

THE MUSIC BOX

JOURNAL OF
the MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY
OF GREAT BRITAIN



No. 7. Autumn, 1964

editorial



THE END of the summer is often considered a time of sadness. Evenings draw in, the sun describes a lower and cooler arc daily and it is not long before dreary damp dark November and the winter cold is upon us. For the musical box collector, it means a re-

Dampers can be trimmed and shaped by the comforting fireside, new teeth can be cut and soldered and, above all, we can relax and listen to our boxes without the nagging thought that the blasted lawn needs mowing and the wretched weeds are thriving un-pulled amongst our anorphastrum. For those who would listen if they could but possess few musical boxes (or none at all), it is reassuring to know that there are gramophone records available which can produce the delicate tones of vibrating steel tongue from the hi-fi 'woofer' and 'tweeter' accepted as far more commonplace today than the pipe barrel organ or interchangeable voix celeste, drum and bell cylinder box. Every season its blessings!

TWEET-TWEET-CLACKITY-TWEET-TWEET - or How The Editor Went West

The Uncle Tom Copley village of Widecombe, famed for its annual agricultural show and fair, nestles in a hollow amongst the bracken and gorse-covered Devon tors. The day I went there, the birds were singing away merrily - and the locals were enjoying it as much as the visitors. Each bird-song is heralded by a penny piece for there are two mechanical singing bird devices, one each side of the centre of the little main street.

Each cage held three birds and was proving highly popular with all and sundry. A disgruntled song-thrush sat mute with disgust in a nearby tree.

Whilst exploring this particular neck of the woods, I meandered down to Mevagissey, Cornish fishing village. Here, amongst a mixture of huge lobsters (at 6/- per lb.) and Cornish fudge, superb beer and crab sandwiches, I found a fine barrel piano in one of those souvenir/antique shops. It was just as well it was not for sale - it would never have gone in the Mini! Stopping on the way back at a posh hotel in Fowey for refreshment, I was confronted in the highly modern and comfortably-furnished bar, by a 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Polyphon with 70 discs! And not a whisper of that incessant, infuriating transistorised background music so popular in bar and cafe today.

TO KEY-WIND OR NOT TO KEY-WIND

As it is very 'non-U' (whatever that means) not to possess the odd one or two key-winders so that possession can casually (but plonkingly) be mentioned in discussion with other less-fortunate collectors, there seems a demand for the services of the unscrupulous jobber who will whip out that crank lever, drill a hole in the case and fit a genuine reproduction No. 16-size key - in confidence of course. Should sell well to beginners.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE COLLECTING BIT ABOUT MUSICAL BOX COLLECTING

Have you ever noticed how heavy a musical box is? I don't mean heavy when it comes to lifting it off one table on to another, nor do I mean Nicole's 'Falstaff' as compared to Dawkin's 'Pirates of Penzance'. What I really mean is have you ever taken a musical box out for a walk? Somehow when we think of a collection of boxes (our own or someone else's it doesn't really matter) we know that the boxes live on or under a certain table. We know they belong there in the same way that our favourite arm-chair can be depended upon not to perambulate around the house. But how do they get there in the first place? Not every collector aspires to personal transport. This means that the 'bus, the train and the Shank's pony are brought into use to play an important part. Well, this brings me right back to the question. Ever taken a musical box for a walk????

I was in a delightful little market town recently - one which, by some quirk of official oversight, still possessed a working railway by which I had arrived on business concerning small and virtually weightless bits of paper. I was about to return to London and was striding down the High Street happily minding my own business when I tried to pass an antique shop. In the window rested a small Bremond. The dealer confided in me that he had had it in the window for weeks and no spark of interest had been evoked. Where, I wondered, were all those concupiscent collectors who, locust-like in their quest for specimens, leave no stone unturned!

The price was too high, I said (it was!) and turned to walk out. Already teetering on the brink of uncertainty, I responded at once to his

eager 'wait a minute'. We bargained. It must have been a slack period for him. I won. Now, here was the rub! The box wasn't all that heavy and I only had half a mile to walk to the station and about the same when I got back to London. Brown paper and string were fussed over whilst I bid a fond farewell to the house-keeping money. I picked up my prize. Already it seemed heavier. Perhaps it was the wrapping and a bit of misguided psychology. By the time we were 100 yards down the road my left arm was decidedly longer than my right - and was still stretching. The box had doubled its purchase weight. The wonders of alchemy were transforming the case from inlaid deal to cast iron, the cylinder wax to plumber's lead.

At the station, I was told that I'd just make it if I hurried to Platform 3. I hurried, the box grinding my shins. On Platform 3 the news was that the London train was Platform 5 and I'd just make it. I staggered up the steps, crossed the bridge and reached Platform 5 in a state of sweat and palpitation. No, it was the train on Platform 3 unless I wanted to go via Peterborough. I struggled jelly-kneed up and over the footbridge and finally got a seat on the train. With superhuman effort, I swung the box into the luggage rack and subsided into the seat to while away the journey musing on the unsuccessful attempt made by luggage rack designers to create a market for trapezoidal-bottomed suitcases.

At Kings Cross, I got up and went to lift my parcel from the rack. It wouldn't budge. The box being 8" wide and the rack being 8" from back to front, the two were firmly united like one of those Chinese puzzles. I prodded the sagging netting from underneath, pushed and pulled at the string - even stood on the seat and prised at it. I was conscious of being watched. A porter stood outside on the platform watching me with an inscrutable expression on his weathered face. My eyes must have revealed my plight for, in an instant, he was standing beside me on the seat and, as a fireman frees a big toe from a bath tap, out came my musical box.

It was rush-hour at Kings Cross as I stumbled along, bent double, shifting my parcel from one hand to the other. The string cut into my hands, the box swinging freely in time to my gait, hitting my ankle at the extent of its swing in both directions. Metamorphosis was surely complete now - the box weighed at least a hundredweight if not more.

The seething mass of travellers on the platform yielded not as I approached. One needs to be one of those funny 3-wheeled things with a horn on the front and a retinue of mail trucks behind to have any effect on the hell-bent intending commuter. My box swung and caught a large man on the shin. He directed a somewhat impossible apophthegm at me. "And you, too!" I spluttered - and altered course for the taxi rank. Which just goes to show. Have you ever noticed how heavy a musical box is?

KILLING WOOD-WORM - A Sure Method

Hit each one hard with a hammer.

WHAT HO! YOU UP THERE ON THE LADDER CLEANING THE MUSICAL BOX

For a long while, we were pleased to accept the fact that the largest size of disc musical box produced was the 27" Regina. Then someone found a 27½" Symphonion, a 32" Lochmann and then was unearthed the giant bells-and-comb 36" Symphonion. Having at last seen the surface of the moon from a height of a few feet, acceptance of this lot was child's play. Nevertheless, many an eyebrow was raised, many a heart pounded when the certain well-known weekly advertising journal succumbed to an attack of pie and proclaimed for all to see "For sale, 24½ ft. Polyphon". Now had there been such an animal, and bearing in mind the uses to which old rail carriages, aeroplane fuselages and trams are put, one might have seen advertised "Detached Polyphon for rent, 3 bed. 2 recep. kit. bthrm, sep. w.c. grge spce". Well, it's a thought, isn't it!

MEETING OF THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY

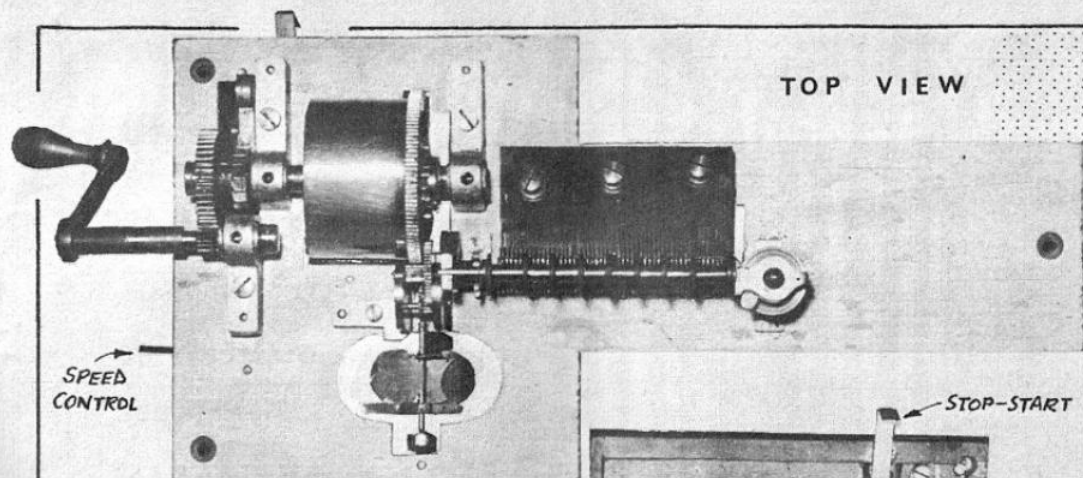
Twice a year, we hold our gets-together in London. This year's Autumn meeting will take place at the Londoner Hotel, Welbeck Street, London W.1 on November 7th, 1964. Each meeting we have staged so far has been a progressive success. This next meeting will be the most ambitious yet and your Committee hopes very much that you will be able to come along. A very full programme of events is planned and we believe in the premise that individually we all know something, collectively we know everything. It is this that makes a meeting between enthusiasts of such great value. For out-of-town Members, how about making a week-end of it in London to take in the meeting? There are all sorts of attractions in the capital including numerous museums, theatres, cinemas and, of course, red buses. Quite seriously, though, this will be a great gathering and everyone is welcome. Full details have already been circulated to Members.

