, P O Box No 299, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB4 8DT

*To whom all applications and queries relating to new membership should be addressed and to whom all general correspondence should be sent.*Meetings Secretary: **Roy Ison**

5 East Bight, Lincoln LN2 1QH

Tel: 01522 540406 Fax: 01522 520782

E-mail: ison@bight.demon.co.uk

Recording Secretary: **Arthur Cunliffe**

c/o The Editor, as below.

Editor: **Alan Pratt**

6 Kingscote Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands B93 8RA

Tel: 01564 775000

Archivist: **Kevin McElhone**

47 St John's Road, Kettering, Northants NN15 5AY

E-mail: kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com

Auction Organiser: **David Walch**

11 Harford Close, Bristol BS9 2QD

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

Committee members:

Graham Whitehead

Ashorne Hall, Ashorne Hill, Warwick, CV33 9QN

Tel: 01926 651444

Robert Hough

Aeolian Court, Chudleigh, Devon, TQ13 0EE

Tel: 01626 853502

Forthcoming Meetings
One day Meetings

Maurice's Music Day

4th March 2000

Maurice and Wendy Adams are holding an Open Day at their home in Weedon, near Aylesbury, on 4th March. Members are invited to bring along an item from their collection for a day of music and chat. Numbers are limited to 20.

This meeting is now fully subscribed.

Chanctonbury Ring

26th March 2000

For details ring Ted Brown on 01403 823533.

Spring Meeting

7th-9th April 2000

Venue - The Saracens' Head, Market Place, Southwell, Nottinghamshire NG25 0HE.

Local Organisers: Dorothy Robinson and Roy Ison.

Programme to date

Friday afternoon

There will be the opportunity for any early arrivals to have a guided tour of Southwell Minster.

Friday evening

If any members wish to bring items to sell there will be a table sale; also if any member who has an interesting item to show and talk about please bring it along.

Saturday morning

Registration followed by a talk on campanology by Dorothy Robinson, "Bell ringing to bells used in mechanical clocks".

Coffee break followed by a talk from Alan Pell, organ builder; he will demonstrate at least four organs, comparing micro chip with paper roll.

Lunch

Saturday afternoon

A visit to the Regal cinema in Newark to hear a Compton cinema organ, removed from the Savoy cinema in Lincoln in the 1950s plus a silent film show. A trip by coach to Ossington Church to see and hear a rare hand wound barrel organ, still in use on Sundays for hymn singing, then a quick demonstration of bell ringing on the church bells.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to our Society:-

2710 Nick Hawkins	2717 W.R. Sargent, Surrey
- Phillips, Knowle	2718 J. Tibbles, France
2711 Mrs. Carol Sharpe,	2719 Roland Craft, E. Yorks
Derbyshire	2720 Pianola Restoration &
2712 Mrs. S. Goddard, Surrey	Antiques, Wales
2713 Mrs. Betty Cotton, Surrey	2721 F.C. Wonink - Netherlands
2714 H.J. Schriber, South Africa	2722 Rosanna & Bill Harris -
2715 Gordon Smith, Somerset	USA
2716 Mrs. Joan Rippingal, Sussex	2723 Roy Evett - Staffs
	2724 R.Fleming-Williams -
	London

President's Message

Firstly, may I thank Coulson Conn (MBSI President and long term MBSGB member) for covering the Bruschal meeting for me. This was simply because my health would not have agreed with a trip to Germany after the American 50th Anniversary meeting. We all realise the importance of like societies working together in a common cause. These days of faxes, e-mails and web sites mean that communication is moving at a speed none of us could have comprehended a few years ago.

The learning curve is almost vertical and the only thing holding information back is the many languages in which it is presented. It has to be presented in common languages and then made available to all in a thoughtful way. Those of us who, even now, still can't get to grips with this 'electricity' would have to just fall by the wayside if the information were not made available in articles and books. Mankind is, on the whole, gregarious and this is why there is more to Mechanical Music than just technical information.

Our journal and meetings hold us together as people, not numbers or letters on a web site.

Our society meetings, open days and local groups are always fully subscribed. We have a good time and always look forward to meeting again.

All the societies present at the Bruschal meeting felt the need to get involved in joint co-operation without having to lose their individual identities. I think I can safely say the same about our Society. We need the future but we must not let go of the past.

Going back to our journal, if any of you feel a certain subject needs more coverage, tell us; better still do us an article. We have 'experts' who are quite happy to edit or correct any little inaccuracies - or even big ones - rather than let you worry about putting in an incorrect statement. There are not many amongst us who have got it right 100% every time.

I have just had my first look at the completed Tune Sheet book. Those of you who haven't ordered yet can see the advert on page 132. It will not disappoint you. All pre-ordered books will be with you shortly. There are a few casebound (hard cover) copies left, so order soon if you want one - there is unlikely to be a reprint. ■ **Ted Brown**

New Area Group

Kevin McElhone and one or two others are thinking of starting up an East Midlands area group to meet two or three times a year on the same lines as the successful Chanctonbury Ring which meets in Sussex. Kevin has been attending these meetings for three years and hopes to copy their format.

If you would be interested in either joining or hosting this group from time to time in the area from Kettering to Derby/Nottingham, either in your home or a school/other hall, please phone Kevin on 01536 523988. (The best time to phone is during the day or between 8.00 and 9.30 p.m.) ■

Saturday evening

The Society Dinner - to be followed by a magic lantern slide show presented by David and Juliet Shankland.

Sunday morning

A visit to Upton Hall, the British Horological Institute, to see the fine collection of clocks and watches.

Southwell is a small and interesting market town with a selection of shops and is only about six miles from Newark, a town well known for its antique shops including seven antique centres.

Autumn Meeting

8th-10th September 2000

Venue - The Post House, Havant, Hants.

Local Organiser: Barry Wilson assisted by Brian Chapman

Provisional programme

Friday - Members are invited to bring their own favourite instruments to talk about and play.

Saturday - Short scenic tour to the Royal Armouries at Fort Nelson. A tour is arranged and a light lunch is available.

Afternoon visit to Barry Wilson's collection. Table Top Sale. Society Dinner.

Sunday - For interested members, a visit can be arranged to Hollycombe Steam Collection on Sunday afternoon. This will be for members using their own cars.

More details of this meeting in the Summer issue.

AGM and Society Auction

The Society Annual General Meeting will be on Saturday 3rd June. Venue is the Athletic & Working Mens Club in Kettering. This is at 104 Rockingham Road, Kettering, which is close to the town centre. There is car parking 'on site' for 100 cars and double door level access from the rear car park for anyone bringing larger items. Morning coffee, a buffet lunch and tea in the afternoon will be included in the £10 Registration fee, and there will be a cash bar at lunchtime.

AGM (cont'd)

Please note that there is no access to the building before 9.00 a.m. Registration is from 9.30.

As we have to clear the meeting hall by 5.30 p.m., auction viewing must end at 1.15 p.m. for the auction to start promptly at 1.45 p.m. The auction organiser would find it very helpful if members could book in their auction entries by 10.30 a.m. before the start of the AGM.

If you are coming by road it is suggested that you leave the A14 onto the A43 signposted Corby. After approximately 1 mile turn right at roundabout (signed Town Centre & Football ground). Straight on over two roundabouts and you are in Rockingham Road. The venue is then 200m on the left (past the Football ground). The railway station is about 1 mile from the venue. It is 72 miles from St. Pancras - an easy journey. Finally, if you arrive by bus, you are about 500m away - go past Sainsburys and you're there.

For emergency contact on the day you can call either 01536 513506 or 485823.

We are pleased to say that once again Christopher Proudfoot has agreed to be our auctioneer.

It has been suggested that after the auction in the afternoon we might have a 'Name that Tune' session, where members bring along boxes without tune sheets for some of our more knowledgeable colleagues to identify the tunes. What do you think?

An entry sheet for items for auction is included with this issue of Music Box.

On the following day (Sunday) it is proposed to hold a Barrel Piano meeting in a local school close to the AGM venue.

Members are invited to bring instruments along to the event which will run from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Local overnight accommodation can be arranged if required.

Ring Dorothy Robinson on 01673 843000 or Kevin McElhone on 01536 523988 for further details.

**Events around the country
Wind and Steam at Tavistock**

From our West Country correspondent we learn that an opportunity for live steam enthusiasts and organ grinders will present itself at next year's Tavistock Steam Fair. The west Devon town of Tavistock will host a live steam fair and, for the first time, include fairground and street organs. This event will take place over the weekend of the 3/4th June. Any member interested should contact the organiser John Hobbs on 01822 615519 for more details.

Such an opportunity to "organ-grind" in Devon is a rare happening. John Hobbs is hoping to attract several enthusiasts to this event, so put this one in your diary.

The Tavistock area offers other attractions to visit, and so organ grinders could enjoy a long weekend in Devon filling their organ bellows with pure Devon air as well as their lungs! Have some fun and go.

Vintage Technology Fair

MBSGB member Brian Chesters is organising the first mechanical music based fair north of Birmingham called Vintage Technology Fair. The first fair is on 26th March 2000 and will feature gramophones, phonographs, musical boxes, antique radios and TVs and similar items. For more information

contact Brian Chesters on 01253 508232 or e-mail: brian@blackpool.net

**Message from the
Recording Secretary**

Members are reminded that the AGM of the Society is the time when members have a chance to contribute to the running of the society. There is always a place on the committee for willing and eager people who have a desire to promote our well being and to forward our aims and objectives.

If you feel that you can help in this direction, please make sure that your nomination is presented to the Correspondence Secretary at least six weeks in advance of the AGM as required by society rules. Any nomination must include the written approval of the member nominated and be supported by a proposer and seconder.

Notice of all committee nominations, together with any propositions submitted for consideration at the AGM, will be published in the society journal immediately prior to the AGM.

Please submit all nominations and/or propositions suitably proposed and seconded to:-

Alan Wyatt MBE, Membership and Correspondence Secretary,
P.O. Box 299 Waterbeach,
Cambridge CB4 8DT ■

Arthur Cunliffe
Recording Secretary

Information Wanted

Do you know of an event which is to take place in your area which may be of interest to other members? A note to the Editor will help keep members informed about anything concerned with mechanical music or associated topics.

MBSGB European Tour

Our visit to Berlin in May is now fully booked - and there is a waiting list, as this has proved to be a very popular choice of venue.

We are now looking for local sponsors for Spring and Autumn meetings in 2001.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of organising a meeting in your area, please call Roy Ison, our Meetings Secretary. We need assistance in identifying local attractions and selecting suitable hotels.

Don't worry if you have never done anything like this before - there is plenty of help and assistance available, but we do need your local knowledge if we are to continue with these successful events.

... 'Name
that tune'...

Video Review

Sounds of the Past.

This video has been produced to give a selection of music from the private collection of Ted Brown near Horsham, Surrey who the Player Piano Group visited early on in the summer of 1999. It is intended as a brief history and selection of Mechanical Music from the past 200 years and it succeeds really well.

Unlike some Videos I have reviewed for various publications

recently, the sound has been digitally recorded and what you see is what you hear. If the Disc being played is Daisy Bell then you hear and see that disc rather than hear something which is not synchronised with the picture. This makes this tape a really enjoyable hour of musical nostalgia.

The volume of sound is also right, a Snuff Box sounds much quieter than the Orchestrelle which is not always the case and can be misleading.

Ted's style of humorous but knowledgeable introduction of instruments adds to the enjoyment of the vast selection of music played. Instruments include Cylinder and Disc Musical Boxes, Organettes, Barrel Pipe Organ, Barrel Piano, Orchestrelle, Player Piano and a surprise instrument which has to be pedalled AND has to have a handle wound at the same time!

If you are looking for a present for a friend or yourself then this 60 minute tape is ideal. If you would like a copy please phone direct to Ted Brown on 01403 823533. ■

Christmas Open Day

The Christmas Open Day in West Sussex went extremely well. The list had closed at 40 but, due to requests from new members after the November journal came out, the number rose to 47.

