

THE MUSIC BOX

JOURNAL OF
the MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY
OF GREAT BRITAIN

No 2 Easter 1963

editorial

The production of the first issue of THE MUSIC BOX was uphill work and I wondered if those promised articles would in fact materialise! However, the response from Members has been most encouraging and some fine material has already come in. I still need plenty more and urge you to put pen to paper and let me hear from you. To those who have already obliged, live up to your new reputation as an author and

write some more for the Journal!

THE AUTOGLOCKENPOLYPHON

'A stately machine, all mahogany and curlicues, standing against the wall of the bar It looked something like an immense grandfather clock, twice as wide as it should be and carrying behind its Roman arched front between the Stephensonian Order columns, a gleaming steel disc, perforated like a colander. At intervals a customer would stagger up to the machine and uncertainly push a penny into the large ornate slot - then...' With these words, Member Bruce Angrave opened an interesting half-hour broadcast on the B.B.C. Third Programme on Saturday, February 16th. This was the second hearing of the talk, illustrated with discs from his Model 104 19⁵/₈", Roberts 22" and Model 1 24¹/₂" Polyphons, Mr. Angrave first gave last Summer. The fine tone of these superb examples in Mr. Angrave's collection came over very well.

EMBLEM

It has been suggested that the Society ought to have an emblem, badge, crest or coat of dampers, so to speak, and Members are therefore invited to forward any suggestions which they may have to the Secretary. Once a design is finalised, it may be possible, if demand is sufficient, to produce a tie, car badge or brooch for sale to members. The suggestion that it should take the form of a toothless comb surmounted by a cylinder without pins has been nipped in the resonators.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

A small boy was once seen methodically searching a leaf-strewn roadside. A passer-by, perturbed to see one so young apparently so earnestly engrossed in seeking something precious which had strayed, asked the young chap what he was looking for. The lad held up a car windscreen wiper blade and answered 'The rest of the car'. Vice-President Gerry Planus has a fine Symphonion clock - with only three legs and is scouring the country for a front offside Symphonion clock leg in serviceable condition. Any offers?

PRESERVED PAST PCP PIECES PERMANENTLY PINNED FOR POSTERITY

An appreciable amount of the popular music of past eras failed to survive the test of time and has been lost forever. However, a number of the musical boxes made played tunes from the music halls and have to a large extent been responsible for perpetuating melody and words. One such tune, long since forgotten, has just been rediscovered by the Rev. Canon Streatfield of Wells. The rediscovery of this tune is told by Canon Streatfield in this issue. One wonders how many similar tunes, popular in their day, lie unidentified in the mechanisms of musical boxes throughout the country.

However, melodies thus preserved - even ones popular today - are not always immediately recognisable! Some fearful abridgments and set ups emanated from such houses as Stella, Polyphon, Symphonion, Britannia and, yes, even Nicole Freres! Only recently, I came across a Symphonion disc (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ ", No. 3353) of the Hallelujah Chorus which was even worse than the Lost Chord on a small Symphonion! Mr. Green showed me a nice early Nicole box a few weeks ago (No. 27194) which played, among other things, that sweet alto aria "He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd" from the Messiah. A fine set-up - but in galop time! The opposite occurs with an Autophone barrel organ which I own. Here we have 'Flyaway Galop' in rip-roaring, toe-tapping time, ending with two superb, Bach-like sonorous chords. Logically, if a customer bought an Autophone cylinder, he expected his monies' worth and so an obvious gap at the end of the tune had to be filled - anyhow!

In this issue we have gone somewhat rash to provide several more pages at somewhat short notice. The unusual page numbering which has resulted is a modern idea imported from Upper Silesia where the high incidence of deaths through high blood-pressure has been attributed to the adoption of this practice.....

POLYPHON PASSIFIES PASSENGERS AT PORTSMOUTH

The Isle of Wight is a secluded community which dearly cherishes that five mile strip of water 'twixt the world of hustle and bustle and the horse and cart. I know - I live there. Back in the deep freeze of January, ice floes in the creeks prevented the usual sporadic car ferry from running and thus it was with some trepidation that I arrived at Portsmouth Harbour passenger station one Saturday afternoon in a hired car into which I had forced a superb 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " vertical Polyphon. The thought of entrusting my newest prize to the tender mercies of Dr. Beechings' Brigade did not appeal to me one little bit but there was no other way to get it home - short of laying it on its back in the water, climbing in and rowing it across the channel.

A porter agreed to come out to the car and help me on to the boat with the Poly. He took one look at it as it lay in the back of the car, the beautiful brass lyre on its front shining wanly in the traditionally dim lights of the station yard. His face slowly broke into a wrinkled grin, his cap came off and he gently - almost reverently put out a dusky hand to touch the curvaceous columns. He was, believe it or not, near to tears. He looked up at me and proclaimed that here was something which took him back to his early days. The upshoot was that we had it out, standing on carefully prepared sacking covered with a clean copy of the DAILY MIRROR in the middle of the platform. My porter, his eyes visibly redenned, fumbled almost automatically in his pocket, produced a penny and slowly, lingeringly, he pushed it into the slot. The train from Brighton had just come in and a small Cup Final crowd was surging up the platform towards us as the mellow tones of 'Monastery Bells' emanated from my Polyphon. It seemed so incongruous, yet there it was! Station staff silently gathered around, travellers, hitherto purposefully striding about their business, paused and listened. All was quiet as 78 broad steel tongues consolingly, unconcernedly and peaceably played on. At the end of the tune, someone produced another penny. The onlookers stood firm, patiently waiting for a repeat performance. It was quite uncanny! My prize was finally gently lifted and placed carefully on the boat for me - as hand luggage at no extra charge!

— The Editor —

1st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The first Annual General Meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain was held at the Clifton-Ford Hotel, London, W.1 on Saturday, March 30th. The Clifton-Ford Hotel, an oasis surrounded by parking meters, proved an otherwise ideal location for the business

meeting and subsequent afternoon of musical box desiderata.

The business meeting opened at 11.30, Mr. G. Planus (Vice-President) taking the chair in place of Mr. Clark who was unable to attend. Mr. de Vere Green (Secretary) announced that we had 51 members - over half of our target for the first year.

Mr. Greenacre (Treasurer) briefly outlined the financial position, stating that, after payment of sundry expenses including the first issue of the Journal, the sum of £95 odd remained at the bank.

Mr. Ord-Hume (Editor) commented on the Journal, saying that it was proposed to add to the number of pages as membership grew. Since the Journal was often the sole link between Members, a large proportion of Society funds would go towards the production of the magazine.