KEEP HEALTHY, FIT AND IN GOOD TRIM

The musical box needs periodic attention if it is to keep on giving of its best and now is the time to look towards basic maintenance. Good cleaning and general light lubrication is all that is really needed. The cylinder box often collects dirt and dust in the gear train, making it stiff and slow to play. The disc machine is very prone to collecting dirt transferred from the disc projections and removal of the combs will usually reveal inexplicably large quantities of fluff, hair, coprologous looking refuse and dead flies, all of which must be carefully raked out or sucked out with a vacuum cleaner. Ordinary '3 in 1' oil or sewing machine oil completes this annual service. This will keep you going over Christmas. The boxless musical box lover, armed with the projectionless black discs described elsewhere in this issue, can spend the while oiling his record-player.

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

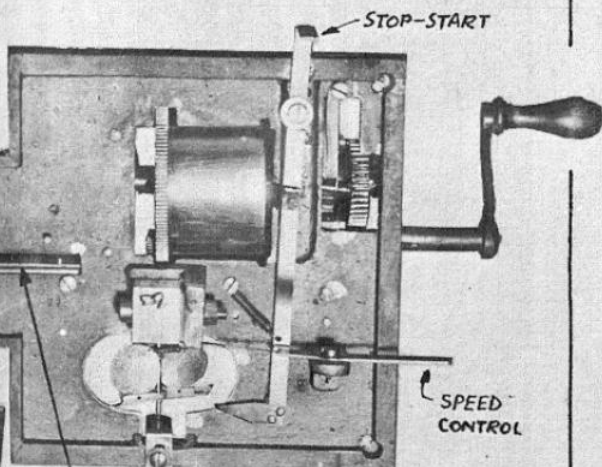
TOP VIEW



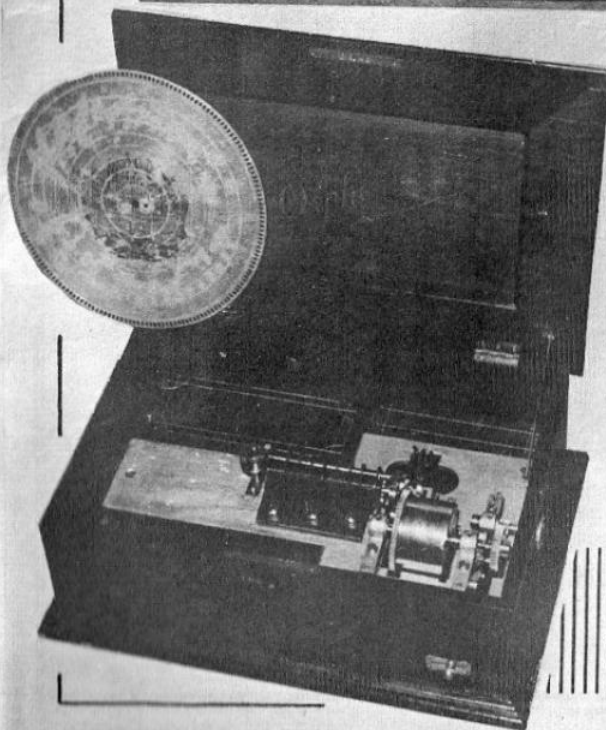
STOP-START

SPEED
CONTROL

UNDERNEATH

SPEED
CONTROL

NOTE DAMPER STRIP



Orphenion



BARREL
ORGAN

by

T. C. BATES

FORMERLY IN

REGULAR USE

AT GREAT ALNE

from

the
Liddell Collection of
mechanical musical
instruments at Bir-
mingham City Museum
& Art Gallery



► This photograph and
those on Pages

16 & 17 taken
specially for THE
MUSIC BOX by
Birmingham City
Museum & Art Gallery



THE

AEOLIAN HARP

Mrs. B. de Vere Green sends this extract from Volume Five of "The Ladies Treasury" published in 1861:

"An alteration in the temperature of a room will cause the strings of an ordinary harp to give forth musical sounds. But an effect of this is produced far more effectively by the use of a simple contrivance to which has been given the name of the Aeolian Harp.

This instrument consists of two harmonic tables on which are extended two metal strings or wires. These wires acted upon by the air sweeping over them, vibrate and send forth musical sounds which may be heard for a considerable distance, and produce a very agreeable effect. In the silence of a summer night, these aerial concert - harps responding to harps - are exceedingly delightful, and if the simple arrangement by which they are produced was unknown, would convey to the superstitious the idea of a spiritual choir.

The Aeolian Harp was known to the Egyptians and is supposed to have been the means employed in producing the musical response of Memnon to the rising sun. It formed a favourite amusement with the Roman Emperors; and in the hands of the crafty and designing was frequently turned to account for impressing the weak and credulous with a sense of supernatural agency".

THAT THE AEOLIAN HARP can be considered as a mechanical musical instrument is evidenced from the following extract from "MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS" by Buchner and published by Batchworth Press:

"If air is driven at a constant speed on to a taut string, a certain note is produced, known as the 'friction note'; the note produced depends on the speed of the current of air and the thickness of the string. As soon as one of the movements of vibration caused by the current of air reaches the same number of periods as one of the free vibrations of the string, an audible tone is heard. If the vibrations caused by the air do not agree with the number of periods of the string, they produce only partial tones, which sound separately and louder (for example) than flageolet playing on a stringed instrument. As long as these partial tones are lower than the ninth, we hear those which belong to the normal order of notes. If higher partial tones are evoked, they are outside the normal scale and their dissonant effect gives the Aeolian Harp its mysterious, supernatural tone.

The fact that currents of air had a certain effect on strings in particular was already known in ancient times. In the Talmud we are told that the harp of David sounded at midnight, when the North wind touched it.

In Archbishop Eustatius's commentary to the poems of Homer there is a passage about the harmonic tones evoked by the wind playing on a taut string. Several types of Aeolian Harp are still in use in China today; the dragon harps of Shanghai were mentioned by Kircher who described the way they were made in his "Ars Magna Lucis et Unbrae".

In the tenth century, an Archbishop of Canterbury is said to have been accused of sorcery because he experimented with an Aeolian harp. Sachs is of the opinion that it was this danger that caused the Aeolian Harp to fall into oblivion during the Middle Ages. It reappears in the sixteenth century, thanks to Giovanni Battista Parta of Naples, and in the seventeenth century Kircher deals with it at length. In his "Phonurgia Nova" he mentions several different types of this instrument. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Aeolian Harps were only known in England and to some extent in Germany; it was the romantic movement that brought them into fashion again. The idea of a succession of notes softly rising and falling in volume with no real melody, dying away as it were in the distance like a refreshing spring breeze, fascinated the romantics, as we can see from all the works written about this instrument.

The name Aeolian Harp probably came to be used first in England. It is so called in the poems of Thompson. Among the first known makers of Aeolian Harps in England were: Longman & Broderip in Cheepsid in London (second half of the eighteenth century); Longman Luckey & Co., London (about 1760); William Jones (about 1781); Clementi & Co., London (about 1800). In Germany, the makers were Heinrich Christoph Koch in Rudolfsstadt (1749 - 1816) and Johann Wilhelm Bindernagel in Gotha (1770-1845), Freidrich Kaufmann of Dresden made a specially designed Aeolian Harp with separate air valves; Wilhelm Mehlhop of Hamburg (1841) one with completely covered strings; I. Pleyel of Paris (about 1845) one with three horns; Robert Burkhardt and C. Dobler (about 1860) one with bent air pipes."

FROM THE ABOVE LIST OF MAKERS, one or two familiar names emerge and the Aeolian Harp and barrel organ must have been contemporary products for at least two firms. Instruments were made for inserting in an open window or doorway and some had sound deflectors and resonating boards. The reference to harps with horns is readily explained when it is appreciated that early Aeolian Harps comprised a hollow horn to channel the air on to the strings. In fact, Kircher draws a harp resembling a cross-section of an aerodynamiscists' wind-tunnel with a bell-mouth at each end, a constriction to speed up the air velocity and an expansion chamber in which is mounted the string frame! The whole thing rotated, weather-cock like, to face the wind. One might thus expect any modern attempt at Aeolian Harp design to be preceeded with wind-tunnel tests at the National Physical Laboratory - or perhaps Farnborough itself!

The tune-sheet, or, more properly, programme sheet on a musical box is frequently found torn, damaged and dirty. A new lease of life can be given to this fragile document and its appearance and in consequence that of the box enhanced greatly.

PRESERVING PROGRAMME SHEETS

The first thing is to remove the sheet and this is best done by very gently easing out the brass tacks by inserting a thin knife down behind the sheet. Try to fetch out the tacks without tearing the sheet more than can be helped and, wherever possible, preserve the little disc of sheet which lies under the tack head in cases where the tack has pulled right through the sheet. Sometimes the sheet will have been stuck to the lid by a previous 'repairer'. Soaking it to remove it will certainly cause the ink and sometimes the colours to run, so it must be gently steamed and then eased off with a sharp knife.