After coffee, the morning was spent in one group. Anthony Bulleid showed a bell box that had had the bell section re-pinned. The rest of the pins on the cylinder only needed straightening. They were then raked along with the bell pins to give an even height. The result was well worth the extra effort.

Robin Timms, recent recipient of an award at the 50th anniversary of the MBSI for disc box music arranging, played us some of his arrangements of 11" Polyphon discs on his double comb machine. He then put a disc (Ding Dong Merrily on High) on his machine and another copy of the disc on a borrowed double comb machine. By starting them together and slowing down one of the discs where necessary, he was able to keep them in time with each other. Is this the first ever stereophonic performance of 11" Polyphons to be heard in public.

Robin then did his party piece of studying the projections on the back of a disc, picked at random by one of the members from an initial stack of about 45 belonging to someone else in the room. After only a minute or two he was able to give the disc number and title of six of the seven picked out.

We played about 18 different arrangements of Silent Night and then other carols and Christmas songs on about 20 cylinder and disc boxes, organettes and organs, including

Jingle Bells on a Cob Roller Organ and Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer on a 14 note orchestral organette.

After a hot lunch we split into two groups to watch a video and listen to Daphne Ladell's 31 note Raffin and Jane Dicken's 20 note Raffin, and then watch and listen to what seemed like a never ending supply of musical Christmas novelties. These were both ancient and modern.

We finally finished the day with tea and coffee and a few tunes on the Orchestrelle. ■



Robin Timms' stereo demonstration.

*Polyphons
in stereo*

An invitation from The City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society Ltd

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For your annual subscription, which runs from 1st March each year, you receive our quarterly magazine, the HILLANDLE NEWS, the official journal of CLPGS Ltd. Articles are contributed by Members for Members, and

arranged by the Editorial Team from material received.

Monthly meetings are held in London, bi-monthly meetings in Birmingham, Preston and Exeter. Annual Phonofairs are organised in Northampton and Wolverhampton.

Annual subscription, UK and Europe: £15, or £10 for registered students. Worldwide, outside Europe is £17, or US \$28-50. Write to the Membership Secretary, Suzanne Lewis, 51 Brockhurst Road, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3JB.

Chanctonbury Ring

The morning of the 16th January dawned chilly but bright, with the cheerful Sussex sun welcoming 26 visitors to our hosts Ted and Kay Brown's Old School. The unforgiving action of the dreaded influenza bug meant that numbers were slightly down on those of some earlier meetings. Our theme for the day was 'Operas and Operettas' but, as is so often the case, there were a few interesting diversions on the way!

Anthony Bulleid gave us a light-hearted and informative insight into overture boxes, illustrating this with an 1847 Lecoulre 6 air box playing three overtures on two turns per air.

Anthony highlighted how the arranger of the Zampa overture had struggled with the interval of silence between the two turns but had achieved a good effect at the changeover in Donizetti's Don Pasquale. We were treated to a clear explanation of the engineering means, used by some manufacturers, to ensure the cylinders of two-turns-per-tune boxes only stop after alternate turns. We were also warned of the effect if the associated cam on the great wheel is set out of phase.

Terry Longhurst played two 6 air Nicole Frere overture boxes, made about two years apart. The difference in tonal characteristics was most marked for instruments of

the same pedigree and near identical manufacturing date. Several other members played boxes they had brought and these were augmented by a number of cylinder and disc boxes, and organettes, from Ted Brown's collection.

Kevin McElhone played a 24 note twin-reeded Mexon (some say Mezon) organette using both adapted Ariston card discs and the correct Mexon ones.

One question remained unanswered at the end of the day - how did they decide just which operas to pin on a cylinder?

Many thanks to our hosts for the filling school steam puddings! ■

Book Review

Tune Sheet Book

I have very recently received a review copy of the Musical Box Tune Sheets by H.A.V. Bulleid. It seems a long time since the first of many long discussions in committee meetings talking about what should be included and what form the book should take but, in fact, the first mention of the book was at the Wakefield meeting in Spring 1999. Since then, due to the enthusiasm of our President, Ted Brown, to have the book written and printed to mark the new millennium for the MBSGB, together with the sheer hard work and dedication of Anthony Bulleid, a wonderful edition has been produced. Every member of the Society can be proud of the result and it is a definite 'must

have' on their bookshelf.

The book contains 216 tune sheets, all very well produced in black and white, with informative captions under each illustration and 15 colour plates, 10 of which are tune sheets and the other 5 are of typical musical boxes of the period. Also, at the back of the book are 14 dating charts with useful notes on the makers.

A complete list of mechanical music societies throughout the world is included with addresses/telephone numbers etc., very good for anyone trying to research boxes or even when planning trips!

Useful information is also included about the MBSGB register from which a lot of data for this book has

been researched.

As a musical box collector I can highly recommend this publication; it is packed full of information, written in an easy to understand light hearted style, suitable for all collectors of mechanical music. If you have a few minutes to spare you can always dip into this excellent book and discover interesting aspects of musical box manufacture. Again, I would like to heartily congratulate Anthony Bulleid for the magnificent effort put into this book. I know that it will be a very useful tool for musical box research and identification both now and in the future - an absolute must for your bookshelf! ■ Roy Ison

Editor's note: For details of this book, see page 132



MUSIC BOX BINDERS

As promised in the last issue, we now have a supply of binders for your magazine. Each binder takes eight issues plus index and this keeps each Volume as a valuable reference. The words "The Music Box" are in gold on the spine - looks great on the bookshelf! The binders come packed two per box and each box is priced at £12.00 plus postage. Postage is as follows:-

UK	£1.60.
Europe/EU countries	£2.42
USA	£5.57
Australia/New Zealand/Japan	£6.19

Orders, with cheque to MBSGB, please to:- Alan Wyatt, The Willows, 102 High Street, Landbeach, Cambs CB4 8DT, England.

Sale Room Report Mechanical Music at Phillips - February 9th

The recent sale of Mechanical Music at the Midlands sale room marked a healthy return for Phillips in the musical box market, with good prices paid for quality cylinder and disc boxes. Highlights of the sale included two exceptional and early pieces: a sur-plateau movement in a engraved silver case which made £2100, and a fine fusee wound musical clock base (as illustrated on the front cover). Features of the movement included a sectional comb with teeth in groups of three and an unusually long

14 inch cylinder. In apparently untouched condition and playing well the lot realised £4500.

Among a good selection of cylinder boxes was a Langdorff harpe piccolo interchangeable with four cylinders and matching table at £4600, a concertino longue marche box at £3900, and a good Nicole Frere forte-piano two per turn at £2700. However, the star lot had to be a rare Komet 13 1/4 inch disc musical bracket clock with three train fusee movement by A & H Rowley of London. An upmarket alternative to the more common Polyphon/Symphonion longcase variety, the Komet realised a

modest £8000.

Automata were also well represented with a previously unknown Vichy automaton with Lioret phonograph movement doubling its estimate at £6600, while a dismantled Lambert clown with broom made £5000. Other automata included three Bontemps birds in an unrestored cage, a Decamps spinning woman and a rare German somersaulting lady.

Entries are currently being accepted for Phillips next Mechanical Music sale on the 6th September 2000. A reduced vendor's commission of 10% is offered to MBSGB members. ■

Archive Corner - One

This is the first of a series of articles intended to put the spotlight on some of the items contained in our society Archives which come under several main headings.

1. M.B.S.G.B. - Publications
2. Other Societies - Journals etc.
3. Text Books
4. Reprints
5. Mechanical Musical Instrument Makers Catalogue
6. Auction Catalogues
7. Modern Day Traders Literature
8. Films & Videos
9. Sound Recordings
10. Robin Timms arrangements
11. Patents for Mechanical Devices + USA + Others
12. Museums - Leaflets & Catalogues

I hope to mention all of these sections over coming issues & will start off with Sound Recordings. These range from 7 made on an old reel to reel tape recorder in the early

1960's, 5 audio cassette tapes, an L.P. & 3 Compact Discs. I have transferred all of the old reel to reel recordings to one modern day cassette tape before my old tape recorder finally expires.

I feel that this is a very poor showing considering that everything we research, collect, restore or play to friends & visitors makes music. Surely we ought to have a LARGE selection of audio tapes from current museums & private collections. I would see these as being useful for private research, helping to write articles for the magazine and so on. I hopefully other members as well might find it really interesting to be able to listen to rare instruments, particularly those not know in your own country. I find it useful myself to listen to instruments so that I can decide whether I would like to try & find one to add to my collection. Last year I hear a recording of a

certain machine which had been on my list for several years, unknown in Europe, I heard it for the first time on a recording & decided I did not like it so managed to shorten my 'wants' list as no cost at all! That does not happen very often.

If there were enough contributions or recordings from members it might even be possible to produce a 'mega' tape of say 1 tune played on 30 different cylinder boxes, disc boxes, organettes etc. There could be a series of tapes - let me or other committee members know your thoughts & send me a audio tape of favourite tunes played on instruments in your collection.

Please include on a sheet of paper a list of instruments & tunes played for use if we decide to make up a tape for members. If you prefer any recording you send in simply to be in the Archives & not to be used in any other way then please mark the recording accordingly.

I look forward to lots of tapes soon! ■ Kevin McElhone



Keith Harding MUSICAL BOXES Sales & Restorations

World of Mechanical Music, Northleach, Nr Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 3EU

Telephone: 01451 860181 Fax: 01451 861133

Museum & Shop open 7 days a week 10am - 6pm

Hick of a Problem

A restoration project by Paul Bellamy - Part 1

If anyone has heard of or read the works of Mrs Walton, the Victorian writer of religious stories, they will know the heart tugging story of Christie's Old Organ or its alternative title Home Sweet Home. The story depicts the life and death of Old Treffy, a street beggar, his happy departure to the land of everlasting mechanical music and the bequest of his beloved street organ to young, impoverished and orphaned Christie. Wonderful! Of course, it was not an organ but a small barrel piano, almost certainly made by Hicks of either London or Bristol.

Having previously restored two barrel pianos, one a 40-key manivelle and the other a spring-motor-operated 48 key instrument, I had little hesitation in bidding for a 22 key Hicks instrument. I wanted it for 'street' use, a wonderful way of demonstrating mechanical music, making friends and raising the occasional coppers for charity. Perhaps Old Treffy was standing beside me and young Christie tugging at my sleeve as the bids went up and up beyond my estimate. "Sold to the gentleman at the back" said another Christopher as the hammer brought me back to reality.

Another Society member, a former practitioner of constabulary duties, gave me access to his own Hicks. With this knowledge I decided to restore the piano to its original domestic glory of polished rosewood and star-quilted silk front panel. However, I also wanted to retain the later accoutrements when the instrument was adapted for use by itinerant street 'musicians'.

Every job presents its own unique problems and it is these that I attempt to describe below. In all other respects the restoration was in line with the articles by David Snelling.

Restoration

A close inspection gave rise to my first doubts that the instrument would ever be strong enough for street use.

The case work comprised side, front and bottom panels only 5/16 inches thick, including the veneer, with numerous splits. The first task was to ensure the death of all worm. Thus for two months Hicky remained sealed in plastic bin sacks and lots of wood worming fluid. Glued joints had failed. Brackets, pins and screws had been added over the years but wood worm damage was confined to areas of the base and sound board bridge. The bridge was too weak in places. It had to be repaired in situ or replaced. A mini-drill with ball ended router was used to clean out all the eaten parts, leaving a frail honeycomb of a shell. Care was taken not to displace any of the bridge pins. Using a small metal rod, slightly flattened and bent at one end, the cavities were built up using conventional two-part natural-coloured wood filler. The filler was made up in successive small batches, each batch being worked in by the rod. As the first batch started to harden, the second was applied and so on, taking care not to disturb the pins whilst ensuring they were firmly embedded in the filler. The rest of the bridge was plugged and glued with new wood and saturated with a proprietary brand of dry rot hardener. The bridge was then smoothed down to its original contours. The result was a surprisingly strong bridge which, when re-blackened, is virtually

undetectable from the original.