Minor revisions to the Society Constitution were then discussed and accepted. Details of these will be circulated to Members with the next mailing from the Secretary.

In accordance with the revision to Article 4 Section 1 of the Constitution, two Members were to be elected to serve on the Committee. Mr. Arthur Coombs and Mr. Bruce Angrave were subsequently elected.

The meeting being completed, Mr. Ridsdill of York was to lecture on the History of Music Boxes but he was delayed in arriving. Mr. Burnett of Birkenhead ably stepped in to provide an extremely interesting talk on musical seals and snuff boxes in his collection, some dozen or so of these intriguing little devices being shown.

After lunch, Members and their guests gathered in the Exhibition Room where several Members displayed items from their collections. Mr. Greenacre showed among other machines a 12" Monopol which featured an unusual but neat and effective zither attachment on its twin combs.

Mr. G. Planus demonstrated the slotting of comb teeth for new points using a specially-made abrasive disc rotated at high speed by a motor.

Mr. A. Ord-Hume illustrated the hand-polishing of cylinders using a soft wire brush and metal polish.

Mr. de Vere Green displayed his device for making damper wires to the correct length by use of a lipped brass plate as a cutting gauge.

Mr. Ridsdill arrived to give a most interesting show of colour slides of early machines and Mr. Lawrence showed some fine small boxes and also mechanical singing birds.

The meeting concluded with a Founder Members cocktail party at the home of Mr. de Vere Green who allowed members to see - and play - many items from his collection.

Meetings are to be held bi-annually, the next being in the Autumn.

Recently, the Bornand Music Box Co. undertook the re-pinning of what we believe to be the largest cylinder of a music box to have been re-pinned in the United States. It was 19" long and 5" diameter. Roughly 48,000 pins were used and it took over 50 hours of labour, skilled in this art, to complete insertion of the new pins alone. The damage to the cylinder, as so often happens, was caused by inexperienced handling of the governor and four of the tunes were completely ruined. Fortunately, the comb was not seriously hurt.

We felt that the quality of the mechanism and beautiful case warranted this tremendous work. It is a Nicole Frere piece with 32 selections of music, tunes listed on silver programme plate attached to the lid. The case is rosewood trimmed with brass, silver, pearls and enamels.

As cylinder pins are so often the main point of inquiry, the following is a brief explanation of the work involved.

First the cement is removed from inside the cylinder, then all remaining old pins removed by placing the cylinder in a bath of special acid (see Page 14a) which melts them out without harming the cylinder itself. Next the cylinder is carefully cleaned inside and out and all new pins are inserted in the original holes - the notes of the music as originally pinned.

The cylinder is then re-cemented and the new pins ground down to their proper height, measurements having been carefully taken before removal of the old ones. The cylinder is then cleaned and polished ready to be re-set in the mechanism after all other of the music box parts have been checked, necessary repairs completed and the comb re-dampened. Thus a fine music box that would otherwise be scrapped because of a spoiled cylinder, is again restored to its original condition.

We are fortunate to be able to obtain the special pins for this work which have been made by the Bornand family in Switzerland for generations. They are still being made for us on the original pin lathe. These pins are called 'goupilles' or needles in Switzerland and many millions of them have been turned out by this time.

I will add here, in answer to the frequent enquiry of 'why not just replace the missing pins on a cylinder' that this method has never been used by the Bornand family. Whilst it is true that a few pins might be successfully replaced in a cylinder, we feel that if part of the music has been spoiled, and the rest of the mechanism is worthwhile, then the cylinder is worth the complete repinning to restore the music box to its original condition.

It was a lovely day. Spring had arrived at last and even the birds under the glass dome of my automata were singing their heads off especially the patriotic one that I'd re-feathered in Red, White and Blue. Looking out of the window of my workshop on to the beautiful vista of factory walls and piles of broken sewing machine treadles where dandelions fought the piles of cast iron for a glimpse of the sun, a thought came to me - why it should do so I just don't know for thoughts are few and far between as far as I'm concerned - but it came just like that, out of the blue, a very thoughtful thought indeed and it was this. 'What's the point of being your own Guvner if you can't take the day off when you feel like it!' Now wasn't that a beautiful thought! I thought it was anyway, so I shoved it back into my head and let it tumble around a bit more and this time it came out different. It came out this way 'You can't take it with you, Mate, so why worry!!' What a lovely bit of Negative Thinking that was so, for the sheer joy of it, I once more shoved the thought back into my head and let it tumble around a bit more. This was fun! This time, I let it tumble around for a full minute before I let it come out - and it was a beaut! It was concise - in fact you couldn't get it any conciser. I rolled the words around my tongue to get the taste and flavour of them. There were only two of them, but what a flavour they had! No matter which came first they made sense so I let them come out very very slowly. "Who cares!" Once they were out I repeated them out loud 'Who cares!' Yes, who did care, why nobody, and that did it. If nobody cared then I was off for the day and they knew what they could do about it! In five minutes flat, my overalls were off, the shop was locked and I was in the car and, as every Londoner does, I headed for the country. After a couple of hours driving, the houses started to thin out and here and there bits of green fields shyly let themselves be seen - just a glimpse, then they hid themselves behind the houses again until at last one immodest young field let herself be seen in full. This was it! This was the start of the country and gradually other young fields let themselves be seen, singly at first, then two joined together, then three and all of a sudden there was a group of them showing themselves in all their glory. They decorated themselves with hedgerows - some even had trees alongside them and one old devil of a field had a stream running through him. Then they were all around me and I was in the country, surrounded by fields.