Find a piece of clean white card a little bit larger all round than the tune sheet. The card should be stiff and up to 1/16" thick. Stick the sheet carefully to the card using either photo-mounting paste (the smooth white office paste) or impact adhesive. The perfectionist will use photographic mounting tissue, applied with a hot iron, but this does not help where the sheet has been 'feathered' in tearing or has been crumpled at the edges. Well glue the sheet down, seeing that feathered edged tears are carefully laid out the right way. If missing, now stick in the little pieces removed from under the tack heads. Missing corners of tune sheets are sometimes found - if you are lucky - inside the works under the bedplate of the musical movement! Well press the mounted tune sheet and leave to dry. Now clean off all loose dirt with a soft eraser of the artist's gum type, not india-rubber which is too coarse. On paper tune sheets which are very thin and rough-textured, the only cleaning which is advisable is a gentle rub all over with a piece of new bread which will clean as it crumbles - Mr. Fred Hill of Godalming provided this tip with special reference to renovating barrel organ programmes.

It is better to trim the mounted sheet about 1/32" smaller than original to give a clean, unruffled edge and this is done with a metal straight edge and a sharp modelling knife. Any missing parts of the tune sheet may either be left as plain card or, if you are artistic, you can sometimes extemporise the missing parts in water-colours with sufficient success to pass the ordinary quick scrutiny.

Now polish the heads of the brass tacks. Whilst the inside of the musical box lid is clear it is advisable to give it a good clean and, if necessary, restore the finish by polishing, lacquering or painting to suit. The 'new' programme is now affixed into the original brad holes in the lid. The job only takes an hour or so and is well worth the effort.

DIRECTIONS FOR OILING A MUSICAL BOX.

1. To apply oil to the mechanism of a Musical Box, the only part necessary to be unscrewed is the little piece of brass on the top of cover of fly, and that only partially, so as to enable the piece of brass to be turned round a little way. But, as the jewel is loose, care must be taken not to turn the brass piece too far, lest the stone should fall out. After applying one drop of good salad oil to the hole, replace the brass piece with the jewel directly over the hole and screw it tightly down. While doing this with the right hand, it is necessary to use the left by holding the fly between the forefinger and thumb, and slightly bearing downwards, so as to prevent the pressure of the wheels throwing the fly up.

2. Convey, by means of a small iron skewer, two or three drops of oil to the worm pinion beneath the fly, which works in connection with the train of small wheels.

3. Two drops may also be advantageously applied to the pivot at each extreme end of the axle of cylinder.

4. It sometimes happens that, for want of oil on the steel rod which passes through the centre of cylinder, a little confusion in the music may arise from one tune running into another; noticeable more particularly when the barrel re-bounds after the last air on the list has been played out. To obviate this, two or three drops of oil must be put on the steel rod close to the brass ends of cylinder, and while the cylinder is at the end of the first tune (after Stop No. 2 has been pushed towards the back), move the cylinder with the forefinger from right to left, several times, until the obstruction has been removed.

5. It is specially desirable that in oiling the mechanism nothing should be attempted until the mainspring has been exhausted, and run completely down, for want of winding.

WALES & McCULLOCH,

IMPORTERS OF MUSICAL BOXES,

22, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON.

The above has been loaned by Mr. G. Planus

AN APOLOGY - The firm which processes our Photopages was unable to obtain supplies of double-sided sensitized paper in time for publication date of this issue. In consequence, pages 5 and 6 as well as 27 and 28 are printed on single-sided paper. This is unintentional but it is suggested you use the blank sides to draft out your contribution to THE MUSIC BOX.

I WAS VERY INTERESTED in the article in your Spring issue "How I obtained my first musical box" and think that the following story of my own start in the hobby may also be of interest.

EL DORADO ———
IN
——— BRIGHTON

By C. W. Bruce

Many years ago, about 1930-31, I lived in a bachelor flat in London and frequently visited my parents home in Brighton. My father had several budgerigars in a conservatory and, being very fond of all livestock in the form of pets, they fascinated me. On Saturday mornings I would visit a well-known street market in Brighton and I came across a musical box on a stall. I had not seen one before and knew nothing about them and being of a musical mind this one attracted my attention. The stall holder played part of a tune and I was at once thrilled and thought this would amuse the budgerigars.

I enquired the price and was told it was 7/6d, so I thought I would be rash and bought it. The stall holder told me he had several others in a warehouse nearby which I subsequently visited. It was filled with musical boxes, also parts galore, many mechanisms without boxes and also boxes without the works. Well, I was merely interested in it and left it at that and thought that having spent 7/6d on one box I had been rash enough. The said box did amuse the birds to which they would sing away in accompaniment.

Many years passed by until my attention was drawn to a sale in London in 1939 about the time of the Munich crisis. No one was very enthusiastic in adding to their possessions having quite enough uneasiness about safeguarding the possessions they already had. I still have the catalogue and one regrets now not having bought the whole lot! To quote a few examples may interest readers:

- a. A Nicole Freres box 18", also miniature Polyphon with 18 discs for 50/-
- b. A double comb G. Baker & Co. Geneva, playing six airs from Wagner, Strauss, Flotow &c, 18½" also PVF 20" 8 English airs, for £4
- c. Nicole organ musical box, 8 airs from the Operas, 27" £2.15.0
- d. Nicole Freres burr walnut inlaid Mother o'Pearl, 3 ft. long plus five interchangeable cylinders for 35/-
- e. Symphonion musical clock, 7' 7" high, carved walnut, 25 tunes, £3. 15.0
- f. Musical Box 'Simplex', 12 interchangeable cylinders in inlaid walnut case, 2 ft. mounted on walnut table with two drawers for cylinders, 3 ft. long, £6

and so on for forty-six lots!

I was again rash and bought two or three of them only. Later my interest really developed and I soon started to look around antique shops. I eventually met Mr. Clark and, from then onwards, became a very serious collector. Incidentally, I found that my original box at 7/5d was a Nicole Freres 1839 Overture box and a really fine specimen at that. I would not dream of parting with it now at any price.

Being a born collector, I have many collecting hobbies and the musical box collection grew to such an extent that I stopped for lack of room (or rooms!). I now have Musical watches, seals, bird boxes, snuff boxes and many unusual items including an automatic Polyphon, but I have no budgerigars!

I always look back and I still treasure my first meeting with a musical box with a sentimental feeling as it started me off eventually to acquire this very large variety I now have.

Incidentally, before the rush starts, I should mention that I tried to locate that old Brighton warehouse again after I had learned to appreciate musical boxes. I never found it and no one in the locality knew of it ever existing - although I know it did exist originally.

Editor's Comment: A few months ago, an old gentleman who collected Victoriana in the shape of fine clocks and musical boxes passed away. His widow, unappreciative of the finer points of these treasures, sold the lot to a junk merchant and I have been told how two men were seen throwing the stuff on to a cart. Mr. Bruce's Brighton stall-holder quite likely lost his collection either through enemy action or some such vandal action as described above. As with everything, there is a period of utter uselessness at a stage between usefulness and its value as a collector's piece. Happily, the musical box is practically out of this phase and the pianola starting the slow upward struggle again. That many now priceless specimens are no more is lamentable, yet it does throw into heightened relief the value of the remaining examples. One has only to instance the steam locomotive and the Spitfire as comparison to illustrate this state of 'inverse values' which decree a thing worthless until there are hardly any more left! Incidentally, Mr. Bruce has been prevented from attending our meetings to date. Perhaps we might prevail upon him to provide a talk or an exhibition at a future convention.

 HAVE YOU ANY OLD MUSICAL BOX CATALOGUES, advertisements, lists of tunes, descriptions or instructions? If so, please loan them to your Society for copying and return. Such material will be published in THE MUSIC BOX

The clock that struck 200

WHAT THE PAPERS
say.....

EXPERTS yesterday examined the parish church clock at High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, to see if it had been damaged by a pigeon which became caught in the mechanism.

The vicar, the Rev. Eric Hague, said: "We realised something was wrong when the clock struck 200."

Your Editor, ever
alert to the
funny, odd, pe-
culiar and silly,
saw these in
his paper....

HE HAS RUNG BELL FOR LAST TIME

Mr. Frederick Stevens, head porter at Alleyn's, the Dulwich public school, for the past 30 years, has rung the school bell for the last time.

... it fell on him

**HOWS THAT FOR A BIT
OF QUICK THINKING, EH!**

BELOW is reproduced the face of the trade card of Mojon Manger & Co. circa 1885. A high-class maker of musical boxes and watches, their card bears on the reverse the following:

"WATCHES - Ordinary kinds. Keyless - repeaters Quarter & Minute, Chronographs - Watches in Rings and Bracelets. Clock Watches - English Watches. MUSICAL BOXES - Ordinary Kinds. Drum, Bell & Castagnettes - Voix Celeste. Forte Piano & Mandoline - Harmoniflute. Piccolo-Zither - and other accompaniments. Overtures, &c, &c.
Musical Boxes made to order with every description of airs. Mechanical Harmoniums and Pianos. Table boxes playing 24, 36, 48, 60 & 100 airs. Specialite Boxes with Double Springs playing 20 to 150 minutes."

Mojon, Manger & Co.
FORMERLY

MOJON, MONTANDON & CO & JOHN MANGER & CO

Manufacturers of

WATCHES & MUSICAL BOXES.

26 & 27, BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS HOLBORN CIRCUS,

London, E.C.

AND AT

CHAUX-DE-FONDS, GENEVA,

& OXFORD TERRACE COVENTRY.