It was not practicable to strip the thick rosewood veneers from the thin case of the side and front panels which were extensively damaged by splits and failed joints. Also, this would have damaged the fine patina of the veneer. The joints had contracted too far to remake with pearl glue. A coarse hacksaw blade, ground at one end to a V-point and clamped in a pad-saw handle, was carefully dragged back and forth along each split until the blade tip contacted the veneer. With the veneer face of each panel clamped for support against pieces of flat board, thin strips of wood (veneer, such as beech is ideal) were glued into the slots with PVA. Corner joints were cleaned of old glue using the adapted hacksaw blade and then re-glued and clamped. Piano glue, a jelly version of pearl glue which melts when its container is immersed in hot water, was easier to use than hot pearl glue. The top corners of the front panel were reinforced with small corner blocks (Fig.1). This modification is reversible but justified for the instrument's street use. The base panel was split, contracted and with some localised worm damage. Having no veneer, these cracks and splits in this panel were sawn through in situ using a single blade for narrow joints and a pack of two or three for the wider ones. Damaged areas were cut out and

*...to the land
of everlasting
mechanical
music...*



Fig.1. Corner blocks for additional strength. Extra ratchet and pawl for safety.

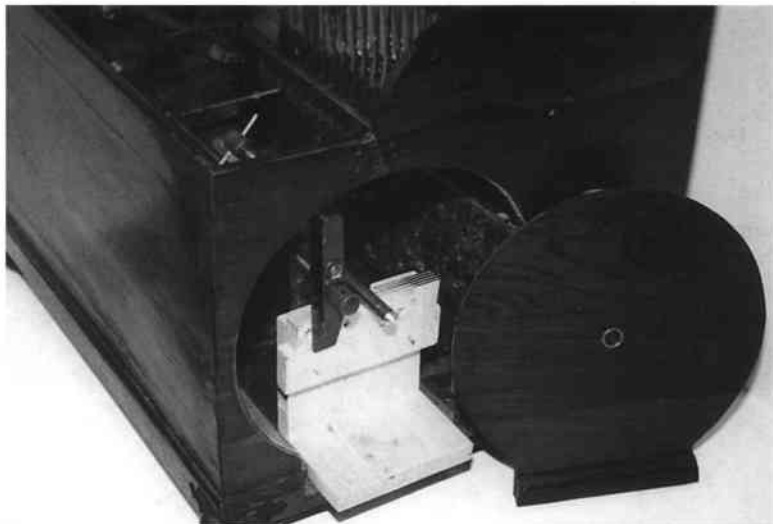


Fig.2 The new end plate with veneers cut to match side panel. Note operating linkage to key frame.

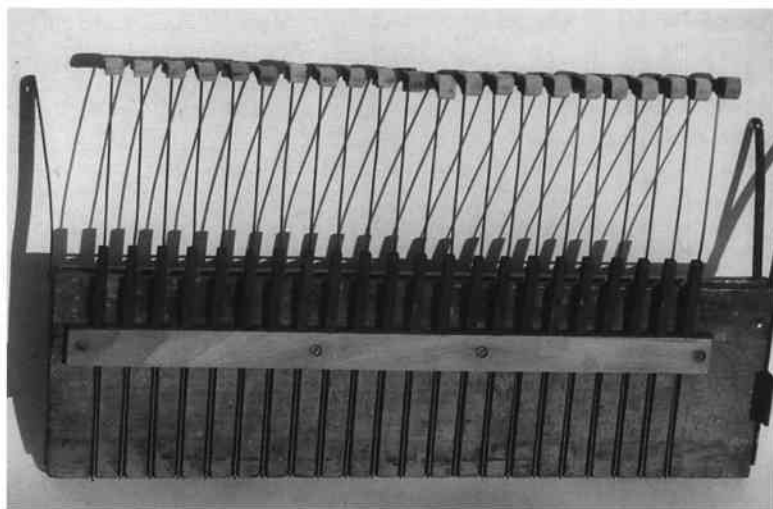


Fig.3 Oak stiffener and support for hammers.

replaced with old pine board carefully cut to give tight joints. PVA was again used for the free areas but piano glue for the edge joints. New wood was then paired down to thickness with a scraper so as not to destroy the aged character of the rest of the wood. The fresh areas were tinted with a blend of modern spirit dye and fine paint brush to give a matching colour. Some darker shades of dye were then brushed in so that the colour variations of old and new wood blended. Finally, the whole was wiped over with a cloth lightly soaked in methylated spirit to blend original grime with the newly stained wood. Although the inside and bottom of the case is rarely seen, the work described above took a little time but gave satisfaction since the extensive repair work is not obvious when the barrel is removed or the piano is carried on its back for transport.

The barrel hole cover was missing. This was made from old close grain pine board and re-veneered with rosewood. This is now in short supply and cannot be imported. Fortunately, I obtained existing stock which was being reserved for restoration purposes. By selecting pieces of veneer the new and old grains were carefully matched. The new veneers were much thinner than the originals and very light in colour. Saturating them in a strong solution of potassium peroxide over a few days soon added a hundred-odd years. A coat of shellac polish and the cover was virtually indistinguishable from the original. (Fig.2). Other missing bits were made up in a similar way. The bottom rail of the front panel had lost most of its veneer. In this case, remnants of veneer were removed and kept for patching elsewhere. A

sandwich of three layers of new veneer was glued and clamped between boards. This was then used to completely recover the bottom rail of the front panel and the missing bottom section of the quilted front panel.

The carcass of the hammer rail was riddled with the dreaded worm. The choice was either to make a new one or to reinforce it and hope for the best. Pieces of one millimetre diameter welding wire were inserted down the weakest vertical 'fingers' taking care to drive them to one side of the wire hole used to pivot the hammers. The whole carcass was saturated in proprietary dry-rot hardener. The hammers are loaded by small diameter vertical coil springs and aligned by sitting on the bottom of their slots under the tension of its spring. As the wood was too distorted and weak, all the hammers sat in different positions. A transverse rail of oak (Fig.3) was made and carefully screwed to the carcass with the top of the rail level with the bottom of the slots. This rail served both as a rest for the hammers and to provide extra longitudinal stiffness. A thin piece of piano felt was glued to this rail to cushion the hammers, a practice found on the large tingelaries.

Only a few of the original springs were fit for re-use. These were about 2.5 inches long and made of brass wire. To assess the spring rating, one of them was suspended from a pin tacked into a piece of wood clamped in the vice. A temporary wire hook was attached to the lower end. The free length was marked on the wood. A largish nut was then hung on the hook and the extended length marked off. A further nut of the same size was then added and the new length again marked. As a double check on the weight/extension ratio, another spring was treated similarly. Satisfied that both springs gave equal results, the next job was to produce a full set of springs with similar performance. The bore of the old spring was gauged at about 40 wire gauge (0.044ins). A straight piece of wire (silver steel is ideal) of slightly smaller diameter was then used as a mandrel on which to wind a new spring. I had a supply of various

*Saturating them
in a strong
solution of
potassium
peroxide over
a few days
soon added a
hundred-odd
years.*

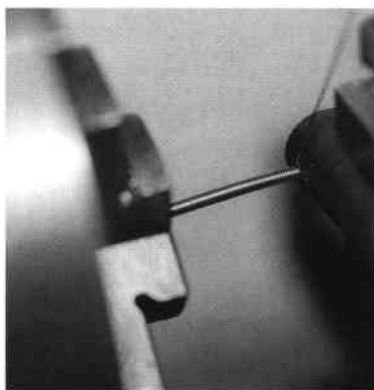


Fig.4 Spring winding in progress.

thickness piano wire used for re-pinning musical box cylinders. I chose one of 4 WG (0.013ins) diameter and cut a length of 40 inches. The steel wire mandrel was clamped in the 3-jaw chuck of my Myford lathe using the jaws to nip tight one end of the piano wire. A piece of brass, drilled to clear the mandrel wire and mounted on the cross slide with the hole concentric with the 3-jaw chuck, acted as a support to the free end of the mandrel. The lathe was set to minimum speed on back gear and selected to reverse, Reverse direction ensured the spring was wound in the same direction as the original but this was only for aesthetic reasons. With the free end of the piano wire loosely curled around the jaws of a pair of pliers, a leather gloved left hand applying tension to the wire and eye protectors in place, the third hand was used to start the lathe! It is important to maintain tension on the wire throughout the winding process in order to get a tightly wound spring. (Fig.4). The cross slide needs to be free to move along the bedplate as the coil length builds up. Alternatively, a third hand can be used to manually work the traverse just ahead of the coil. Release the wire as the end approaches the mandrel but be careful of the whiplash as the coil slightly unwinds when the tension is released. Naturally, the spring tends to unwind a little and thus grows slightly in diameter. The new spring is then cut to length with its end opened out and tested in the same way as the original. Either by luck or judgement the spring gave exactly the same extension results as the original.

The hammer rail, with new springs in place, worked very well.

The rail is lifted clear of the barrel by turning a brass knob which, through a link, pushed one end of the key frame clear (Fig.2). This moves the key frame away from the barrel for tune changing and barrel removal. Unfortunately, the frame was not rigid enough. Thus, when lowered into playing position the barrel pins tended to push the remote end clear of the drum instead of lifting the hammers (Fig.5). Wear in the link did not help so this was eliminated. As an alternative to fitting extra oak stiffeners, a light compression spring in a wooden block with two slotted screw holes for adjustment, was attached to the base behind the hammer rail at the remote end. Spring tension must be light enough to allow the rail to clear the barrel pins when tune changing (Fig.5).

The barrel has to be accurately aligned to the hammer tails. A version of the jig used for cylinder boxes was made (Fig.2). The rod needs to be straight. One end is either turned or sleeved to the diameter of the barrel's drive-end bearing. The other end is turned to a sharp point and supported on an adjustable wooden V-block clamped to an L-shaped stand which is clamped to the base. Vertically align the rod to the line of the tails using a vernier calliper. A piece of flat melamine-faced board, cut to fit inside the bottom of the case, makes a good datum surface for the calliper. Gauge the height of the tail pins at each end and note the difference.

Gauge the height of the rod at the drive end. Then set the other end to this height +/- the difference in tail pin height. Repeat the measurements until the axis of the rod is parallel to that of the tails. Pin a strip of wood under the V-block so that it can be moved horizontally without affecting its height. Set the arm of the jig to touch the drive end tail pin and then slide along the rod to the other end. Adjust the horizontal position and repeat the measurements until the axis of the rod is parallel in the horizontal plane. As a precaution, recheck the vertical plane and then the horizontal plane. The process sounds tedious but is quick to perform. Finally, place the barrel cover in position, gently tap the drive end of the jig's rod to centre-punch the barrel cover. Centre a drill to the centre-pop mark and drill the non-drive end bearing. Voila! Perfect alignment of barrel to hammer tails. ■

Part 2 - Goes on to talk about the Worm Drive and the Barrel. See our next issue for the conclusion of this restoration.

Additional Reading

Volume 14 of The Music Box Nos. 3 and 4 - Restoring a Tingelary by David Snelling. Volume 18, No.2 - Roll out the Barrel by John Young. The front cover of Volume 9, No.4, has a wonderful photograph of the Hicks and its cheerful but scruffy player plus a superbly illustrated article called Aural Agonies by Terence J. Wyke.

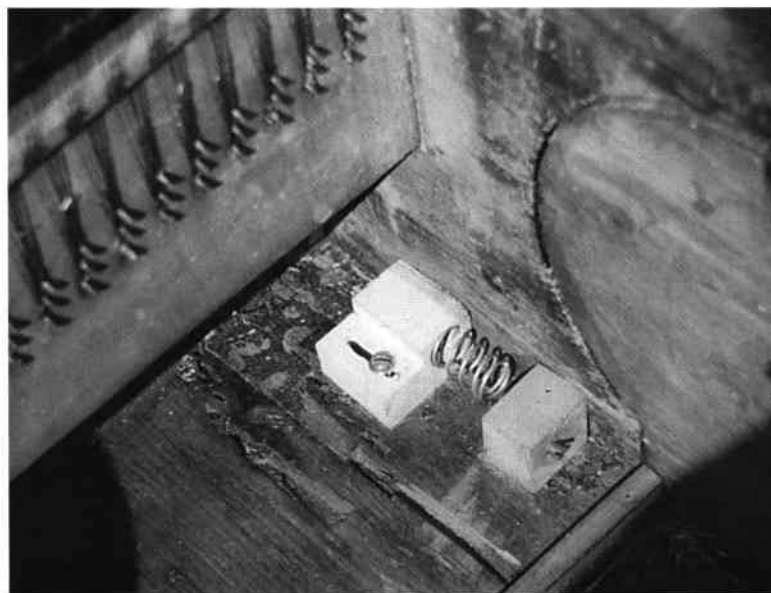


Fig.5 A light compression spring to support the key frame (removed).