ONE

FINE

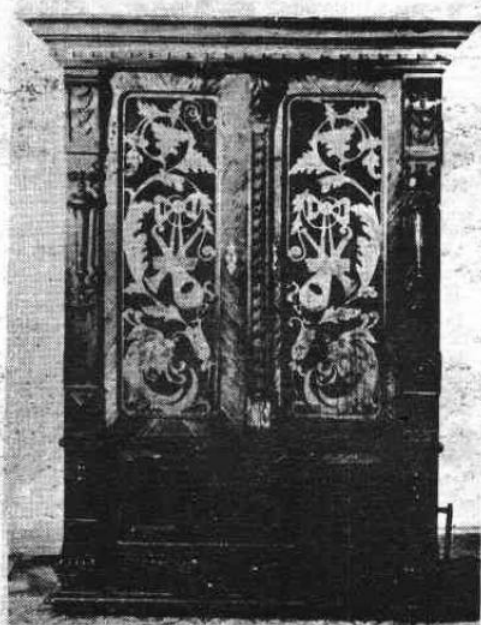
DAY

by

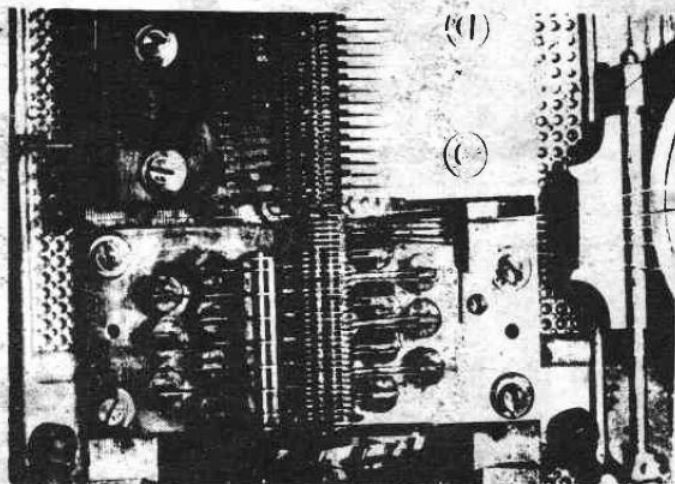
G. (Gerry) Planus

I turned off the main road up an interesting looking lane that twisted and turned as if it had St. Vitus Dance and then it started to undulate as well (you know, that's a lovely word, isn't it. Just

(Continued on Page 15)

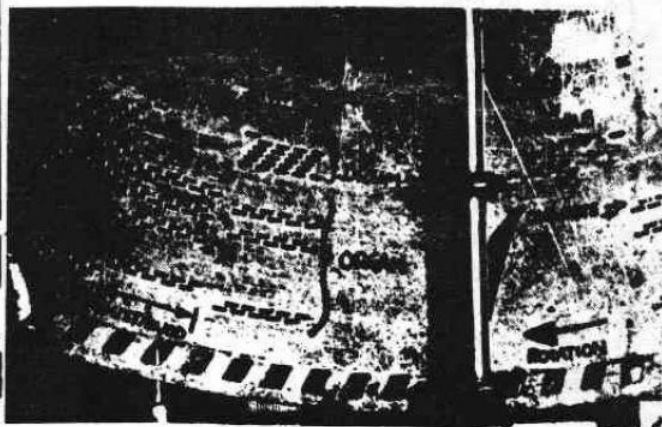
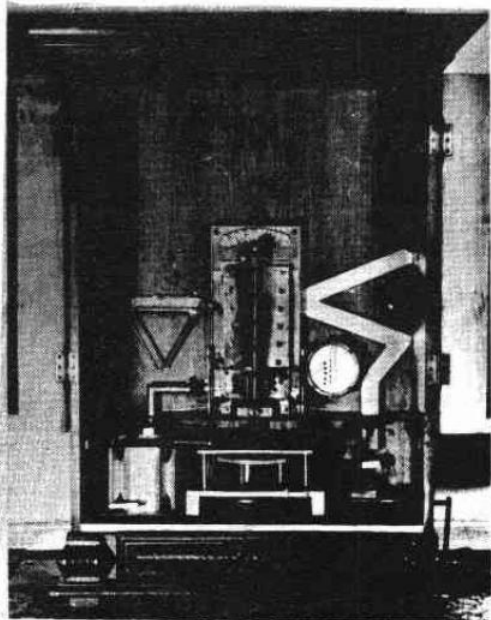


FORTUNA MARVEL ORCHESTRION



The top left illustration shows this machine with the doors closed. Lower right picture shows the mechanism with the doors open, the triangle and drum being clearly visible. Above is seen in close-up the fourteen-reed organ at the outer edge of the tune sheet. Below is shown the same part of this machine with the disc in position to show the staggered projections which together produce a sustained note.

————— (Ord-Hume collection)



NOTES ON CYLINDER RE-PINNING

John E. T. Clark, President M.B.S.o.G.B.

The acid used for eating out the old pins is Sulphuric. The cylinder should be totally immersed in the acid which should be kept in a tall glass jar large enough to take the complete cylinder.

All the wax must first be out of the cylinder and the centre spindle and tune shift dog removed prior to immersion otherwise these will suffer damage from the acid.

The cylinder should be left to stand in the acid for about six weeks to complete the eating out of all the pins. From the acid, the cylinder must be rinsed in clear water and then immersed in a lime bath to neutralise the remaining acid. Avoid high temperatures on the cylinder as this will cause it to distort.

Keep the acid bottles well stoppered and mark them 'ACID'.

The "Jacot Manual" shows some good punches to aid the job of re-pinning.

(It is hoped to reprint part of the Jacot Repair Manual at an early date - Editor)

DISMANTLING MUSICAL BOXES

Many early boxes used hand-chased screw threads. This means that a screw is intended for one hole and one hole only. To mix up screws thus made would not only make them hard to drive home (if not impossible) but would permanently spoil the threads and risk stripping them. Again, screws of slightly differing lengths should not be confused - they were usually made that way for a reason.

Mr. C. de Vere Green, our Secretary, has come forward with a sound and simple suggestion to eliminate confusion. He writes:

"When dismantling a musical box for cleaning or repair, I have found it helpful to have an old cardboard box in which holes have been punched in the lid corresponding to the positions of the various screws which have to be removed. The screws are then dropped into their various positions on the lid thus ensuring when reassembling that each precision fit screw is replaced in its original position".

Another point worth remembering is that the vast majority of musical boxes use the Metric screw thread and thus lost or misplaced screws may be very difficult to replace.

The Rev. Canon R.C. Streatfield of _____ A LOST MELODY FOUND —
 Wells, Somerset, tells the story of _____

The Musical Box was in the window of the Thrift Shop, marked "50/- NEEDS REPAIR". When I saw it my mind went back fifty years to holidays spent in Gloucestershire and to our hostess's musical box with our favourite tune 'Robert Mumby'. Here was just such another made by Lecoultre Freres about 1850 in Geneva, so for old times' sake I bought it. It certainly did need repair. With the help of a local watchmaker, I got the clockwork going, only to find that most of the pins were bent or broken and no recognizable tune could be coaxed from it.

This was very tantalizing, for the last of the airs on the list was 'The Ratcatcher's Daughter'. I had read in Mr. Clark's book that 'although the words of the song are preserved, the tune is not' and his quotation from Theodore Felstead's "Stars who Made the Halls" "In the absence of the melody, long lost to posterity, we shall never know how this pathetic tale became the rage of London'. And here, on the cylinder of my Lecoultre, was the long lost melody, inaudible for the lack of pins! I felt that something had to be done about it.