P. T. O.

UNUSUAL MUSICAL MOVEMENTS



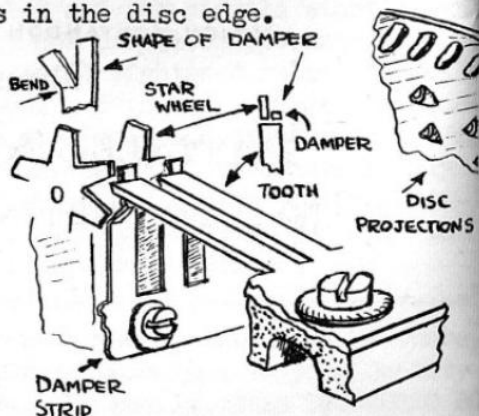
Our subject this time is another 'unknown' make of disc musical box - the "ORPHENION". Believed to exist also in 16" and 17½" disc sizes, the 10.11/16" model is described here.

The Orphenion is housed in a plain, tastefully proportioned case, plainly veneered. Inside the lid, a plain wood panel bears the word 'Orphenion' in gold script. Several features are immediately apparent - the large and complex shaped base-plate containing a cut-out through which operates a delicate 'spectacles' type of endless fan, and the exposed nickel-plated motor wound from the right-hand side of the case by an external handle. The visible endless fan comprises a 'U'-sectioned cross piece into which are set at the extremities spring-loaded brass discs. As the mechanism is set in motion, the discs move outwards against their springs. The motor features a shrouded Geneva stop-work and the start and stop mechanism is operated by a sliding knob on the front of the case. This controls a lever which engages directly - and very noisily - in the fan. A Symphonion-type speed control is effected with a lever on the right hand outside of the case. The comb contains 50 square-ended, finely cut teeth, the base notes carrying large resonators. Dampers are poorly designed and comprise vertical brass elements. The end of each damper is split and bent so that the rotating star wheel pushes the damper against the tooth (see illustration). Once the brass has become 'tired', damping ceases to be effective. Continual adjustment is necessary in use.

The most interesting feature is probably the disc which is of zinc. There are no 'projections' as such, the disc being stamped with little scoop-shaped dents. In playing these quickly wear and flatten so that careful re-denting with a nail-file is needed. Nine thin pressure wheels on the clamping bar hold the disc on to the star wheel riders. Drive is by peripheral gear which engages in slots in the disc edge.

The machine has a most marked tone, surprisingly deep and resonant, yet mellow. Of the limited number of discs with the Author's example, all seem to be set up well and show off the fine tone.

There appears to be no discernable form of trade mark other than the title 'Orphenion' on the discs. Again, there is the chance that some other Members may be able to shed further light on the type and its maker.



THE STEAM FAIR AT WHITE WALTHAM

by
David Tallis

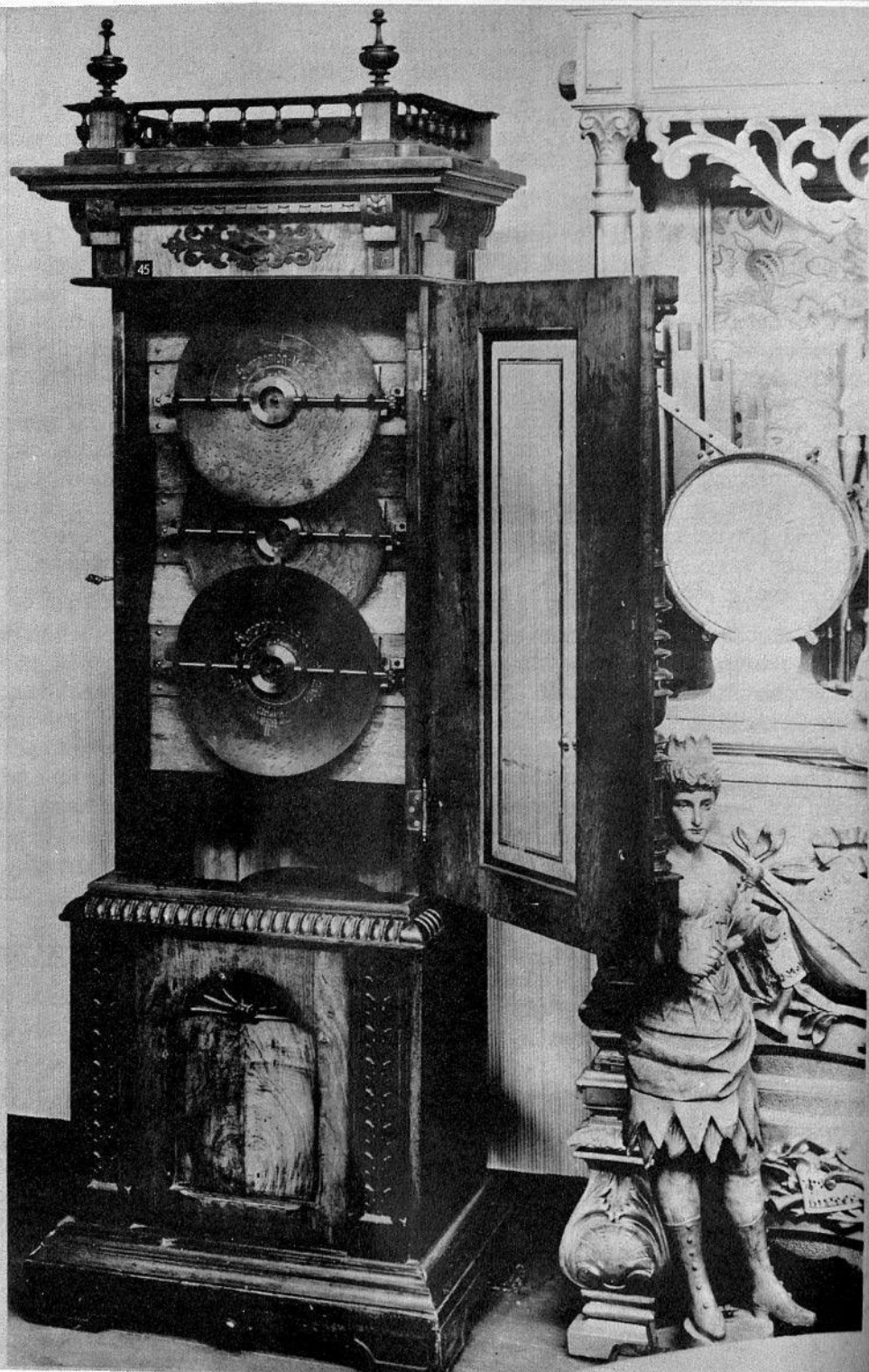
Sunday, August 30th, was a date to bear in mind for go with them. The common at White Waltham, Maidenhead, was the venue for the aptly-named Steam Fair.

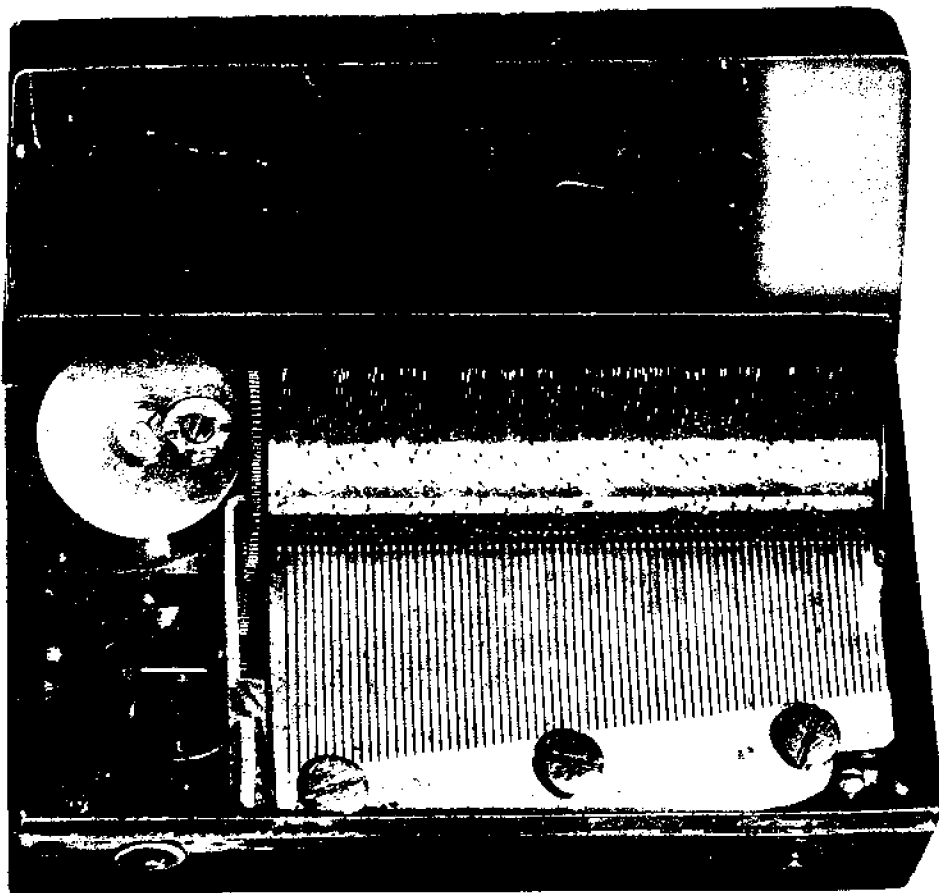
After seeing the back of the same car for five miles in half an hour, I abandoned my car and walked the last mile. The country air was fresh with the smell of hot engines and petrol and sang with transistorised music. The last leg was across a field of automobiles, neatly sewn in lines and watered and now ready for the reaper. Behind the field was a row of tall trees and behind the tall trees - the fair!