Voila! Perfect alignment of barrel to hammer tails.

More on Tomasso

By Alan Pratt

Following the article in the last issue of *The Music Box* on the Tomasso family, we received an interesting piece written by the well-known cartoonist Ronald Searle.

From the dates mentioned it is possible to establish that this was first published in the 1940s - although where it first appeared remains a mystery.

It seems that Ronald Searle set out to discover more about street pianos, which were rapidly disappearing from London's streets at that time. For whatever reason he ended up buying one and playing it outside Paddington Station on the way home to Bayswater! His drawings of Signor Antonio Tomasso and his yard in Islington are a delight, capturing the essence of a dying trade.

Commenting on his meeting with Tomasso, Ronald Searle writes, "The number of organs to be heard about London today is between eight and ten. Signor Tomasso, who lives at Islington and who is the only man left in London to let them out on hire, says there must be at least ten. For

two of his have not come home and he feels they must be playing somewhere.

Mr. Tomasso is 87 and came to Saffron Hill when he was 15, but he is still talking like the favourite Italian organ-grinder of our story books. We found him in a narrow shed in a back street of Islington. He was stretched on a broken horsehair sofa and in the half-light the "pianos" standing about his couch looked like shapely Victorian barmaids. It is here his clients come to pay their four shillings a day and pull his "pianos" away in the hope of a good "drop". Unhappily his clients are not all reliable. Mr. Tomasso, smiling all over his brown and grizzled face, puts it even more strongly: "You gotta do business with some of the dirtiest peoples in the world. "He was cross because the day before he had walked half over London through the West End (always the best run) and round the street markets, looking for his two strays."

Searle also recounts the rigours of being a street musician - "We know that it's almost as difficult steering a "piano" down a hill as pulling it up one, and that to keep the handle



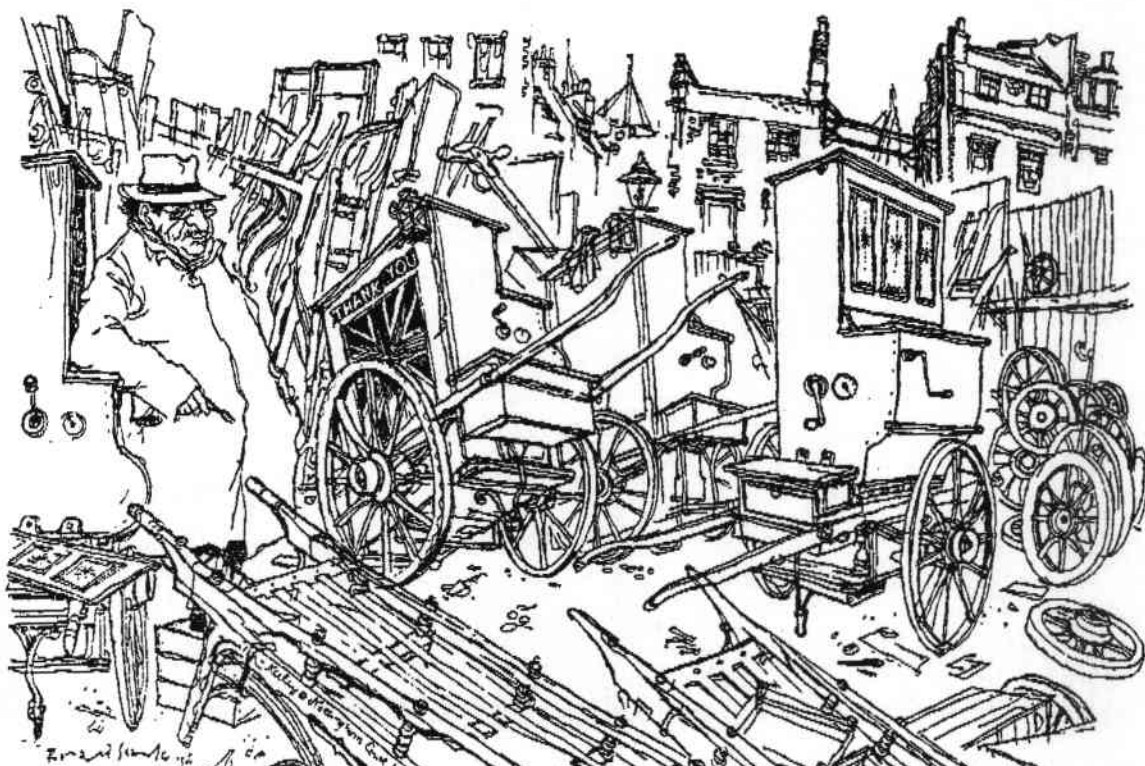
Fig.1. "Mr Tomasso still has the air of his native Cassino about him".

turning so that the tune doesn't falter is no job for a weak muscled amateur.

In a final touching comment on the street piano, he quotes a verse by Alfred Noyes:

*"And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets...."* ■

It is here his clients come to pay their four shillings a day and pull his "pianos" away...



Merritt Gally's Orchestrone

by Nicholas Simons

First reported in Music Box Vol.19 No.1, Nicholas recounts the discovery and restoration of this interesting instrument.

One advantage of being a member of the Musical Box Society is to join the regular social gatherings and see other members collections, talk to other people with common interests and even find the odd item to add to ones own collection. It was in this last category that the Spring 1998 meeting in Norwich was particularly fruitful for me. During the weekend we visited the home and workshop of a local well-known collector and dealer. Whilst viewing an impressive array of musical boxes and orchestrions I spotted, looking rather decrepit in a corner, what

looked like a small roll playing keyboardless organ. Negotiation with the owner quickly followed and I became the proud owner of a do-it-yourself kit for an Orchestrone.

The orchestrone is an unusual instrument in that it sits mid-way between the organette and the player organ. In general, organettes are small hand-cranked reed organs which are placed on a table to be played. Player organs, however, are full size keyboard-played reed organs which have the addition of a paper roll to allow automatic playing. The Orchestrone could be described as a large floor standing organette since it is played by a seated operator who produces the wind with pedals and drives the roll by hand.

Professor Merritt Gally and John McTammany were two of the most prominent inventors in the mechanical music field in America during the second half of the nineteenth century. The instruments, however, were made by the Munroe Organ Reed Company of Worcester, Massachusetts. This company started in 1869 and within ten years it was employing over two hundred workmen and was producing thirty-five thousand instruments each year. By 1887 this was up to fifty thousand annually. Most types of organettes and player organs were made by Munroe whose name rarely appeared on the instruments, the sellers name being given.

Organettes designed by Gally include the Jubal Orchestrone and

...I became the proud owner of a do-it-yourself kit for an Orchestrone.



Fig.1. Merritt Gally's Orchestrone c. 1880.

the Bijou Orchestrone which play fourteen and twenty notes respectively. Both work on a similar pneumatic valve system and would have been relatively expensive in the organette market. The Bijou Orchestrone is also known as the Peerless or the Fairy Musician, the difference just being in the stencilled decoration. My own Peerless actually has a Bijou Orchestrone sticker on the bellows bottom board. These are well designed instruments utilising a puff primary valve system which gives a very prompt response to the music roll. Full details of the mechanism including internal photographs are given in Roger Booty's article in 'The Music Box', Volume 9, Number 3, Page 118.

The Orchestrone was built in a number of styles, some being shown on pages 760 and 761 of the Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments by Q David Bowers. My instrument is a Model 44 A and consists of a 44 note organ played by a 48 hole paper roll which is hand cranked across the tracker bar. A hand cranked roll is considered to be an advantage in the advertiser's description, For the convenience of teachers, and that the instrument may be under the control of the operator the motor is omitted in this style'. It is amusing to note that in the advertiser's description of another model, the Model 26 B, the following is stated, 'This instrument has the same compass as the Style A and uses the same music, but possesses the following advantages, the most important of which is the wind motor or engine, which is a novel and ingenious device for operating the music sheet'.

A general view of the instrument is shown in Figure 1. It has the proportions of a small parlour organ although where the keyboard should be there are three compartments fitted with three hinged lids. It is interesting to note that the hinges used are identical to those found on the Bijou Orchestrone. The central compartment houses the roll mechanism playing, unusually, from side to side. Figure 2 shows



Fig.2. Tracker Bar and Roll Mechanism.

the central lid raised to show the roll mechanism. This lid overlaps the other two so that a single central lock secures all three compartments. The two side compartments allow sufficient capacity to store a large number of music rolls, a useful feature not found in many other mechanical instruments. Also visible in Figure 3 are the manufacturer's and retailer's labels. Forward play is achieved by turning the small hand crank clockwise. This is connected by belt to a counter-shaft which has a small pinion engaging in the large drive gear visible at the front of the take-up spool. Rewind is achieved by pulling out the crank which causes it to be connected to the music roll chuck at the back. Simultaneously, the lever at the front is moved to the left to disengage the drive pinion. The paper unrolls from the underside of both the music roll and the take-up spool. I was lucky to obtain seventeen rolls, plus two duplicates, with my organ, further original rolls being almost impossible to obtain.

The details given on the two labels glued to the underside of the side compartment lids are as follows:

Left side:

'Patents of the United States
May 7 1878
Reissue August 19 1879
November 26 1878

October 7 1879

April 8 1879

November 25 1879

Her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent
of Great Britain October 2 1878
Number 3876

January 20 1879 Number 232

Imperial Patent of Germany
A.D. 1879 Number 4034

Prof M.Gally, Inventor and
Proprietor. 76 Fifth Avenue. New
York.'

Right side:

'Manufactured for M. Gally by the
Munroe Organ Reed Co.

All instruments manufactured by
the Munroe Organ Reed Co., are
made under Gally, McTammany,
and other patents.'

The Scale

The music rolls have a width of 8½ inches and the tracker bar holes are spaced at six to the inch. There are 48 holes in the tracker bar comprising 44 musical notes and 4 for the two swell shutters.

Orchestrone scale:

- 1 Treble forte Nearest to player
- 2 Bass forte
- 3 B flat Highest note
- 44 F
- 45 C
- 46 G Lowest note
- 47 Treble piano [rapid]
- 48 Bass piano [rapid] Furthest from player

*The Bijou
Orchestrone is
also known as
the Peerless
or the Fairy
Musician...*

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The scale from holes 3 to 44 is fully chromatic. The organ plays a minor third below the scale given.

The top 22 notes are positioned at the front of the instrument and are covered by a swell shutter. Similarly, for the lower 22 notes which are positioned at the back and voice out of the fretwork panel above the roll box. Holes 1 and 2 will slowly open the corresponding shutter when punched. The speed of opening is affected by the distance between adjacent holes along the roll. When no forte hole is punched, the shutter will slowly close. This can be accelerated by punching hole 47 or 48 which opens the swell pneumatic directly to atmosphere. This is an unusual feature to have in such a small and early instrument.

The music rolls are wound onto wooden spools which are fitted with ends similar to 58 and 65 note music rolls. The label includes the price which was obviously dependant on the length. For example, Roll 28, Lead Kindly Light, cost 86 cents whereas Roll 513, The Seventh Lancers, is the longest at 4 dollars 85 cents.

Restoration

When acquired, the organ was in need of a complete restoration. Although in pieces, the complete instrument was present and luckily it was free of woodworm. In spite of this, the first job was to spray the entire instrument with woodworm fluid. The main exhausters and reservoir are built to the common American Organ design and were recovered using a heavy grade double sided rubber cloth. The flap valves were replaced and new operating straps were fitted.