An enthusiastic collector, who is also a very skillful engineer, pronounced the box to be a good one but in such bad shape that repairs would be difficult and expensive. However, I pursued the matter and wrote to Messrs. Baud Freres of L'Auberson, Switzerland, who quoted just over £8 for repinning. I thought it was worth it. My friend packed the box most efficiently, more or less suspending it in a strong carton, and we sent it off by British Railways.

There followed months of waiting but at last, just over a year later, the musical box came back, beautifully repaired and cleaned. It cost a good deal more than £8, what with other repairs, freight and customs, but it was well worth it, for the quality of tone was superb. And at the end of the round came - 'The Ratcatcher's Daughter'!

The original song was sung by Samuel Cowell (1820-1864). It told of a seller of white sand enamoured of the ratcatcher's daughter:-

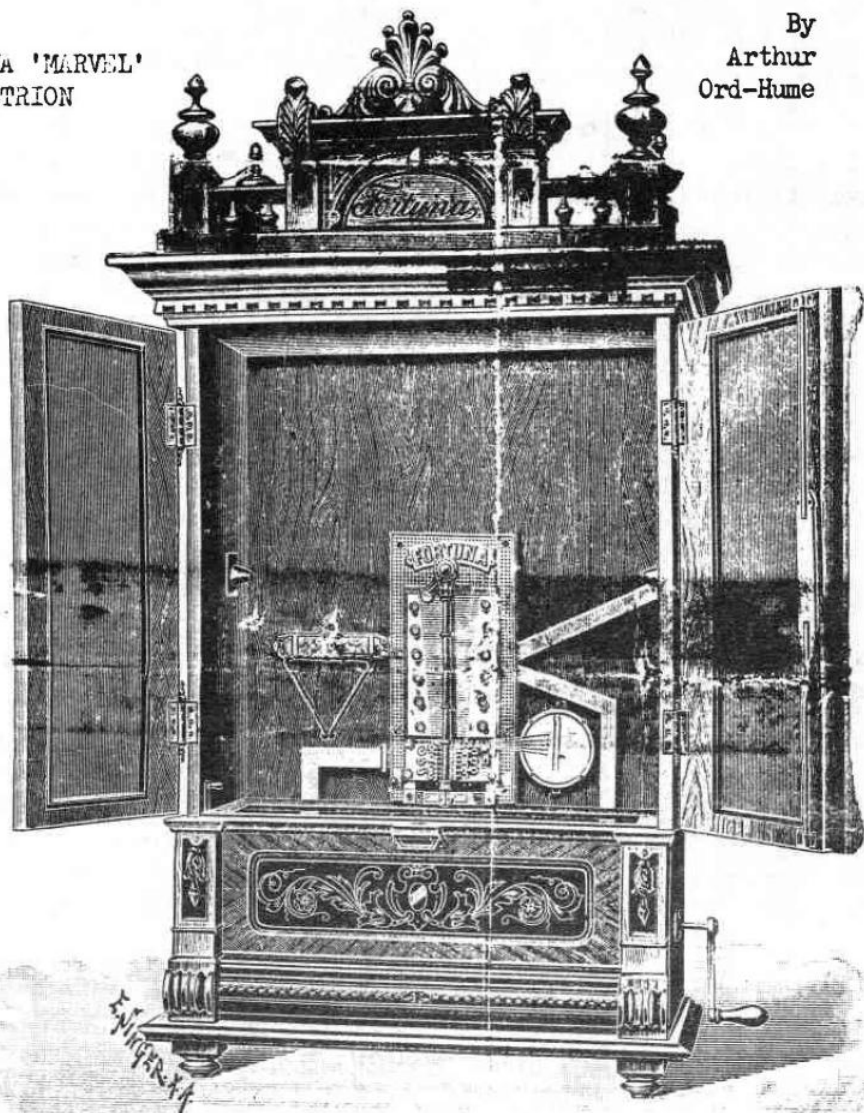
The donkey pricked up his ears and laughed
 And wondered vot he vos arter
 To hear his lily-white Sandman cry
 'Vill you buy any ratcatcher's darter?'

The melody, composed by E. Bradley, is in keeping with the words, a simple, jiggy tune, light and cheerful - and it is preserved in my musical box if nowhere else....

— R. C. Streatfield —

THE
FORTUNA 'MARVEL'
ORCHESTRION

By
Arthur
Ord-Hume



370

Very suitable for large Halls, Restaurants etc.

The 26" Fortuna Orchestrion which I own is believed to be one of but a very few remaining examples in this country. It has 118 broad-tooth twin combs of the same arrangement as the larger Polyphons together with a 14-reed harmonium, a drum and a triangle. The instrument is coin-operated and driven by a large clockwork motor.

The comb mechanism is plucked in the same manner as with other disc machines with this type of comb arrangement. One gantry

of star wheels is employed, alternate wheels plucking the leading comb and the lower comb. The dampers are unusual in that the damper strip is pressed outwards by the star wheel to damper the tooth on the recessed end of the tooth which is square-cut in two steps. To do this, the damper wire carries on it a channel-section guide which fits over the star wheels, thus preventing the damper from moving sideways.

An interesting point is the way in which sustained notes are produced on the harmonium from the disc which carries the usual type of disc projection. Each harmonium note is operated by two immediately adjacent levers coupled together and spring-loaded to shut the reed when the lifting force is removed. To sustain a note, the disc or tune sheet carries a double row of alternately-spaced projections. The first projection engages the first lever, sounding the reed. As the disc turns, the second projection engages the second lever as the first is released. The result is a slight tremulo effect on the note which adds to the timbre of the music and displays sound engineering to overcome a problem quite different to that found with a cylinder box where a bridge holds the reed open. Because the reeds are disposed either side of the disc playing line in the same manner as the combs, the left hand seven notes are operated through an ingenious system of linking levers.

The coin mechanism is finely balanced so that the penny tray oscillates before the mechanism is fully released. This serves to ensure that the coin is lying flat in the tray otherwise it cannot pass through the hinged bottom of the receiver. Unlike the popular Polyphons, the penny is not released until the end of the disc is reached. To slow down the drop of the coin between the penny slot and the receiver, the coin guide is 'Z' shaped.

The organ bellows are mounted to the left of the motor and are driven via a link to an eccentric protruding through the top of the top motor plate. A wind chest is affixed to the rear of the bellows and is sprung from the back of the cabinet. To disconnect the organ whilst playing, a lever is provided which simply opens a flap valve in the wind chest. Small levers also engage or disengage the drum and triangle by raising the engaging cams clear of the disc lugs.