It was everyone's picture of the ideal fair. The setting was perfect with trees all around and the spire of the church visible through them. Within the area was a regiment of steam traction engines, columns of smoke issuing from them, which were either being used to drive another fairground contrivance or were merely being shown off. In every case the engines were spotlessly clean and shone with polished brass. In comparison, their owners were filthy, clad in shiny blue denims and black caps.

The air was full of music, puffing and blowing out of a dozen or so fairground organs, staying somehow stationary in a puffing and blowing crowd. The finest sound of all came from the 1908 White Bros. Mammoth 112-key Gavioli organ, a veritable masterpiece of automatopolyphonica. The massive array of central boxwood pipes would be enough to satisfy most of us but in addition to these were ranks of tin pipes and brass trumpets as well as a fine array of percussion instruments. These include bass and sidedrums, castinettes, a triangle, a tambourine and a set of tubular bells. Apart from the design and appearance of the organ, its music was of a very high standard and this was shown by the fact that it was continually surrounded by an audience many of whom had come to listen as well as just to look. The balance and tuning were superb and as the instrument was in a state of almost complete disrepair as recently as 1953, great credit is due to its resuscitator and present owner, Mr. George Palmley of Chester-le-Street. There was also a very fine 98-key organ by C. H. Marengi owned by T. G. Hunt of Oldbury. This played well to a large audience but somehow lacked the character of the huge Gavioli.

There were a dozen or so other organs all of which were nursed by their enthusiastic owners who were continually feeding them with music. They had all been well restored and were giving ample reward for the work put into them. I even heard one organ playing "My Fair Lady" proving that the art of roll-cutting has not died. This is reassuring, as is the fact that there are enough interested people about who will care for the many fairground organs still surviving.





THE LIDDELL COLLECTION, now on exhibition at the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, began with the purchase of this movement in a tin box for one shilling. Two tunes are played - "Air de Braham" (sic) and "O Fly Not Yet".

◀ **EROLICA symphonion**

In place on the playing spindles are the three discs of the "Symphonion Marsch" No. 8059. To the right of the instrument stands an incomplete Gavioli fairground organ.

RECORD

REVIEW

The purist may well shun the gramophone, bearing against it the grudge that it was responsible for the end of the musical box era. However, the aforesaid device has at last decided, it seems, to make amends and the musical box enthusiast is now able to purchase gramophone records of Victorian 'pops' performed on real live mechanical musical instruments.

'Canned' music is so much a part of our lives that we take for granted the facility to listen to the whole gamut of music in our own homes. That there is more than a minority interest in mechanical music is seen when a leading British recording company publishes music box records. As inferred already, we have now gone the full circle and, with the release in July by Decca of three discs of Polyphon music plus one of fair-ground organ music, we now have the chance to buy mechanical musical gems over the counter alongside the teenagers who remain singularly unmoved by the rhythm of the Alabama Coon Cake Walk or The Belle of New York.

Three of the new Decca discs are 45 r.p.m. E.P.'s featuring machines from the collection of our enterprising Member Bruce Angrave who also supplied the rather attractive and eye-catching sleeves and 'programme notes'. The first disc is called 'POP POLYPHON' (Decca DFE 8577) and begins with the authentic and necessary sound of the instrument being wound up. The standard of recording of this and the other two discs is extremely high whilst at the same time retaining the minor imperfections of this type of music such as the occasional unpredictable mechanical noise and the clatter of the endless and stop at the end of the tune. It is pleasing at last to hear recordings which allow the natural resonance of the instrument to expire at the end of the tune as it is a common fault of other recordings, in particular American ones, that once the melody is ceased, the recording is cut leaving one with the very positive feeling that it is only a recording! 'POP POLYPHON' features a 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ " instrument and it includes in the programme of six tunes the spirited and pleasing performance of that somewhat hackneyed musical box tune "The Bluebells of Scotland".

The second disc is 'SUPER POLYPHON' (DFE 8579) and comprises again six tunes played on a 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " model. An extraordinarily authentic recording again with a well-chosen programme beginning with "Boccaccio" and ending with 'Rejoice Greatly'.

DFE 8578, the third disc, I have left to last because it features the thing which Bruce has dubbed "AUTOGLOCKENPOLYPHON" - the 22" self-changing instrument with dulcimers. Beginning and ending with the aural manifestations of the mechanical wizardry of this device, the programme once more comprises 'six of the best' including "Shepherd's Dance from Henry

VIII", "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" and "Sweet and Low".

These discs are well worth owning - even if only to suggest to your next door neighbour that you own something bigger than an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Polyphon.

The fourth new release is something quite different. In our Easter 1963 issue, we featured George Pamley and the Gavioli fairground organ which he restored. Again under the Decca label "MAMMOTH GAVIOLI FAIRGROUND ORGAN" (LK 4595 Mono) is a splendid adjunct to anyone who wishes to form a representative collection of records of mechanical musical instruments or someone who, as myself, has a deep-seated appreciation for the now rare sound of a genuine fairground organ.

A full 12" 33.1/3 r.p.m. LP, it gives us on one side three Overtures. These are "Light Cavalry" by Suppe, "Mansaniello" (in toto) by Auber and "Excelsior" by Balfe. Each is brilliantly performed by the 112-key instrument which formerly saw service with Sidney Whites' Electric Coliseum Bioscope and Variety Show at Barry Island. I particularly liked the bright, prompt rendering of the Suppe.

Bearing in mind that a fair organ is hardly the easiest device to record, the Decca engineers have made a good job of this with the exception of a little base resonance and overload distortion here and there - this may have been just my copy. Side 2, oddly enough, is free from this and features seven 'pops' including the marches "Blaze Away", "Under the Double Eagle", "Marche Lorraine" and "Old Comrades".

The Gavioli steadfastly and accurately performs the programme with a masterly air and does tend to pose a hint of a question as to whether or not our musical interests today are not awfully awry when one thinks that a fairground audience was treated, seemingly without inspiring a tomato-chucking session, with good music. Today, the fair organ with its attendant steam, smell and colour, is superseded by the high-wattag output of a well-used recording of 'beat' music played, seemingly, with a blunt pin. Imagine "Mansaniello" at 'Dreamland' for example!

The sleeve features a fine colour picture from an unusual angle depicting part of the front of the instrument. John H. Meredith's historical programme notes are both lucid and correct.

Perhaps sufficient interest will be shown in these records to all recording companies to give consideration to publishing a disc of exotic music such as some of the fine Nicole overtures, the best of the barre organ, street piano and auto-harp.

The Editor

TRADE MARKS

LECOULTRE

Lecoultre is one of the best-known names in cylinder musical boxes and was certainly one of the most prolific manufacturers of mechanisms of sustained quality and, in the opinion of many, rivals the old house of Nicole in this respect.

Some early pieces are to be found with the name 'Lecoultre Fa' stamped on the comb and these are certainly of the pre-1840 period. Clark gives Lecoultre Freres as makers of watch and small musical instruments as from 1810 and further credits David Lecoultre as the probable originator of the brass cylinder musical box although no evidence corroborate or refute this has so far come to light. Nevertheless that the firm manufactured in Geneva from 1828 to the 1890's is definite. Many early key-wind examples - fine ones at that - are to be found in plain oak cases. Specimens of the interim period exist which, whilst retaining the key-wind and the end flap to the case, mechanism is covered with an inner glass lid.

Later still, lever wind boxes were made, the lever often having a distinctive shape in that it is bent to the right over the motor to fit on case length. Levers were of flat-section brass, the upper edge scalloped in many instances. Base-plates were always of polished brass as were most of Nicole (incidentally, Nicole at one time produced boxes with ribbed brass bed-plates). The serial number is stamped on the upper left-hand corner. As yet, no system of dating a box by its numbers has been formulated, although if enough tune-sheets and serial numbers were to be forthcoming, an intelligent guess could be made of the periods. To be of any value, however, a very extensive survey would have to be carried out.

After the very early oak-case key-winders, the insides of the boxes were finished in red-brown 'dragons blood' polish and the putty under the inner glass lid was pinkish in colour throughout. Eventually, the boxes were ornamented in the manner of the period with wood inlay, sometimes brass, enamel and minerals. Late boxes were painted as the era of the cheaper, more popular box arrived.

Lecoultre were essentially watch-makers and their boxes - more particularly the very early ones - display this type of craftsmanship: silent running, slender workmanship and a degree of fineness of design and finish in manufacture not present in other makes. Motor bridge, gear train side plates, wheels and cock are very slender on early boxes, the cock often coming to a near point in plan form by the endstone.

Characteristics are relatively easy, the best, say the experts, being the tone which is often very bright and almost metallic in a plain

TRADE MARKS

LECOULTRE

Lecoultré is one of the best-known names in cylinder musical boxes and was certainly one of the most prolific manufacturers of mechanisms of sustained good quality and, in the opinion of many, rivals the famed house of Nicole in this respect.