The player section is built onto the underside of the rectangular soundboard and is similar in design to the action used in the Bijou Orchestrone using leather puffs and circular valves. About one quarter of the puffs had suffered from insect damage and were replaced by thin split skiver leather. All airways between the individual valves and the tracker bar are machined into a wooden plank. This makes for a most compact design without the use of rubber tubing but can suffer disastrously from damp which can cause the

joints to split open. The smallest leak will render the organ inoperative.

The swell pneumatics were recovered in thin tosh rubber cloth, the reeds cleaned, and the soundboard and roll-box reassembled into the cabinet.

Due to severe rain and bird dropping attack on the upper cabinet panels these were all stripped down and refinished with Liberon Finishing Oil and Liberon Black Bison Fine Paste Wax Polish. This gives a very durable finish with a satin sheen and is very easy for an amateur to apply. It is more forgiving of knocks than varnish or french polish.

All music rolls were carefully repaired using Scotch Magic Tape where torn. Do not use ordinary Sellotape as this will quickly go sticky and shrink causing distortion to the rolls.

After a few weeks work the Orchestrone is now good as new and in spite of its limited registration it is a joy to play and can produce some very acceptable music. ■



Fig.3. Orchestrone showing roll storage.

“Marche continue:”

The Isle Rousseau tune sheet shown in Fig.1 belongs to serial 19510, a Rechange box with three 13” (33cm) cylinders and a 6-air comb of 120 teeth. It has an imposing case, 34” (87cm) wide, with a drawer in the podium for its three cylinders.

If you switch on the movement with cylinder 3 in position, it will play right through the *Zampa* overture taking about six minutes and giving, I have to say, a dazzling performance particularly on those heavy climactic chords.

That is why the tune list heading adds “Continuous play.” The cylinder is normally pinned except that there is no tune gap. Instead, it is pinned helically for about half an inch to continue playing while the cylinder slowly shifts to the next line of pins.

After six turns of cylinders 2 and 3, and after every two turns of cylinder 1 with its three shorter tunes, the cylinder retracts from the comb and the mechanism stops.

This box was probably made in the early 1890s and most likely by Bremond who used the Isle Rousseau tune sheet at that time. It

underwent repair in 1921 and this is noted crisply on the back of the tune sheet and translates from the French as “Restored by the clock-maker Willy Robert in 1921.”

Rather massive and complex machinery is needed to provide the disengagement of cylinder with comb, which is essential to achieve continuous play and to provide safe cylinder changing. Not exactly cost-effective, but what a result! These six-minute overtures simply cannot be matched by anything on disc!

This system is generally described as semi-helicoidal and there were various ways of doing it. I think the most complex was Conchon’s serial 8285 made in 1891, as described in detail on pages 199-201 of Vol.16 no.7, Autumn 1994.

The tune sheet was originally supplied loose with the box, not uncommon on rechange boxes. So I feel sure it was Willy Robert who fixed it to the lid with one small round-head screw each side; those were the only holes in the tune sheet. How lucky that it hung on for 77 years.

A Guitare box by Rivenc

Rivenc’s Guitare box serial 28844, with its 14” (355mm) cylinder

playing ten airs, is mainly interesting for its comb. As can be seen in Fig.2, most of its 80 teeth, starting at no.23, are in eight groups tuned to the same pitch. The five largest groups have 7 teeth each, adequate for the guitare effect which usually seems to have a slightly slower rate of notes-per-second than the “super” mandoline which always involves some groups of eight.

This box was made in about 1880, when the zither craze was well started; in fact zithers appeared on some Rivenc boxes from 1878 or even earlier. Most of them are fixed by two screws into the front edge of the bedplate; but serial 28844 differs. Its zither is supported from an L-shaped bracket secured by two screws underneath the bedplate. Both arrangements involve clearance being cut in the wood spacer along the front of the case, and on 28844 this cut out looks like an original feature. So I think this zither was definitely supplied with the box.

The zither tissue extends from teeth 24 to 65, and it certainly gives an alternative version to each tune. But boxes with combs like this one benefit from the sympathetic vibrations of other teeth in their



Fig. 1. Serial 19510's Isle Rousseau with swans and the headings for the three cylinders in German, - Walze. Cylinder dimensions are in the cartouche or banner, diameter 24 lignes = 54mm. Tune sheet copy thanks to Sotheby's.

group whenever one of them is sounded. Therefore many teeth are often adding their bit to the total sound. The effect is a rich undercurrent, which is totally lost when the zither is applied. If first heard without and then with zither, it sounds emaciated, though it does pick out many decorative notes very clearly. For comparison with a Junod Guitare Tremolo with 62 teeth, see Vol.16 page 236.

The great wheel of this box is also of interest, see Fig.3. The asterisk-shaped and non-serif IE stamps are also seen together on some Bremond, Conchon and other Rivenc boxes. They are seen

separately on other makes. They are so far unexplained.

Rivenc 28844 also provides a hidden advertisement of that versatile alloy, brass. Among its many attributes it numbers the property of hardening when cold worked. For example springs can be made from soft sheet brass as described in Vol.15 page 57 (or my second book page 219). From time to time one sees cylinder bearings and even comb bases which have been stretched by hammering one side. This is not a respectable practice but it serves and survives because the metal is locally strengthened rather than weakened.



Fig. 4. The Rivenc 28844 stop arm. It has been vigorously stretched to curve the right side upwards and thereby lift the catch closer to the stop tail.

For some reason the stop arm catch on Rivenc 28844 was failing to connect with the governor stop tail. No doubt it was an urgent job and by curving the catch side upwards the problem was quickly solved as show in Fig.4.

Blanks

When the manufacture of large musical boxes got really going in the late 1830s, it was supported by and very soon became completely dependent upon the makers of blanks. A blank consisted of a completed musical box except that it had no comb and the cylinder was a plain polished brass tube. The same blank would serve for boxes with different numbers of tunes, therefore the snail cam was also missing. A blank was normally supplied in a fruit wood case without a lid but including end flap and control levers - also, when lever winding came in, the separate controls and partitions. Probably some, but certainly not all, blank makers included the glass lid; see Fig.5.

The musical box maker awaiting his order of blanks would have already ordered the comb and snail cam, and when the blank was delivered he could send the case for finishing, perhaps with added feet or podium and with marquetry and veneer on the lid, as sometimes noted by him on the bottom of the case. He then proceeded with the cylinder pinning and all the final stages with the comb. And then the last touch, about which no data exist... who picked up the appropriate tune sheet, wrote the description and the tunes, and fixed it to the lid? This item gets no mention in Cuendet's Works Ledger.

...with zither,
it sounds
emaciated...



Fig. 2. Rivenc 28844 with the comb marked for the two 440Hz a teeth and the eight groups. Corresponding helical lines of pins can be seen on the cylinder.



Fig. 3. Rivenc 28844 great wheel, scribed gamme 5316 and stamped 64 the blank number of the cylinder assembly, also the "asterisk" and the non-serif IE.

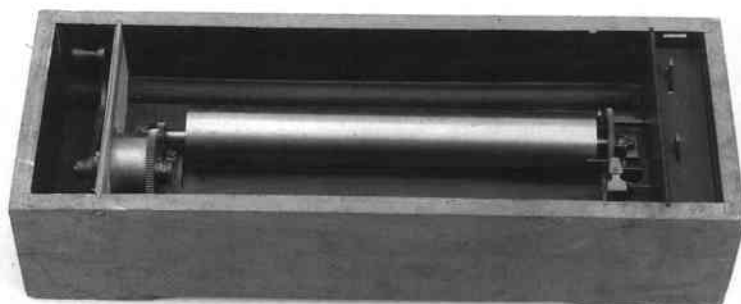


Fig. 5. A typical lever-wind blank, in its permanent but lidless box, as delivered to a musical box maker. Photo kindly lent by Musikautomaton Museum, Seewen, near Basel.

musical box oddments no. 84

Among the blank suppliers, three about whom something is known are... S.B.I. with their riverside works in Geneva; Karrer with a sizeable establishment in Teufentahl in the German-speaking Swiss area about 20 miles north-north-east of Lucerne; and Justin Jaccard. A half-mile walk due south from Ste. Croix takes you to La Sagne, and a further half mile, until the road stops at the foot of 3,000 metre mountain peaks, finds you in Culliairy. That is where J. Jaccard made blanks.

All musical boxes were made in this way until the mid 1870s when factory working started; the exception being L'Epée who always made his own blanks.

The blank makers obtained most of their components and some sub-assemblies from home workers who in turn sub-contracted minor items to others. This diversity in the "cottage industry" was very well illustrated ages ago by Olin Tillotson, who recorded the many different shapes of governor side plates on about twenty boxes from the 1835 to 1855 period. The blanks for all these boxes came from one or two Geneva blank makers and detail differences show that details came from many sources. This largely explains why so many components are stamped with "blank numbers." Why else should items like governor wings and spring arbors be stamped.

The blank maker stamped the bedplate edge to indicate the two or three blank numbers of the cylinder, spring and governor assemblies. This in turn allowed the musical box maker to keep them together while awaiting their cylinder and comb.

2-per-turn Forte Piano in the 1840s

I think Ducommun Girod was the first maker to produce 12-alr forte piano boxes with "standard" (24 lignes, 54mm, approx. $21\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter) cylinders pinned at .07" (1.8mm) per second. This means that one revolution of the cylinder takes 96 seconds. The two 5mm tune gaps take up 3 seconds each, so tunes last 45 seconds.

A good example, with $12\frac{3}{4}$ " (32cm) cylinder, is serial 22386, in plain case with end flap. It was



Fig. 6. Mystery letter R on 22386 bedplate, about 1847.



Fig. 7. Letter R again on serial 21741, probably 1846.

described in Vol.12, page 107 (and my first book p.64). Its forte and piano combs had 89 and 39 teeth, all of about the same stiffness. The piano comb was set for reduced lift and therefore softer playing, the principle adopted in the early forte piano boxes with long and short pins and a single comb. This box has that mysterious R near its serial number, as shown in Fig.6.

Another good and rather earlier example, from about 1845, is serial 21741. It is in a clock base, cylinder length $10\frac{1}{4}$ " (27cm). It has the same close pinning, the same .017" tune tracks, and the same mystery R on the bedplate, see Fig.7. The same maker, Boujol, provided the combs, here with 75 and 30 teeth, and the forte 70% stiffer than the piano. It is strange that this earlier box had the stiffer forte teeth.

Blank numbers 7 and 17 are both stamped on spring and governor parts and on the cylinder



Fig. 9. Craft mark on bedplate corner.

bearings, and blank no.15 is on cylinder parts, see Fig.8.

Craft marks are often seen on early Ducommun Girod boxes; here the device is stamped on the bedplate with a chisel and consists of a cross above a square, Fig.9. The number 1106 may be a shot at the Gamme number which is given as 1102 on the great wheel but 1105 on both the forte comb bass lead and the cylinder bass end, that is the majority opinion, seen in Fig. 10.

This clock movement, naturally lacking its tune sheet as well as its clock, plays mainly operatic airs, all with panache but slightly florid - including a complex version of the Tyrolienne in *William Tell*.

Speed Problems...

These two boxes had both suffered sundry disasters since 1850, and repairs and tampering left their marks. In particular both were running far too fast, taking about 30 seconds for tunes pinned to last 45. Perhaps previous repairers had assumed that was the desired speed.