The machine, described as 'suitable for large-halls, Restaurants, etc' has a superb tone and stands 4' 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high, 2' 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " across and 1' 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. It weighs 130 lbs and takes one hundred seconds to play a disc! Two beautifully fretted doors enclose the works and the motor and bellows are visible through an internal glass cover.

It is hoped to present some historical details of Fortuna musical boxes in a forthcoming issue of THE MUSIC BOX. —————

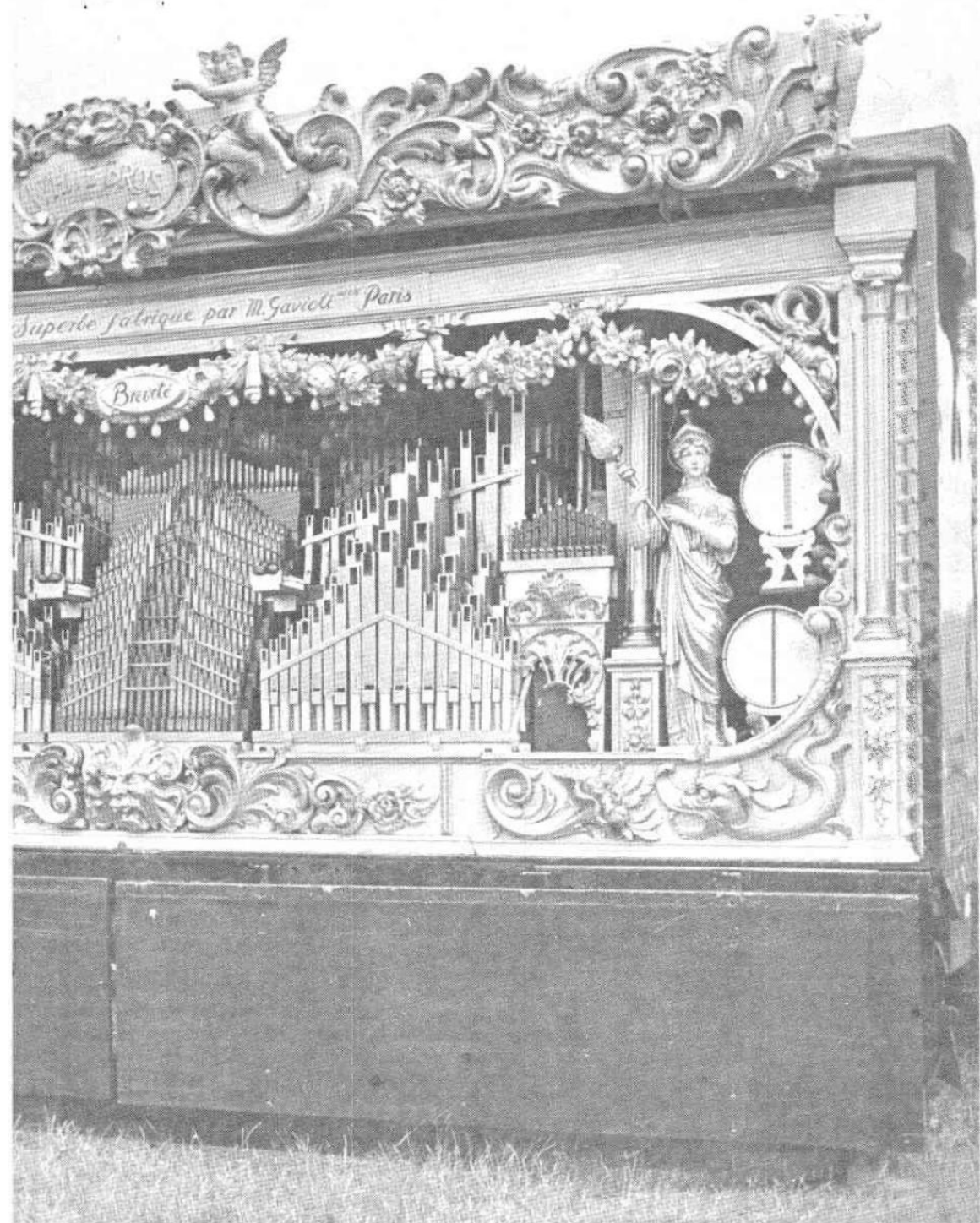
The superb "112-note Keyless Gavioliphone" (right) which is owned by the Show Organ Society and described fully on Page 12 by the Secretary of the Society, Mr. George Parmley.

ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAGE 15a

1. Bremond Orchestral Music Box playing bells, Drum, Castenets, Organ and Flute attachments. 12 cylinders, 6 tunes on each. 2. DUPLEX musical box playing two combs on two cylinders at once. 3. The same machine showing the fine cabinet. 4. "Silver Bell" music box which won 1st prize at the 1896 Paris Exposition. The five bells are of solid silver with butterfly strikers, drum and silver zither. The inner glass lid is delicately decorated as is the 28" walnut cabinet. This box is truly a 'one-off' special and plays ten tunes. As can be seen, the control levers are at the left and the motor at the right.

These pictures are of some of the machines in the collection of Mrs. Ruth Bornand, Pelham, New York.





The Show Organ Society exists to restore, preserve and exhibit Mechanical Musical Instruments of Historic Interest specialising in Fairground-type Organs. Chairman George Parmley describes here the remarkable instrument illustrated on Page 11

A
SHORT
HISTORY
OF THE
MAMMOTH
GAVIOLI SHOW-ORGAN



Mechanical Organs have been in use on fairgrounds for nearly a century. Until 1894, they were all barrel-operated, small and with a very limited repertoire. In that year, the very famous firm of M. Gavioli et Cie of Paris introduced an 87-key paper operated organ. These were an immediate success, a great number of them being made use of for roundabouts.

However, about 1904-1906, astute travelling showmen began to exhibit the new novelty 'moving pictures' in a portable booth on the fairground. The showmen decided to use very large and powerful organs to form a 'front' for these shows. Gavioli then produced eight or nine of the very largest organs ever made, all of which were delivered to Great Britain and known as the '112 Keyless "Gavioliphone"! The No. 1 organ held on trust by our Society is the last organ ever built of this size by M. Gavioli. It was purchased new in 1909 by Mr. S. White, a well-known showman of Cardiff.

The organ was in almost continuous use until 1934 but for the next 14 years stood silent, the Clarency Panatrope replacing it. Ownership had then passed to Mr. J. Rehorn, a relative of White's. In 1954, unwilling that the famous old organ should be destroyed like most of its contemporaries, Mr. Rehorn entrusted it to the Show Organ Society of Durham City. The Society restored it and rebuilt the instrument, taking two years to complete the job.