Some early pieces are to be found with the name 'Lecoultré Falconer' stamped on the comb and these are certainly of the pre-1840 period. Clark gives Lecoultré Freres as makers of watch and small musical movements as from 1810 and further credits David Lecoultré as the probable originator of the brass cylinder musical box although no evidence to corroborate or refute this has so far come to light. Nevertheless, that the firm manufactured in Geneva from 1828 to the 1890's is definitive. Many early key-wind examples - fine ones at that - are to be found in plain oak cases. Specimens of the interim period exist in which, whilst retaining the key-wind and the end flap to the case, the mechanism is covered with an inner glass lid.

Later still, lever wind boxes were made, the lever often having a distinctive shape in that it is bent to the right over the motor to save on case length. Levers were of flat-section brass, the upper edge being scalloped in many instances. Base-plates were always of polished brass as were most of Nicole (incidentally, Nicole at one time produced large boxes with ribbed brass bed-plates). The serial number is stamped in the upper left-hand corner. As yet, no system of dating a box by serial numbers has been formulated, although if enough tune-sheets and serial numbers were to be forthcoming, an intelligent guess could be made at periods. To be of any value, however, a very extensive survey would have to be carried out.

After the very early oak-case key-winders, the insides of the cases were finished in red-brown 'dragons blood' polish and the putty around the inner glass lid was pinkish in colour throughout. Eventually, cases were ornamented in the manner of the period with wood inlay, sometimes brass, enamel and minerals. Late boxes were painted as the era of the cheaper, more popular box arrived.

Lecoultré were essentially watch-makers and their boxes - more particularly the very early ones - display this type of craftsmanship in silent running, slender workmanship and a degree of fineness of design and finish in manufacture not present in other makes. Motor bridges and gear train side plates, wheels and cock are very slender on early ones, the cock often coming to a near point in plan form by the endstone.

Characteristics are relatively easy, the best, say the experts, being the tone which is often very bright and almost metallic in a pleas-

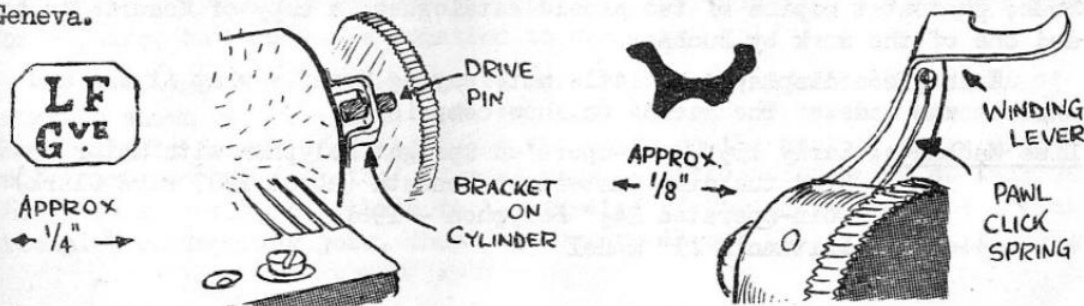
ing way. This is due to the shape of the teeth in particular the upper register which are needle-like and display no great taper or presence of a definite waisted point. The spaces between them are square cut. Base notes are often weak, the musical set up being not always to the best advantage of the base notes.

The comb sometimes bears the mark 'LF' above 'Gve' in an eight-sided border (see illustration), but not always.

A peculiar identification is a small symbol often misinterpreted as a dent or casting fault which we shall term 'the rampant puppy'. This tiny mark can usually - but not always - be found somewhere on the base-plate, more often between the front ends of the motor bridges, sometimes by the train and in some instances in several places on one base-plate. It appears on boxes of all sizes and cannot thus be a casting fault or a pattern blemish. The mark is very small and easily missed if the plate is dirty (see illustration). The significance of a small capital letter sometimes found at the top right-hand corner of the base-plate is a moot point. Letters 'C' and 'M' have been found. Combs often bear definite indication of having been polished parallel to the teeth whilst the uncut portion is polished parallel to the comb's length.

Finally, there is the method of driving the cylinder. On a number of boxes, the spigot on the great wheel engages in a small bracket fixed to the end of the cylinder in place of the usual sloppy engagement in a hole in the end of the cylinder itself. Whilst this is present during a period of manufacture, the more conventional drive method is also frequently found. (see illustration).

As best as can be ascertained, Lecoultré never entered a 'doldrums' period as did Nicole at one time. All their boxes were of a high order of quality and the early ones in particular are exceptionally fine pieces of workmanship. The firm of F. C. Lecoultré made very, very large musical boxes in later years - some as big as coffins - and one example has been seen in which the mechanism alone weighs in excess of one hundred-weight. The House of Lecoultré, so proclaims a nameplate on this particular item, was founded in 1823 and the address shown is Rue des Alpes 12, Geneva.



MANSFIELD MUSEUM MUSICAL

BOX EXHIBITION

By John Entwistle

Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery has staged a very successful exhibition of musical boxes this summer. So successful has it been - there were over 5,000 visitors in August alone - that the display was retained for a further four weeks.

It all started off in the early part of the summer when the Curator told me that the Museums Association were holding their Annual Conference this year in Nottingham and that on one of these days, after visiting several houses in the vicinity, the delegates would be returning to Mansfield where the Corporation would entertain them to tea. Would I put on a little exhibition as I had done three or four years ago.

A short while ago, I found it necessary to move into a small flat and thus distributed most of my collection around the family in different parts of the country for safe keeping. I was quite willing to put on a show for the Mansfield Museum but felt that the few pieces I still had at home were insufficient by themselves, so I wrote to our worthy Secretary asking for whatever help he could give me. He very promptly and generously replied that I could take along as many of his boxes as I cared to collect and regard them as being on loan from Members of the Musical Box Society, there being insufficient time to circulate Members generally to try to get other items together. So saying, a number of pieces belonging to Mr. Green, myself and a few contributions from friends were put on show for the Association's delegates on July 10th.

The exhibition was thereafter opened to the public and on Saturday afternoons I went along to demonstrate - the Curator ably attending to this job during the week. All the boxes - excepting my 24½" Polyphon - were locked in glass cases which were opened for the purposes of demonstrations. Thus none of the pieces could be touched by the public.

The exhibition included a bit about our Society with Membership forms being available from the Curator, a copy of the third edition of Mr. Clark book, photostat copies of two Nicole catalogues, a copy of Mosoriak's book and one of the work by Buchner.

Each piece displayed a little note saying briefly what it was and when it was made. The pieces on show comprised:

Disc Machines: Early 15½" coin-operated upright Polyphon with motor behind the disc instead of beneath (about 1887 says Clark)
Coin-operated 24½" Polyphon - 1901
Britannia 11" model

Cylinder Models - Nicole Freres = No. 43144 (6 overtures)
 No. 41335 (4 overtures)
 No. 16295 (6 airs)
 No. 22545 (6 airs)
 No. 27194 (6 airs - oratorio only)
 No. 29326 (6 airs - forte-piano)
 No. 41332 (6 airs)
 No. 38162 (4 airs)
 Lecoultre = No. 4878 (6 airs)
 P.V.F. = (12 airs)
 - ==Two photograph albums, circa 1880

In addition, there was an automaton, kindly loaned by the Duchess of Portland (which I restored for her)- this is the usual kind of thing with a ship in the foreground rolling on the waves with a windmill on the left hand side and two trains which pass over a bridge in the background.

One other piece was shown, namely a mandoline movement in the course of re-pinning, about half of the cylinder being completed.

The exhibition attracted notice in the local newspapers and, in addition, the B.B.C. sent a film unit along to do a short film sequence which appeared on Midland Television programme 'Six-Ten' on Thursday August 11th and lasted about four minutes.

The Curator tells me that the musical boxes have attracted appreciably more visitors to the Museum than is usual for this time of the year and indeed they proved so popular that the exhibition remained open until September 26th.

A number of people who have seen the exhibition have written or spoken to me saying that they have musical boxes made in 1495 or something equally improbable. One or two have said that they have boxes which they do not want and would I care to have them. A number have told me about boxes belonging to their great-great-great-grandfathers which no longer work and can I do anything about it. At the moment I have collected an automaton, three musical boxes and one musical chair for repair and others I am assured are about to descend upon me! Incidentally, I make no charge for repairs, but suggest a donation to charity.

One of the things which has rather shaken me has been the amount of interest shown by teenagers, even the cafe-bar cowboy types - who seem cheerfully to accept that the tunes they hear on the musical boxes might well represent the 'top-ten' of past eras, but the point which so many of them make is really a tribute to the quality of the workmanship - "real precision engineering jobs, them!" as one youth put it. *****

PIANOFORTE AND ORGAN MANUFACTORY.

ESTABLISHED 1840.

LIMONAIRE BROTHERS & CO.

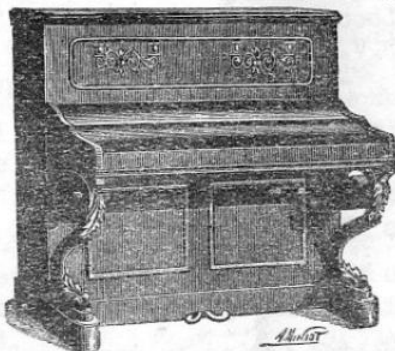
Paris:

166, Avenue
Daumesnil, 166.—
PARIS.

PIANOFORTES

OF ALL KINDS, AND
IN ALL STYLES.

Special Manufacture
for
Foreign Climates.



London:

150, Great College
St., Camden Town,
LONDON, N.W.

BARREL ORGANS
OF ALL KINDS.