It is complete ruination of a musical box melody to play it too fast. Faced with this problem, the

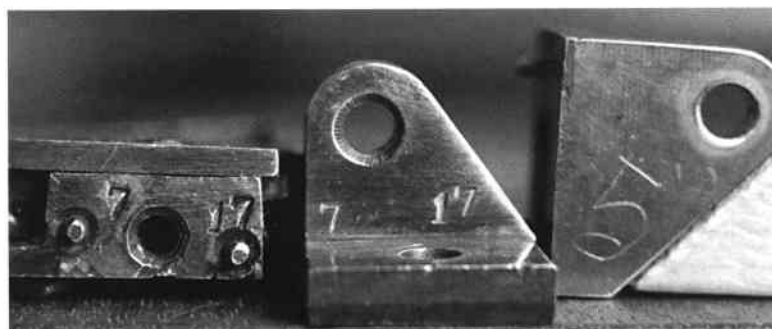


Fig. 8. Governor base and two cylinder bearings of Ducommun Girod 21741. Two different blank numbers on a component suggest some irregularity. The figure 5 scribed on the cylinder bearing is probably short for blank no. 15.

*It is complete
ruination of a
musical box
melody to play
it too fast.*



Fig. 10. Bass end cylinder cap scribed 21741, 1105, and the craft mark. The three holes are for pushing out the brass pegs fixing the barrel to the end cap.

first step is to make sure the governor blades are set for the fullest possible sweep. If still too fast, there may be room to extend the blades before they hit the great wheel or the governor cock. This is best tried by using strips of self-adhesive labels which I have found perfectly

serviceable and easily trimmed to the maximum possible size.

The paper should be applied to the leading faces of the two wings so that it is being pressed against them when working. Clean a strip about 3mm wide by scraping - the adhesive bonds well to a clean

surface. Be sure the blades are at maximum sweep when re-assembling, and pare the paper edges to give adequate clearance. If the desired speed is now achieved, replace the paper (preferably within a year!) with .005" brass strip, soldered with 2mm overlap.

If the governor still runs too fast, seek advice from a governor expert; this will almost certainly be to replace the 30-tooth wormwheel with a 32 or even 34-tooth wheel; the adjustable bottom bearing will make room for the slightly larger wormwheel.

A lot of this bother would have been saved if Ducommun Girod had used larger-diameter great wheels on these boxes, with, say, 15% more teeth.

Edouard Jaccard

A fine 4-air Mandolin-Basse-Piccolo box by Edouard Jaccard, serial 8090, is illustrated on page 185 of "Klangkunst". His name is engraved on the tune control panel, and his trade mark is at the bottom right corner of the tune sheet. Fig.11 shows the tune sheet and Fig.12 is an enlargement of the trade mark, which I think it is important to emphasise because that EJ monogram is rare on this tune sheet.



Fig. 11. Edouard Jaccard's monogram trade mark on serial 8090 tune sheet. Early tunes, but the later top medal is 1883 and the box was probably made in the late 1880s. Thanks again to E. Saluz of the Musikautomaten Museum, Seewen.



Fig. 12. Close up of the EJ monogram, copied from the same design of tune sheet on serial 22476.

This multi-coloured tune sheet, with its lakeside scene framed with country scenes and a few musicians, appears with and without the medals in the top border and the E. Jaccard trade mark. The left and right medals are awards from the Zurich 1883 and the Paris 1867 Exhibitions. Both these medals were awarded to Edouard Jaccard, so everything about the Fig.11 tune sheet is authentic.

When the tune sheet comes with the medals but the EJ monogram replaced by a white Swiss cross on a red shield, on boxes later than 1885, I think it is fairly attributed to Paillards, because they took over the PVF trade mark at that date. They had won the

1883 medal but it was Paillard-Vaucher who won at Paris, 1867.

However, I am getting more worried about attributing these doubtful cases to the Paillards, having in mind the large number of St. Croix makers to whom no tune sheet has yet been attributed.

We need more examples! Just think, Edouard Jaccard serial nos. 9090 and 22476 are the only ones reported. So how about the other 22,474??

Three snippets

Snips are rare at auctions but interesting snippets are fairly common. Here are three from Christie's extensive sale last July...

- 1) National Fine Art Association. They are linked with Dawkins; both sold Rivenc boxes. There were two National boxes in that sale, with their usual tune sheets - a brightly coloured bouquet of flowers around a rectangle with the tunes in two columns. One box had a 6" (15cm) cylinder playing six airs, latest 1880, serial 11569; the other a 9" (23cm) cylinder, eight airs, latest 1883, serial 16706. They could not be by Rivenc, whose serial numbers started after 19,000. Also, both have their first tune on the cylinder dots, indicating a St. Croix maker. Who was it? At least, the higher serial number had the latest tune.
- 2) Edouard Jaccard serial 8420. I think this is the very first reporting of a box by this maker in England. And at that it was a close-run thing, because the bottom half of the tune sheet was missing except for the right corner which contains the EJ monogram mentioned above. Only three of the eight tunes survived on this sad "part tune sheet" the latest being *Don Cesar* by Dellinger, 1885. So this gives a dating clue. The box has a 7" (18cm) cylinder and a comb of 50 teeth of which nine at the bass end work the six drum and three bell strikers. The drum is mounted horizontally - as when hidden - but is visible at bedplate level in the usual drum position. The tuned bells are always in play but the drum can be silenced. Tune one is on the cylinder dots.
- 3) L'Epée serial 80604. My chart dates this at 1909, and it plays a popular hit from 1909. *I do like to be beside the seaside...* creditably performed considering its modest 3½" (9cm) cylinder and 32 teeth. But the interesting thing about this late L'Epée box is that it must have been one of a batch of at least fifteen identical movements. The serial number on its tune sheet is 80590, and the six tunes correctly match its movement stamped 80604. So it seems that, if there were fifteen in the batch, the last one got the first tune sheet. I expect the pile was simply started from the wrong end, - easy enough. I wonder where the other fourteen got to. ■

...Jaccard
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So how about
the other
22,474??

The Music Box & Windows 98

Part 2 - Creating an inventory by David Snelling

Organizing your data - By now you will have created sound, image and text files in respect of all your music boxes and these data can easily be pulled together using the following folder and file hierarchy on the hard drive of your choice -

The hard drive chosen by you eg. F, A folder entitled My Cyl. Music Boxes.

- A folder for each music box (using a long file name) within the above folder.
- Text and sound files for each music box within each music box folder.
- A subfolder entitled Images within each music box folder.
- Image files within the Images folder.

One of the useful features of Windows 98 is that it supports the use of long folder and file names. You can therefore include detailed

identification data in the folder name for each of your music boxes. Folder and file names are fully flexible up to 255 characters with the exception of a limited number of prohibited keyboard characters which will produce a warning prompt from that nice Mr.Gates if you try to use them. This procedure enables you automatically to create an inventory list which can be printed out at any time using a screen image capture program such as HyperSnap DX which I will explain in more detail below.

There are two key bits of data which are desirable or you need to include in the folders or files for each of your music boxes. They are:-

1. MBC or something similar to identify it readily as a cylinder music box folder.
2. The unique serial number of the box .You will probably not have two boxes with the

same serial number so there should be no risk of confusion.

You can then subsequently use these data to search for and list information concerning either all of your music boxes or any of them using the Find Files or Folders application in your Start Menu.

Fig.3 (in the last issue of Music Box) shows a screen print of a folder labelled My Cyl.Boxes Demo which I have created to store a demonstration list of music box folders. Note the detailed information contained in the long folder names.

Your underlying text and sound files will, in turn, need to be placed in the folders you will have created for each of your music boxes along the lines of those in Fig.3. It is best to create another subfolder in each music box folder to contain all the images of that music box. If you have put them

...will produce a warning prompt from that nice Mr.Gates if you try to use them.

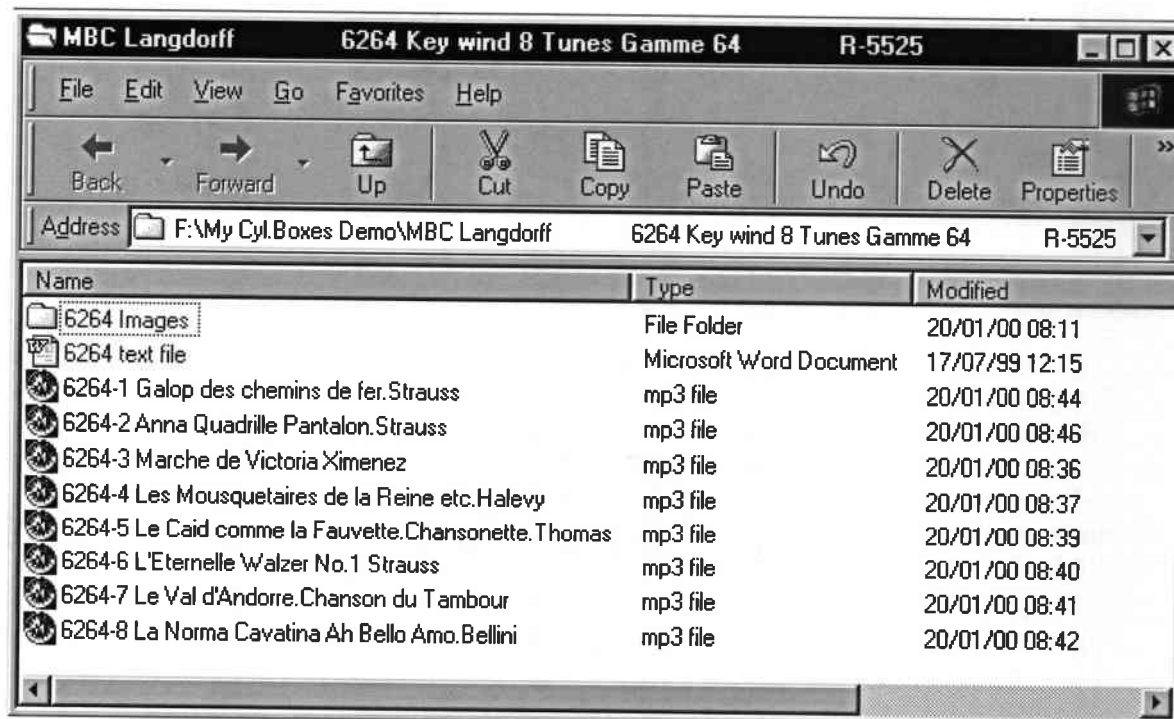


Fig.5.



elsewhere in your computer in the first instance simply Drag and Drop them into the relevant folder. You can, of course, save your images straight into the subfolder you have created for the music box concerned but you will probably have to transfer your sound recordings into their MBC folder (using Drag and Drop) from the MMJB 4 Music file which is located (in my case) under C:\ProgramFiles\MusicMatch\Music\DH Snelling's Greatest Hits (sic !). See Fig.1 in part 1 of this article.

The reason for putting the images of each music box in a subfolder is that it is then possible when that folder is opened to show all the images alongside each other as "thumbnails" (See Fig.6)

You can see whatever files or folders are located within any of your MBC folders when you have finished inserting your files by clicking on its icon in the My Cyl.Boxes window. By way of example Fig.5 shows the text and sound files and the images subfolder contained in the folder My Cyl.Boxes Demo\MBC Langdorff 6264 etc. (Fig.5 replaces Fig.4 in the last issue of The Music Box).

If at any time details of your music box folders or files are displayed in a window it is possible to change or edit their folder or file names by clicking on the relevant icon with the right mouse button which will reveal a Drop Down menu giving a Rename option on which to click. This facility enables one,inter alia,to align vertically the data in a folder or file name with the equivalent data in the names of all the other folders or files so as to create a neat list.

By juggling with the items in the View drop down menu of a window showing your music box folders or files you can also vary the manner in which the data are shown or arranged in a number of different ways which are well worth exploring. If the file name in a list appears to peter out move the appropriate divider at the top of the window over to the right in order to reveal the rest of the name.

Searching for folders and files

The Find Folders and Files application in the Start menu is an extremely useful tool which can be used to conduct a search for almost any folder or file name (even if only part of it is entered) or files containing any specific words or text. You can, therefore, search and list all files and/or folders relating to a specific music box by simply entering its serial number in the search window. Or you can, for example, search for all MBC folders. The window showing the results of a search in the Details view also shows additional information such as the sizes of individual files, their file path and the dates on which they were last modified. Except for the file path this information also appears in any window which you might open for the contents of any folder e.g. an MBC folder for one of your music boxes. See Fig.5 for an example.