The following instruments are represented: Saxophone, Trumpet Trombone, Baritone, Clarinet and Mixture, Violin with accompaniment, Cello, Piccolo, Flagelet, Bass Trombone and Percussion comprising Bass Drum, two Snare Drums, Tamborene, Cymbal, Triangle, 19 tubular Bells and Castanets. Diapason over 700 pipes.

The weight of the Organ and its trailer is seven tons eighteen hundredweight forty pounds. Overall length is 25 ft. 4 ins. and it is electrically powered as it was from being new.

George Parmley

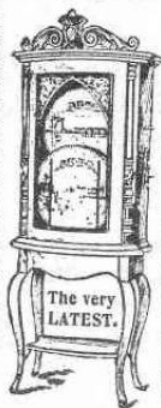
NOTE Although the 98-key Marengi organ at Thursford, Norfolk, is in fact bigger, its range is not as wide as the Gavioliphone. (Editor)



TRADE MARKS

The familiar Polyphon emblem (left) and the emblem of the Fortuna disc music box (right) These are discussed in the article on Page 14a

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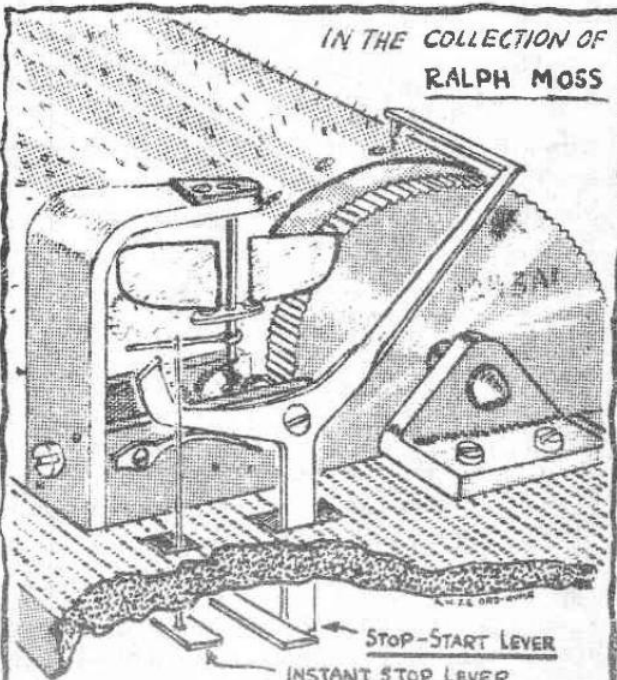
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IN THE COLLECTION OF RALPH MOSS



THE LEVERS PASS UNDER THE BEDPLATE AND PRO-
TRUDE THROUGH A VERTICAL PLATE REACHED THROUGH
AN OVAL DOOR IN THE LEFT END OF THE CASE,
THE DOOR ALSO ACTING AS A BASE FOR A CLOCK.

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 14



he usual cylinder box brake is a well-known and effective device whereby the cylinder is caused to stop after one revolution. It was part of the music transposers' art to arrange the set-up of the tune so that it ended after one revolution of the cylinder. The difficulty of this is sometimes accentuated by an 'Amen' at the end of one verse of a hymn, or by a waltz in galop time.

Some musical boxes would play an overture on one turn of the cylinder and then two tunes together on another turn, e.g. a 4-overture 4-air box with a 6-air comb. Invariably, one was obliged to hear both of the tunes on one turn because there was no device to stop the cylinder after half a turn on some positions of the tune-change cam and after a complete turn on other positions of the cam.

BRAKING POINT

— By —

Ralph Moss

However, an early cartel musical box has come to light which plays tunes of different lengths. First, a word about the movement which is set in a base on which should stand an ormolu clock. It is by F. Lecoultre who also made very fine 'snuff' movements. The cylinder is 7" long and 3" in diameter. The four-air comb, with unusual tooth points which are of equal width along their lengths, has 124 teeth. The eight comb screws have no washers.

The trail of the brake lever, which points downwards, runs on top of the cylinder instead of in a groove in the large cylinder gear wheel. Set round the cylinder in appropriate positions are holes into which the trail falls, thereby raising the brake lever and stopping the endless. The trail must be set accurately, especially in a lateral direction, so that it does not fall into a hole designated for the next revolution. By means of this system, the musical box plays two tunes on two of the turns and three tunes on the other two turns. The overture is 'Semiramis' taking up at least two thirds of a turn whilst 'Cherry Ripe' is arranged on about a quarter of a turn.

The estimated date of the Lecoultre musical box is 1835 and it would appear that the easily-caused misalignment of the trail on to the wrong set of holes was the cause of the system not being used more frequently in later boxes.

Of course, there were the boxes, such as the Bornand interchangeable cylinder boxes and the Columbia sublime harmony box, which had no automatic brake, but stopped as soon as the brake operating lever was moved across. The sketch on the preceding page illustrates the Lecoultre mechanism.

— Ralph Moss —

musical box

TRADE MARKS

Illustrations on Page 13



Every manufacturer of every musical box ever made left his own individual trade mark by which his particular box could always be identified. Unfortunately, in a large number of cases, these trade marks took the form of a particular style of building or of the design of the mechanism rather than the actual appending of a distinctive design, mark or name.

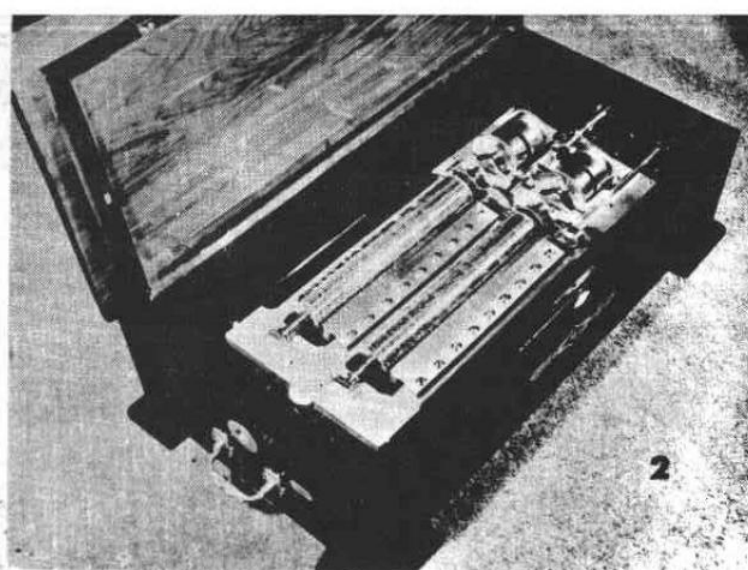
Many hundreds of thousands of boxes were built which were completely devoid of apparent marks of identification and thus it is today that we, as collectors, are concerned largely with the little features of design and building, the small marks of perfection and the design of tune sheets to provide us with the clues to possible identity.