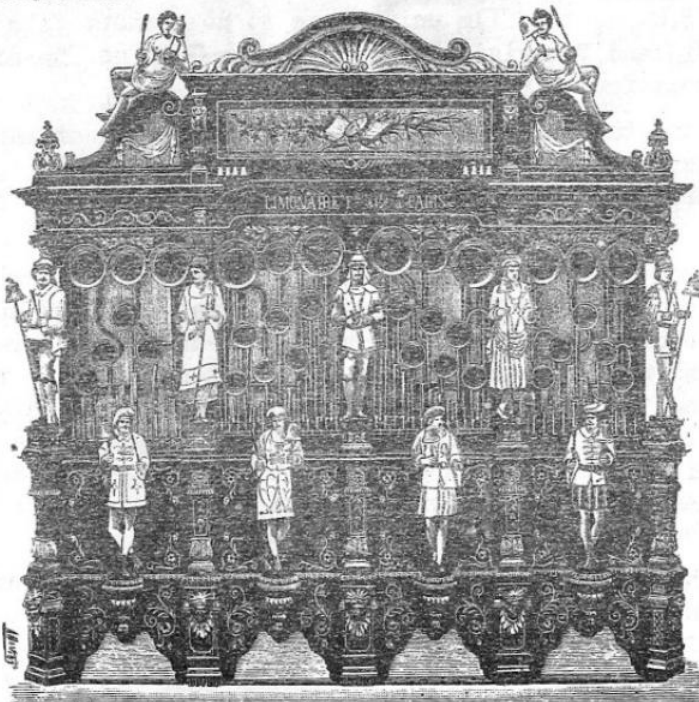
PORTABLE
ORGANS.

ORCHESTRAL
ORGANS,

FOR DANCING SALOONS.

Special Models for
Showmen.

COMMISSION - EXPORTATION.



Catalogues and Designs sent on post-paid applications.

(12)

STEAM WORKS.

THE BRITANNIA

by

Frank S. Greenacre

BY THE LATE 1890's, the versatility and excellent performance of the disc machine had captured a large section of the world's musical box markets and, faced with ever dwindling sales, it is not surprising to find

that Swiss firms pensioned off their cylinder-pricking machines and turned to the production of their own disc machines.

Messrs. Mermod Freres had successfully produced the "Stella" during 1896 and, no doubt encouraged by this, the B.H.A. firm at St. Croix commenced manufacturing the "Britannia" circa 1898. Aimed specifically at the English market, the Britannia differed somewhat in mechanical details when compared with other contemporary machines but did not employ the projection-free disc which was developed at St. Croix, probably because of patent difficulties, or the fact that this method of operation tended to increase production costs of the machine itself. All machines were supplied through the agency of the Star Silver Depot, London, and this name is often found cast into the bed-plate, sometimes in the form of a medallion.

Right from the start the musical aims of the Britannia were obviously the reverse of its mellow and refined Swiss cousin and the strident sound output is often quite startling, particularly with the duplex comb models. This is to a large extent due to the sizeable cases used and the extensive employment of sounding boards. Particularly in the case of the table models, it was not unusual to cram the movement into a case which was only just of sufficient size as with the majority of Polyphons. Not so with the Britannia and this generosity of casework dimensions, coupled with the rapid beat of the comb teeth, gives the Britannia a loud, clear ringing tone which many find preferable to a Polyphon, although it cannot be said that all of the discs have been set up in a brilliant manner.

Britannias came in the usual large variety of sizes and models ranging from the infantile 5" to the giant 25". One of the most popular types was undoubtedly the so-called "smoking cabinet" model which could either be hung on a wall with the brackets provided or stood on a table in the more usual manner (see illustration). This type used a 9" peripheral drive disc which operated 80 teeth on two combs and the rather attractive cases usually exhibit a transfer proclaiming "Regd. design no. 370.254". Unlike the one illustrated, quite a number were made with the base-plate devoid of all wording and, as the discs are often found with only the number and title stencilled on, mistaken identification is commonplace. The set up of the music is identical to the 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " table model, the discs being a litt-

le larger owing to the provision of driving holes.

Models up to and including the 12" disc size were also put on the market called "The Imperial" and, except for the change of name, these machines were identical to Britannia and the discs are, of course, interchangeable.

Some of the cheaper made table cases were manufactured to have either a cylinder or a disc movement installed and the rich 'veneer' and 'inlay' is often only a transfer stuck on a deal carcass. However, some trouble was taken with the upright cases and these are, in the main, well proportioned and well made. After the birth of the phonograph, the larger twin-door cases were modified and fitted with the new wonder talking machine and pigeon holes were provided down each side of the case to house the cylinders. The makers were certainly enterprising!

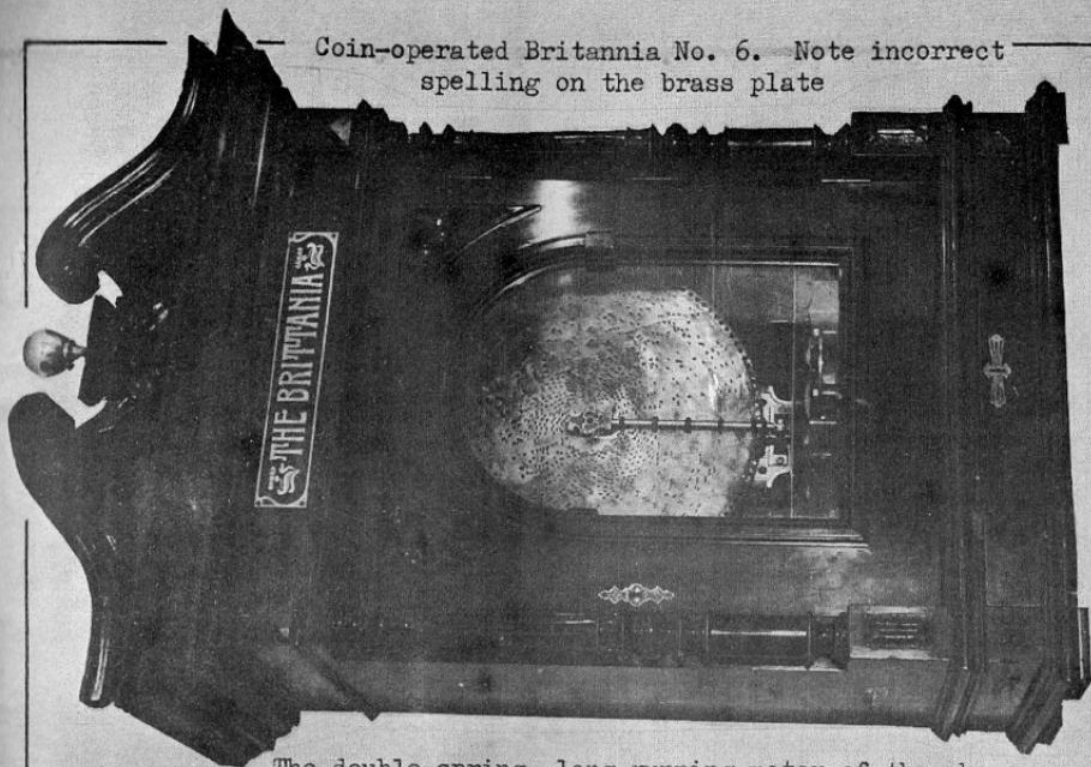
One interesting development on the larger Britannias is the rather unusual comb arrangement which was frequently, but not always, used. An endeavour to get the best of both worlds was attempted by fitting broad-tooth combs for the bass registers and switching to fine-tooth duplex arrangements for the middle and upper registers. The extra trouble and damper complications necessitated by adopting this layout was certainly worth while as these machines have a very fine tone indeed.

Those Members who are lovers of Gilbert & Sullivan will already be aware that, except for one wild burst of Mikado songs (5032 on 19th"), the Polyphon company avoided this wealth of music and, in this connection, it can only be assumed that copyright difficulties were encountered. However, these difficulties do not seem to have been met with by B.H.A. as the writer has many discs of music from H.H.S. Pinafore, Gondoliers, Iolanthe and so on which are very pleasantly rendered and in proper timing.

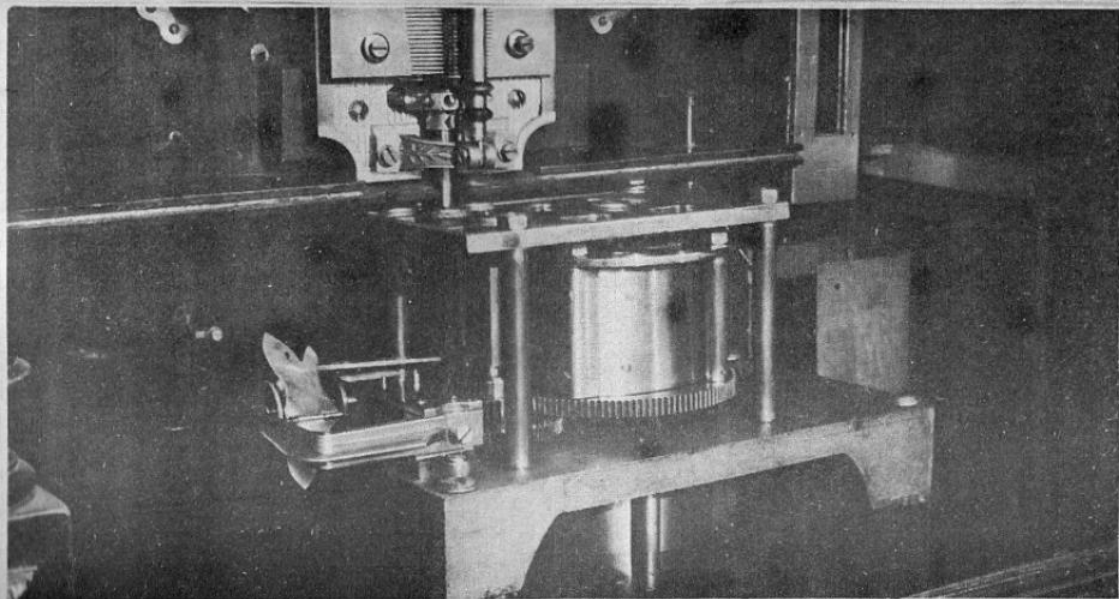
Most disc box makers seem to have had enormous difficulty in finding the correct composer's names - even with well-known popular songs - and mirth-provoking errors are frequent. An instance is "Rule Britannia" which Polyphon concede to L. Zampa, Symphonion to Handel and Monopol to Leghorn when, in fact, it was not composed by any of these!* Britannia rose to the occasion magnificently and solved the problem with one sweep of her trident - Composer's names were not shown!