Other possibilities are searches (1) to locate all tunes by a particular composer eg. Strauss or (2) to locate every sound file of a given tune eg.The Last Rose of summer. For this last type of search it is wise to restrict the subject matter to the barest minimum such as the word "rose" as the spelling of tune titles varies ;in this case it would also search for "Les Roses" which might otherwise not be found. To speed up a search restrict it to the hard drive which includes your music box folders and files or to your My Cyl. Boxes folder.

Storing and using your data

It is likely that the data for each of your music boxes will come to more than 1.44 MB (floppy disc size) but that it will be less than 2 Mb .Unless you have more than 50 music boxes -lucky you - I recommend that you also store copies of all your music box folders and files on an external medium such as a 100MB Iomega Zip Disc by using the Send To facility in Windows 98.You only have to send the folder at the top of the chain as this will include all sub folders or files. Having done

that just check that the transfer worked by exploring your Iomega Zip disc using Windows Explorer. It is desirable to keep the back up disc or a copy of it at another location in case of disaster.

By using a screen capture program such as HyperSnap DX you can capture the region of the window listing the folder names in your My Cyl.Boxes folder (Fig.3) without the surrounding clutter and print it out as a full music boxes inventory. The print will be of an image and not a text print but it will serve its purpose admirably. If you so wish the print can then be annotated by hand with the estimated values of your music boxes for insurance purposes and a copy sent to your insurers.

The procedure set out in this article can, of course, be extended to create inventories of your disc music boxes, player pianos , organettes etc. and any other collectibles or contents of your house.

All your music box data (including images and MP3 sound files) can, in theory, be sent anywhere in the world by e mail in the form of file attachments but some internet service providers (ISPs) are better at this than others. It is best to limit the size of files as very large files may be rejected or compressed by your ISP or the recipient ISP. The rules are often far from clear! However JPEG image files and MP3 sound files are already compressed formats of about the lowest file size achievable at the present state of the art.

If anyone would like to test send or receive music box data please e-mail me at - d.snelling@virgin.net

Some technical observations

When I commenced to write this article MusicMatchJukeBox was (Version 4.1). However it has now developed into version 4.4 and there may well be a new version by the time this article is published .Along the way MMJB dropped the option of being able to create RealAudio (RA) files but 24Kbps MP3 files are almost of the same fidelity.

The procedure set out in this article can, of course, be extended to create inventories of your disc music boxes, player pianos , organettes etc. and any other collectibles or contents of your house.

If you don't wish to create MP3 files by downloading MMJB or a similar program from the web you should still be able to play any MP3 files which might be emailed to you by using Windows Media Player, Real Player GII or WinAmp all of which are readily downloadable and/or upgradeable from the web at no cost. You can find them with the search engine(s) provided by your ISP(s).

Conclusion

I have tried in this article to set out a simple but easy to use data recording method which uses the operating system which comes free with your computer without

the need to incur any significant cost or to acquire or master a dedicated data program. Using this method can also provide useful experience in folder and file handling particularly for those of our members who are new computer owners and/or internet users or are considering putting their toes in the waters for the first time. There are doubtless many other methods which would serve the same purpose and I only hope that my method will not seem to be amateurish to the computer experts amongst you. Any feedback via e-mail or our editor would be gratefully received.

WEB SITE ADDRESS

HyperSnap DX

<http://www.hyperionics.com/FreeLic/HyperSnap.htm>

The download from the above site is free in the first instance but subject to a modest charge for an upgrade to the full registered version. ■

Tip

In order to avoid net congestion do your downloading between 5am and 6am on a weekday when the United States east coast use of the web is at a minimum and cheap telephone call rates apply.



Fig.6. Langdorff folder showing thumbnails alongside each other.

Projects & Wants

First of all, a big thank you to Hendrick Strengers of the Netherlands who has very kindly sent me some of the missing magazines as requested in the last issue. I am particularly grateful for six copies of the German GFFSM Society magazine. I have not heard from anyone else, so perhaps you might like to re-read my request in the last issue of 'The Music Box'.

Robert Hough would like the tracker bar scale for any Welte or Imhof Orchestrions to help with a project he is working on. There are only the large Residence organ scales in the 'Treasury of Mechanical Music' book by Q.D. Bowers, so please let him know via the Correspondence Secretary if you can help.

John Harold is trying to do some research into Greisbaum, the company who made whistling figures and singing birds. He would particularly like to know the dates of production. We have nothing in the Archives to help, so please write c/o the Correspondence Secretary if you can help on this one.

Only two people have mentioned that they would like some new Piano Melodica music of 30 note size. I hope to announce in

the next issue that around 50 titles of the smaller 30 note music is available in France. The 48 and 73 note music will be produced by Franco Severi, hopefully, later this year as well. Watch this space!!

Roll lists on computer?

I wonder if there are any readers out there with details of their collections of rolls on computer??

I have spent the past 10 years compiling full tune catalogues for various types of instrument in order that incomplete labels may be completed, tunes may be identified and the best tunes found for possible re-issue or re-cut projects etc.

I have completed Aeolian 58, 116, 176 note organ, Aeolian Hammond Organ, Artona 88 note Piano Rolls, Grand Roller organ cobs, I still need help - number, title & composer on the following:-

- Pianostyle 88 note
- Cecelian 65 note Piano - 13" wide.
- Schiedmayer Scheola - German Reed organ rolls
- Aeolian 46 note Organ
- Wilcox & White 58 note organ /pushup (Angelus/Symphony) only 2,000 + on list out of 5,000 total
- Ariston 19 + 24 + 36 note

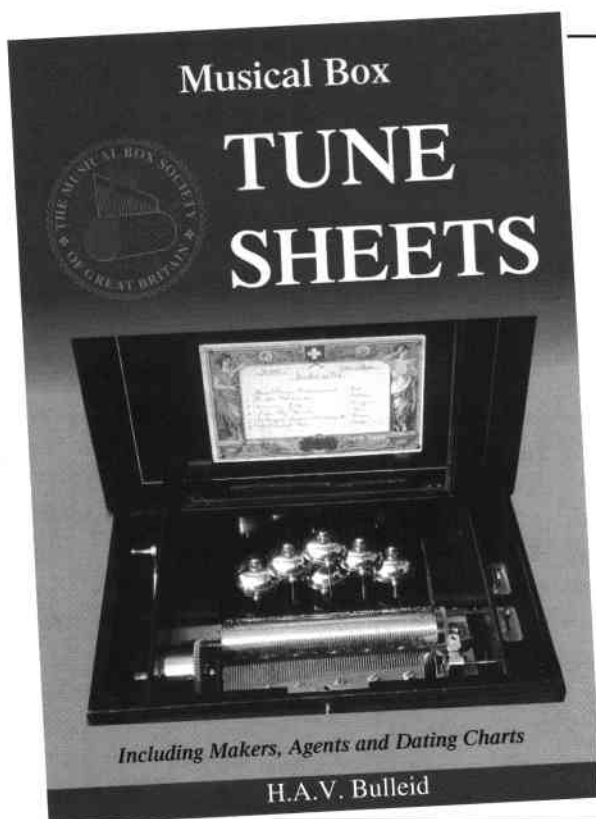
organette discs - 2,500 on list out of 4,500 + made Intona, Ariosa, Phoenix Organettes of 16, 18, 24, 38, 40 note

- Amorette 16, 18, 24, 36 note discs
- Clariophon 24 note zinc bands Kalliston - all sizes
- Gem Roller Organ - only need 568-575, 761-999, 1231, 1260, 1262, 1265, 1274, 1276
- Helikon 16 note
- Herophon 24 note
- Stella 17"
- Polyphon 11", 15½", 19½" + 24½" - if NOT in Graham Webb's Book.
- Regina 15½" Triola Zither.

This is a huge task, but the fact that some of the lists have been successfully completed shows that IT CAN BE DONE!

If you can help with any titles please send me a list in by post or E-mail format (or failing that Lotus or Microsoft formats) or if in some other format please tell me so I can try to convert to a readable form.

I hope to be able to publish future lists as soon as they are completed, although those completed in the distant past were on EIGHT inch diskettes so I cannot convert them onto P.C. format. ■ **Kevin McElhone**



MBSGB Millennium Project Tune Sheet Book

"Tune sheets are the only documents spanning the long lives of musical boxes. They are, so to speak, birth certificates . ." So writes Anthony Bulleid in his introduction to this fascinating book. Produced by the dedicated efforts of Anthony together with Registrar Arthur Cunliffe and other members of the Society, it brings together over 200 tune sheets, some in full colour, together with detailed descriptions and dating charts. A must for every cylinder box collector.

A5 size - over 200 pages.

Sales of this new publication have been most encouraging and only a small number of hardback editions remain! - No problems with the soft cover edition.

Soft cover edition - £12.00

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Rest of world £4.00.

(These are concessionary rates available for a limited period only)

For an order form or more details phone Richard Kerridge on 0118 958 1956

Collectors Showcase

A Very Fine Gold, Enamel and Seed Pearl Singing Bird Box by Jaquet Droz, circa 1790. by Kenneth M. Goldman

I have been collecting musical and automated "Objects of Vertu" for over 15 years now. One piece that I was fortunate to acquire recently is by the first maker of singing bird boxes - Jaquet Droz of Switzerland.

The box is of oval form, having blue guilloché enamel on the front, sides and base. The cover has a seed pearl rim and bezel while the sides are decorated with stylised gold urns. These are typical of the workmanship of Reymond who made many snuff boxes during this era. The lid has a painted enamel scene of two young lovers.

The box operates by a slide in the front which raises the bird. Then bird then sings a long and complex tune while rotating on its axis, flapping its

wings, opening and closing its beak, and moving its tail. The mechanism has a chain fusee movement and is signed Jaquet Droz. Overall, the piece is 90mm wide.

As far as is known, Jaquet Droz was the first maker of the singing bird boxes that we know today. The firm produced large numbers of these snuff boxes with singing birds. They had very clever workmen including J.F. Leschot who later became a partner as well as Jacob Frisard who was originally a specialist in goldsmiths work.

The earlier pieces, such as the Jaquet Droz boxes, were the playthings of the very rich and elite of the time. These wonderful objects of gold, enamel, pearls and, in some cases, diamonds, were extremely expensive at the time of manufacture. The bird song is extremely complex and the trills and tremolos are a wonderful imitation of the birds in the Jura forests of Switzerland.

I would be happy to hear from other collectors of these fascinating objects. I can be reached at P.O. Box 404, Needham, Massachusetts 02494, USA. ■



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At the start of this new year, much was made of the new millennium and the start of the 21st century. If nothing else has happened, in the mechanical music world at least the numbers of Nicole's has kept pace with the years and now number over 2,000. The figures for the Register as a whole has struggled on to reach the 6,000 mark.

In the last issue of the journal, I asked for help in finding reference works for the dating of tunes. My thanks to those members who telephoned and wrote to me with lists of suitable books. As a result, I have been able to borrow books from my local library and check on tunes and their composers.

There seems to be varying information between books. Often the date given for a tune varies by one or two years. Frequently in those books published in America for the American readership, the date given is the date when that melody was first performed there. Often European tunes in origin were actually composed a year or two earlier. However, when checking American composers and tunes, their books are clear on dating their original tunes where European books sometimes give a later date.

Yet another difficulty is that often a number of composers wrote works on the same subject. Even in unlikely themes such as "The Death of Nelson", there seem to have been at least two versions. One was written by C. Dibdin in 1807 and another composed by J. Broham in 1811. The difficulty is knowing which one is which. I have listened to both tunes. One was pinned on an early keywind box and the other on a late L'Epee and they were certainly very different to the ear. Perhaps one day a tune card will turn up with the composers name on it and another question will be answered.

Marenco gave his melody the name Excelsior in 1881 and circa 1885, Balfe used the same name for his composition. These are not the only examples of repetition of titles. Please note composers names whenever possible when

sending in information for inclusion in the Register and be aware that the name given may not be the name of the first person to write a tune of that name. Indeed, it may just be that of an arranger. An obvious example of an arranger is sometimes seen on tune cards when "Cheer Boys Cheer H. Russell" is listed later on in a series as "Russell's Cheer Boys Cheer. by Andrews." If fact all tunes have to be arranged in order to be pinned on a cylinder, so arrangements can go on for two or three generations.