Boxes supplied through agents such as Imhof, Peters, Keith Prowse and similar organisations often bore no marks of identity other than the Agents' label or trade mark of his own.

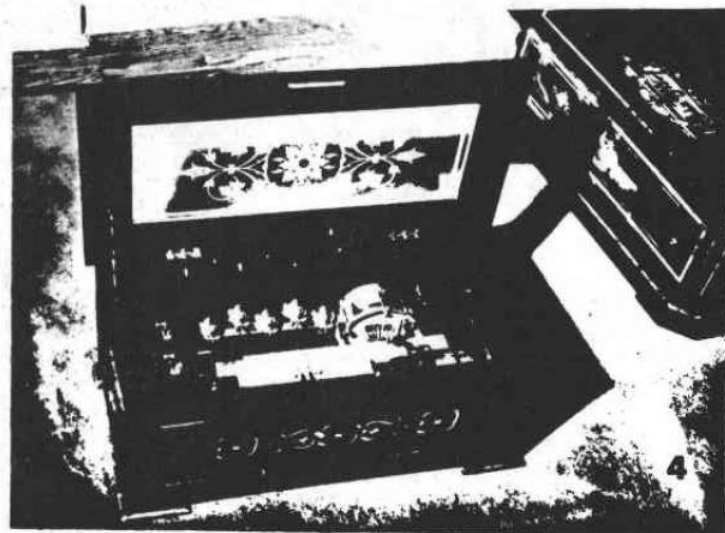
It is therefore left to the discerning collector to detect that one type of box always has its motor bridge screws set from underneath the bedplate and another uses a forged bracket to support the endless. The aim of this regular article is to obtain information of this type from Members, to sift it and then present it in a form which will prove of value to everybody. Wherever possible, trade marks which take the form of an identifiable sketch or layout, illustrations will be produced to show 'what to look for'. The marks discussed here are on Page 13.

We begin this month with two such sketches - one which surely everyone must know and another which is possibly the least known. The first is the familiar Polyphon girl, enshrouded and garlanded as she appears on every disc ever produced by the Polyphon Company. On the 10 discs she appears at her largest, delicately covering almost all of the disc. Later 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " discs saw her relegated to a small blob less than an inch tall. The stringed instrument she clutches is symbolic of all music boxes for it appears on Symphonion, Harmonia, Britannia and Regina in one form or another to mention just a few.

The second sketch shows the Fortuna trade mark - an eagle, talons extended, a symbolic banner caught in its beak conveniently showing the words "TRADE MARK"! Unlike Polyphon's girl, the Fortuna eagle, set against the rising sun, appeared in one size (as drawn) on each of the ten different disc sizes produced by Heinrich Zimmermann. Both of these emblems appear in black and gold as transfers on the disc surface.



captions on page ten



let it come out slowly - UN..DU..LATE - doesn't it sound good). Anyway, this lane undulated until it got a bit tired and stopped at the top of one of it's undulations which naturally was a hill. What was good enough for a lane was good enough for me too, so I pulled up and parked at the side of the lane. I got out, had a stretch, admired the view for a while and then decided to have a bit of a walk to get the benefit of the sun and fresh air.

I wandered along the lane without a care in the world, doing a hop and a skip, now and then cocking an ear to listen to the birds, some of which were nearly as good as my automatic ones (the things that pride of ownership makes one say!). Well, as I was saying, I was wandering along without a care in the world, minding my own business. In fact, I was in the middle of a hop and a skip - and that can be most embarrassing at times - when I saw him. He was wearing a tweed suit which made him blend into the background of hedges. He was short and fiftyish with a weather worn face and was looking a bit worried. Maybe it was the spectacle of me in the middle of my hop and a skip which made him look worried, so I finished my skip and went over to him. "You are looking worried", I said, "What's your trouble?" "Trouble", he answered, "If you had my troubles you wouldn't be cavorting over the countryside crushing poor little inoffensive bits of grass with your daisy roots!" So, using a bit of Dale Carnegie nonsense, I says "If you think in a positive manner you will have no troubles, positively. Tell them all to me and what with your brains and my good looks we will sort them out". We sat down by the roadside and I assumed my Father Confessor air while he let go with his tale of woe (poetic like, that bit!).

"You see that house just through the trees" he began. "That's where I live. I've lived there for fifty four years now and my Father lived there before me and now I've got to get out of it". I looked through the trees at the house and it certainly was a house! It was so old that parts of it were stone age - this was plain to see for there were stones in it everywhere. "Here", he says, "Come with me. We'll go home and have a cup of tea whilst I tell you all about it". So we doddle off along the lane a bit more until we come to a driveway with massive great wrought-iron gates set in a monstrous stone archway. "It's this way" he says. "Oh ho!" thinks I. "What have I let myself in for! This bloke must have pots of money. If he can live in a place like that he shouldn't have any worries!" After about a quarter of an hours' walk up this drive, we come to the house. It looks a bit delapidated but I can see it's the kind of place that I'd like to retire to so, after another ten minutes walking up the steps to the front door, we get in and it's loaded with stuff - all the right stuff, too! There are tapestries a hundred yards long hanging on the walls, chandeliers so big an army could swing on them. Well, to cut a long story shorter, this

house was an antique collector's dream. The whole house was packed with the right stuff. The little man then took me on a tour of the whole place, but bang in front of me in the hall I noticed a huge box on a table. I asked him if I could have a look inside. "Certainly" he says "though what it is I don't know - it's just a box full of mechanism". I lifted the lid and nearly fainted at the beautiful sight inside. The barrel was at least six feet long and a foot in diameter. The pins were like six inch nails whilst the comb must have had 1000 teeth in it but the best bit of all was the name and number stamped on it. There it was - 18,999 and the name was Nicolette Sisters and Geneveive! It was too much for me, I started to cry and went hysterical. The little man patted me on the back and said "There, there old man. There's no need to get into such a state - there's plenty more in a room at the top of the house. Come along and have a look at them!"

Well, as you expect, my heart was thumping and the excitement was nearly too much for me but, with a stiff upper lip, I pulled myself together and followed the little man upstairs. We seemed to climb for ages but at last he stopped before a door which from the looks of it hadn't been opened for donkeys' years. It creaked and groaned as we pushed it open and there we were - in! The walls were lined with shelves from floor to ceiling about six shelves right the way round the room and every shelf was full of music boxes. Without a bit of exaggeration there were millions of them - well, hundreds anyway. There were small ones, ones with levers sticking out of the ends, ones covered with burr walnut, plain ones, serpentine front ones - it was a collectors' dream and I had found it! May I say that my day was made. Well, there it was. Now the problem arose how I could make them mine so, to give myself time to think, I suggested that we sit down and that I listen to this chap's tale of woe. "Well" he says, "you can see what my worries are. I've got this house full of stuff and I've been told to get out as the landlord wants to convert it into a country hotel, so what am I going to do with all this stuff? I have got nowhere else to put it and as you know people don't want this old fashioned kind of furniture and things and as I've been living here on my own for the last thirty years I've lost touch with people and don't know who will get rid of it for me".

Well, as you can imagine my old gearbox was grinding away inside my skull. Oh Ho, thinks I, I've got a hold of a right Charlie here! He must be nuts, but how can I pull this off? So, letting the gearbox get into action, I start. "Just imagine" I said, "I know just the chap to get you out of all your troubles. He'll clear the whole house for you!" "But that won't help me at all" says the little man. "I'll have to give him something for moving all this lot and, as I'm stony broke without a penny in the world, I can't afford to pay him."

So I'm still in trouble". "Not so" says I, for haven't I explained that he's a friend of mine - he'll do it for my sake!" "No, no" the little chap says, "I couldn't put you to all this trouble - after all what would you be getting out of it?" "Well, I'll let you into my little secret" says I. "I'm just a little bit eccentric and the way it gets me is that I love boxes, no matter what shape or size, I love them. I like to feel them and open up their lovely lids and as you have that room full of them, I wondered whether you would let me have them in repayment for getting my friend to clear the house for you". "Ah" he says, "that's why that big box in the hall affected you so much!" "Yes", I said "it's such a long time since I've seen such a big box and the sight of it was too much for me - I hope that you will understand". "Why, certainly" he says, "You can have that room full with pleasure and I'll see if I can't find some more for you for I know there are about twenty that have enamelled lids and little birds pop out of the top of them. I don't know why they made such elaborate toys for children, so I put them in the old nursery".

I suppose that you can understand what a state I was in, so I thought I'd better call it a day before my ticker started playing me up. I made an appointment with the little man the next day and said I'd arrive with a lorry to collect the boxes and that at the same time my friend would arrive with his lorries to clear the rest of the house. My mind was in a turmoil - I didn't know whether it was yesterday or today, so I toddled back to the car and very slowly drove home. I had a very restless night which seemed to be endless. I tossed and turned all night through and was very glad when the sun poked its fingers of light into the bedroom. I got up, had breakfast and rang up my mate to arrange the details of getting the lorries booked. At about 8.30, I started off back to the little man and the house in the trees in the lane.

The lorries trundled along behind me, so I had to take a reasonable speed though I was itching to get the accelerator down on the floorboards so that I could get back to the treasure hoard. After a couple of hours, we turned up into the lane and pulled up in front of the house. I rang the bell and the little man came to the door. He looked rather dishevelled and dusty and very tired. "You look as if you've had a night on the tiles" I said. "Well, yes, I have been rather busy" he answered, "for it's most unusual these days to find someone who is willing to help a person in trouble, so I thought that I'd repay your kindness to me and get your boxes down here ready for you". "Why, thanks a lot", I said, "but you needn't have bothered for we brought a few other chaps along to give us a hand". "It was no trouble at all" he said "for I remembered what you said to me so they weren't so heavy after all". "Hello" I thought, "what's he been up to" so I went further into the hall and what a lovely sight greeted

me! There they were all lined up on the floor - tiny ones on the left and gradually increasing in size to the table models on the right. Such a sight very few men have ever seen - the cream of music boxes piled on top of each other. I called in the men from outside. "Start on the big ones first", I said, so a couple walked over to the biggest which was a monster. "You'll need a few more men on that one, for I've had some experience trying to lift these big ones". Two more went over but by that time the first two had picked up the box. "It's O.K." they called, "it's quite light". Strange, I thought, so I went over when they had it on the back of the truck, lifted up the lid and found the box was full of - nothing! It was empty. Ah, well, I thought, it's a shame but still there are all the others - I mustn't be greedy and anyway the case might come in handy for one of the others might have worm in it. I told the chaps to get on with the rest of the loading.

After a while, one of the men came up to say that they had finished loading the music boxes, so I went and checked that everything was O.K. I looked over the tailboard and there they were! What a lovely sight and they hadn't cost a penny! This kind of thing comes only once in a lifetime if it comes at all and it had happened to me! What a time I would have sorting them out and listening to them and wouldn't my collector friends' eyes pop out when they saw this lot! This was a joyous day indeed, deserving three hearty cheers, caps thrown in the air and all that sort of old rot. Off we went home - the lorries, the boxes and me.

When we got home, I went down to the cellar and made some space. The men started carrying the boxes down. I thought I'd give them a hand and went to take one off the lorry. It was light, too light. I picked up another, this was light. A quick look inside - it was empty, so was the next and the next. They were all empty. Why, how? They weren't yesterday, they are today, how come? I rushed to the telephone, rang up the little man. "They're all empty!" I said. "Of course" he replied, "You told me that you loved the boxes and, as they were too heavy for me to carry downstairs on my own, I threw all the mechanisms out of the window - there's a big pile of them in the courtyard. It seemed only fair that I should try to repay you in some way for the kindness you did me, so I spent all night getting them down. It was fun, too, for the mechanisms made such lovely sounds when they hit the concrete and the parts came off!"

My friends tell me that I am not the same man as I was and I must admit that my hair is now white and whenever I see little men in tweed suits I start crying. But every cloud has it's silver lining, for it must be admitted I have the biggest collection of empty music boxes in the world.....

— Gerry Planus —

LIST OF MEMBERS

- John E. T. Clark, 54, Myddleton Street, London, E.C.1
- C. de Vere Green, 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole St., London, W.1
- G. Planus, 308, Devon Mansions, Tooley Street, London, S.E.1
- Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, "Mirador", Rosemead, Lake, Sandown, I.O.W.
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 to be continued.

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FORTUNA DISC MUSIC BOXES. List of tunes, sizes and numbers.
Photocopy of original catalogue. Available from The Editor

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