Older members of the society may remember the great conductor Sir Thomas Beecham. He is remembered mainly for changing the English symphony orchestra in the early part of the last century and for raising the standard of classical music in this country. He is also remembered to this day for his biting tongue and impish humour. In spite of his ways, he was highly regarded by members of an orchestra and they would nearly always play better for him than any other conductor.

Beecham grew up in a Victorian home that must have had many musical boxes housed in it for he wrote in one of his books,

"My father nourished a passion for musical boxes of every description, and the house almost overflowed with them. The visitor who hung up his hat on a certain peg of the hall rack, or who absent-mindedly abstracted the wrong umbrella from the stand, would be startled at having provoked into life the cheerful strains of William Tell or Fra Diavolo. Others were serious and solid affairs, elaborate of build, full of strange devices. How I loved them then, and how I lament their absence now."

The overture to William Tell is found on many overture boxes. I have little doubt Tommy Beecham would have heard it many times and reflected on the joke he took over from the late Rob Wilton,

"Now I am going to play the overture from William T'Hell."

Beecham was noted for his own definitions of musical

instruments. Organists among us may smile at his description of an organ as, "A mechanical box of whistles." He once referred to a trombone as, "a sluice pump."

Returning to the present day, I wonder how the influence of the internet and e-mails will change our hobby and indeed our society. I had a look at some musical boxes that were being offered for sale on the internet and was amazed at the way a series of pictures could be presented. Descriptions of the boxes were there but I am afraid not necessarily accurate.

I do not know what the legal position is when buying on the internet. What happens if the 4 overture box advertised as being made by Bremond turns out to be an ordinary 4 air box made by another maker with just one of the airs being the theme from an overture? If it has come from another part of the world can a buyer send it back as not being as stated or not up to quality?

I hope we have some members who can write about such matters in the journal before any of us get into deep water. One advantage of going to an auction room and inspecting what is on offer, is that any mistake is entirely of your own making. Remember the old maxim, "Let the buyer beware."

The other day I received a small package through the post which contained a very unusual tape recording. The tape was the story of the hymn Onward Christian Soldiers and how it had been presented on various mechanical musical instruments. Spaced between the musical excerpts was a narrative telling the story of the hymn and its development over the ages. I had not realised that at least five different tunes had been used for the hymn with Sir Arthur Sullivan's tune emerging as the most popular. I am very grateful to have had the chance to listen to the tape. John and Joyce Turner must be congratulated for producing such a fine account of the work of the Reverend Sabine Baring Gould. ■

Arthur Cunliffe

"How I loved them then, and how I lament their absence now."

Luigi Vincenzo Tomasso

The short article by John Turner was very interesting and the old photographs an absolute treasure. Are there any more? The stories of people such as the Tomassos are so important because they put the commercial and musical talents of these people into a social context. Recently, we have been rewarded by the stories about others involved in mechanical pianos, as opposed to the pneumatic kind about which so much has already been published, such as Racca by Franco Severi, Canon Wintle, by Dr. Peter Whitehead, and no doubt there have been others in the past about, for example, Hicks. Whilst the total amount of knowledge about each of them is small is there enough to collate this into a larger tome for publication? **Paul Bellamy**

Anomaly

Can anyone help with an anomaly I have come across regarding discs for BHA's 17¼" Imperial upright?

In the article from Vol.7, page 91, concerning Barnett Samuel, the 17¼" automatic Imperials are advertised with two separate 17¼" discs. One plays on 110 teeth (steel tongues) and one on 140 teeth. Extra discs for one at 2/-, the other 4/-.

If the wrong disc was played on the wrong comb then the ensuing arrangement would surely sound wrong too! Could this also apply to BHA's other styles and sizes I wonder?

Comments would be most welcome. **Alec Reid**

New member

I am a new member, so you must forgive me if I am going over 'old ground' but, like all enthusiasts, I want to get the best from my items.

Having recently added an Aeolian Orchestrelle to my collection, I wonder if there is anybody who has a Users Manual/Players Instruction Booklet for these machines. I would be keen to buy one, or to receive a photocopy of anything that exists.

'Play it in ten minutes, master it in a month' says the publicity, so I assume there would have been a practise roll too. Any interesting rolls for sale?

There is obviously a technique to playing the Orchestrelle, and I am picking this up, albeit slowly, but any help would be appreciated. Many thanks in advance.

John Tibbles

Chateau Fontguitard, Cambounet Sur Le Sor, 81580, Sud Tarn, Southern France. Tel/Fax/ Answering machine 00+ Country Code 33 + 5 63 71 74 08.

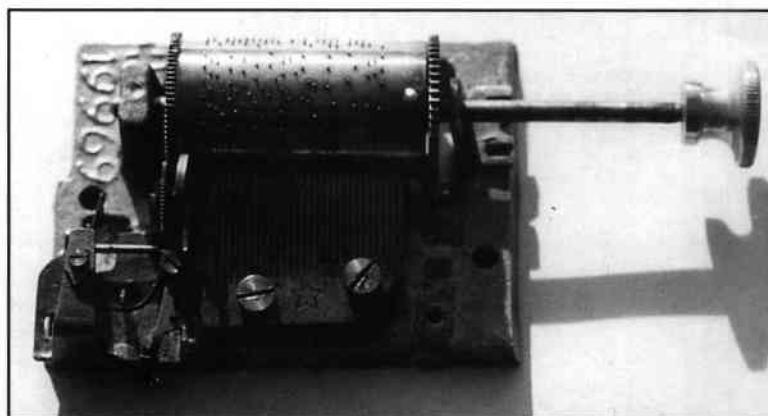
Recently bought

I recently bought a small 30 note miniature musical box which was in a bad state of repair. The drive mechanism seemed very unusual for such a small movement in that the cylinder carried the main drive spring internally at its left end. The main spring and ratchet mechanism were missing. The winder is an

extension of the spring's arbour which passes through the right-hand side of the box terminating in a knurled brass knob. The owner tried to convince me it was a manivelle! The spring was easy to replace but I have no idea about the missing ratchet. It would be easy to make a ratchet but I prefer to copy an original. Can anybody please help by means of a photo/sketch/dimensions. The base plate shows the outline of the missing bit which seems to have been attached with a single screw and no dowel. The comb is stamped with a star (Stella?).

Paul Bellamy

If you can help with information on this, you can contact Paul on 01634 252079 (tel/fax) - Editor. ■

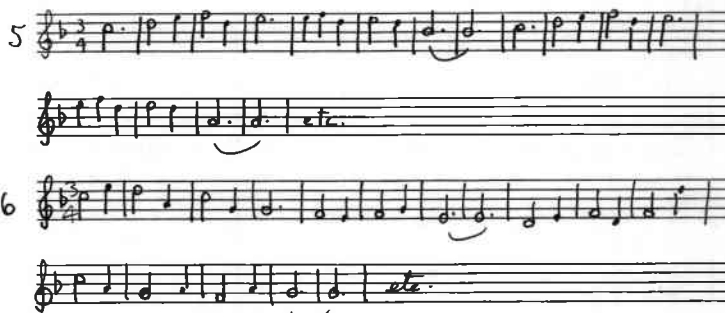


The owner tried to convince me it was a manivelle!

Name that Tune

I have been corresponding with Robin Timms over several matters one of which is trying to obtain a tune pinned on a box that is minus the card. I have been trying to get a full house for some considerable time. Robin informs me that he does not know two of the tunes but has notated them for me. In his own words, "I have written out the opening musical phrases of each - why not put them in the Journal and see if anyone recognises them - especially if they happen to have a similar box".

If you can find a few inches to print this request I know you will make at least two people happy. **John Turner**



What a good idea! Can any member solve the mystery? Write to me with your ideas. Editor.

classified advertisements

CLASSIFIED SALES

Very rare and fine Gavioli hand turned pipe barrel organ. Beautiful appearance. 41 key. 6 registers. Barrel pinned by Wright & Holmes in 1930. Contains approximately 114 pipes including rank of Clarinet reed pipes. Bob Price 01202 485720.

Rare Waddington upright piano with Welte licensee reproducing player action. Electric only. Light mahogany case. Only £1500, to include delivery and rolls. Brian Chesters 01253 508232.

Vintage Technology Fair - March 26th and September 10th, 2000, at The De Vere Hotel, Blackpool (next to the Zoo), selling phonographs, old radios, mechanical music. For details phone 01253 508 232.

19½" Polyphon discs. £7 each or £350 for 65. Roy Ison, tel: 01522 540406; fax: 01522 520782; e-mail: ison@bight.demon.co.uk

Rolmonica Roll Boxes Good quality colour reproductions. Supplied flat, you cut out, fold and glue. £1 or \$1.50 each inc. postage. Minimum order 3 boxes. *David Snelling, The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Santon, Isle of Man IM4 1EZ, British Isles.*

Discs - 7" Kalliope centre drive. 7" Lochman, 8½" centre drive Britannia, 14" Kalliope, 14½" Symphonion & 6½" Piccolo. *Ted Brown 01403 823533.*

A video of some of my instruments is available - approximately 1 hour. £10 plus 90p P&P UK. *Ted Brown 01403 823533.*

Reproduction ROLMONICA roll boxes. Supplied flat. You cut out, fold and glue. £1 (USA \$1.50) each including postage. *David Snelling, The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Santon, Isle of Man IM4 1EZ, British Isles (UK).*

A chamber barrel organ by William Van Kamp c.1760, contained in a rococo style mahogany case with false gilt organ pipes. It has a 16 note key frame, 4 stops and 4 barrels each pinned for 11 tunes. The original tune list and makers label are fitted in the lid. Height 48 ins, width 23 ins, depth 19 ins. Roy Ison, tel. 01522 540406; fax. 01522 520782; e-mail ison@bight.demon.co.uk

A chamber barrel organ by Clementi & Co., Cheapside, London, with divided key frame. Each half respectively controlled by flageolet and organ stops. It has 31 keys, 10 stops, flageolet, tabor, drum, diapason, principal, twelfth, flute, damper, triangle and organ. There are 3 barrels and original tune sheets all contained in a mahogany gothic case with sliding front panel and simulated organ pipes. Height 79", width 33", depth 19". Roy Ison (see above)

CLASSIFIED WANTS

Complete movement for 13½" table model Symphonion case, also an Ariston pressure bar (either style). Edward Baylis 01291 690060 or e-mail pianola@ebaylis.freemove.co.uk

Scrap Amorette organette, for reeds & worm gear. Thomspson 01526 832679.

Small hand cranked **German toy tin organs** playing 3/4 chords. Any condition considered. Roy Ison, tel: 01522 540406; fax: 01522 520782; e-mail: ison@bight.demon.co.uk

A few Symphonion 17½" Centre Drive Discs, preferably with a near to full complement of projections, to add to my limited repertoire. Alan Clark, tel: 01059 515178.1

Any old catalogues and musical box or organette ephemera. *Ted Brown 01403 823533.*

Old auction catalogues, tune lists, etc. Contact Archivist, Kevin McElhone - address in Society Officers list.

A complete governor assembly (with reciprocator). To drive a 13 inch cylinder organ playing musical box. Alternatively, has anyone a similar musical box from which we could possibly take a pattern? The musical box has a 17 note external pallet type organ. The organ is operated via bridges at the centre of cylinder. There are three pairs of bells, played by animated oriental figures. The combs are marked within a small diamond shape, GI, GJ, CI or CJ, Geneva. Can anyone please help with the makers identification? Edward Baylis 01291 690060 or e-mail pianola@ebaylis.freemove.co.uk

Wanted

Barrel Pianos/Organs

Working or not, parts and carts.

Please telephone:

Alan Wyatt on (01223) 860332

WANTS (CONT'D)

Wanted

Disc Box 11½" 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.

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Closing date for the next issue is 5th April 2000

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

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

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)

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

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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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