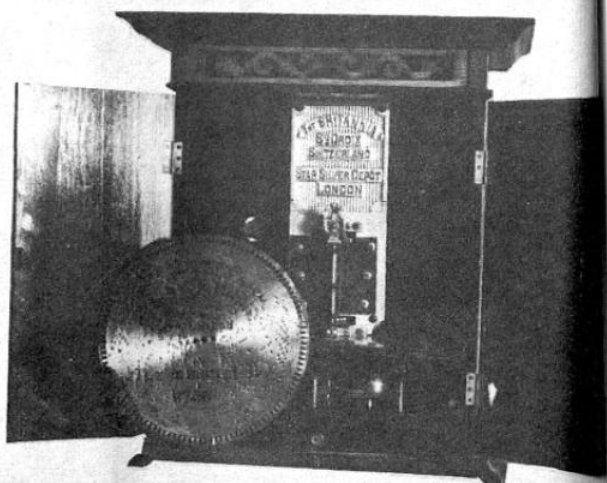
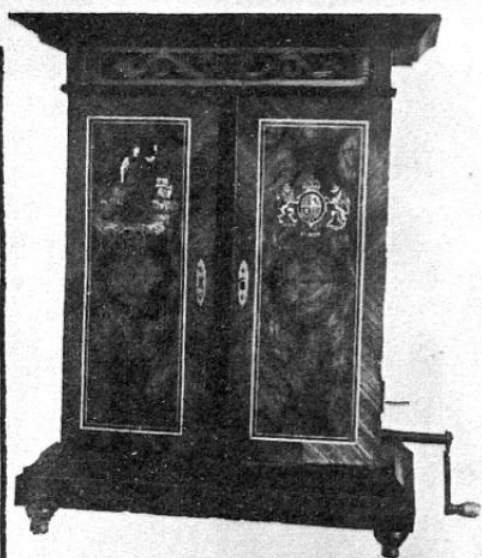
* Rule Britannia was written by Dr. Thomas Arne and it was first performed at Clifden House, Maidenhead, on August 1st, 1740, to celebrate the accession of George 1st to the throne. The music is attributed to Mallet who (with one Thompson) finished libretto for Arne's masque "Alfred" which contained "Rule Britannia", and also, without justification, to Handel!

Coin-operated Britannia No. 6. Note incorrect spelling on the brass plate



The double-spring, long-running motor of the above model. Note plated parts and detachable escapement

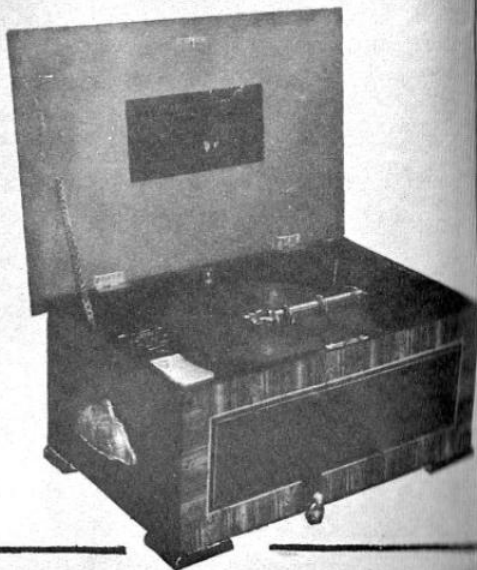
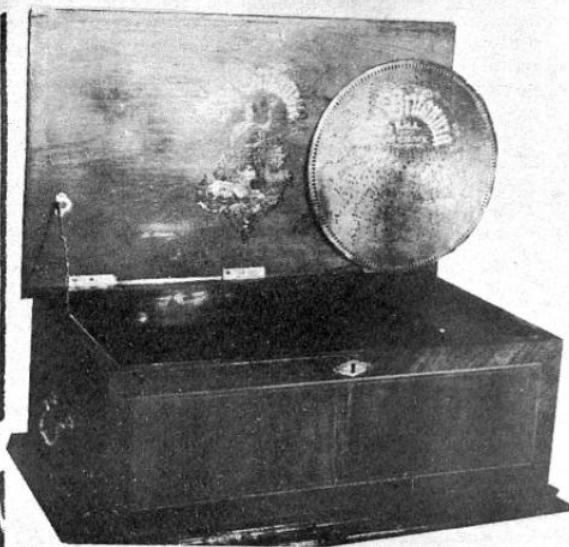




Above: "Smoking Cabinet" twin-comb model purchased new in 1904

Below left: 12" table model, 112 teeth. Full-colour trade-mark in lid

Below right: 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ " single-comb table model, lever wind. Instructions in lid on label.



→ EDITOR'S COMMENT In a late Victorian display room at the Geffrye Museum, London, E.C.1, there stands a cabinet with double doors and surmounted by a knobbly pediment in the best musical box tradition. Beneath the top is a message which reads "The Britannia Phonograph Cabinet" and inside is - a phonograph bearing the name "The Britannia Phonograph". On either side of the contrivance within the cabinet are shelves for storing cylinders. A simulcrum of the musical box variant, incorporation into the case of surplus musical box components is probable and thus we have evidence of another well-known Swiss maker, forced with extinction by the arrival on the scene of the phonograph, adopting the policy "if you can't beat 'em, then join 'em!" ●

REDISCOVERY OF THE QUAIN'T OLD
 ☆ VICTORIAN MUSICAL ☆
 BOX

A very large number of people - and not only youngsters at that - have never seen nor heard a musical box. To many, 'canned music' means the

Caroline/Luxemburg cult of noise purchased in their circular millions as a black disc and rotated at 45 r.p.m. on a record-player. For them, not even the majestic 12" '78' of Caruso, let alone the soft-tone needle, the stroboscope or soundbox. Record playing jargon ceases at the 'top ten' whilst those of more mature years talk squarely of 'gramophones'.

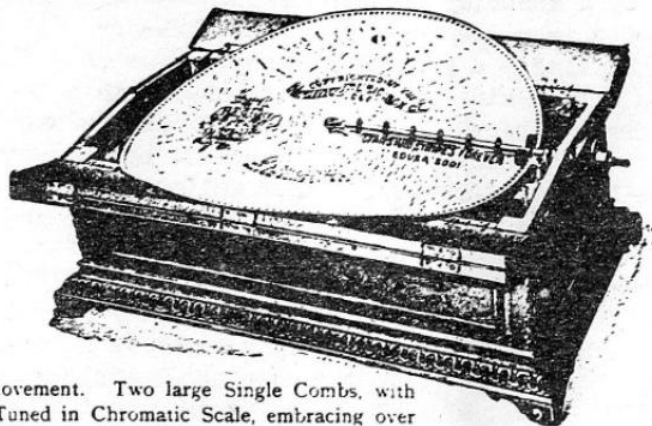
When reference to the thorn needle is as incomprehensible as is the CC41 label on my old shirt, it is easier to understand that, confronted with a musical box for the first time, the youth of today often considers it to be a modern product! Whilst four or five years ago, it was just one of those by-gones which, along with the combination boot scraper and brush, the curling tongs and the candle-snuffer, was accepted but hardly a subject of great concern or interest, the dulcet-toned musical box has certainly been "re-discovered". The B.B.C. frequently uses recordings of them to introduce programmes and similarly the period play on television (I detest the contraction "T.V." - it savours of a malady) is now considered "with it" only if the characters in it leap up at intervals and play the musical box almost as frequently as they drink tea.

This serves two purposes - firstly to preserve the character of the automatic musical instrument, thereby bringing it before a larger cross-section of the public. This means certain preservation. Secondly, it indicates that it is a worthwhile possession. This means greater value.

Whilst the sound of the finest music boxes will be propagated through the gramophone record and tape recorder, one thing is certain! There is no chance of anything other than the cheap musical movement ever being produced again. The cost would be quite fantastic and even the lowliest of the Lecoultre class would probably cost well over £100 to produce even in quantity. Unless we were to be content with one made of polythene.. ●

Orchestral Regina, No. 6

REPRINTED FROM
THE
POLYPHON
CATALOGUE



Long-running movement. Two large Single Combs, with 172 Notes, Tuned in Chromatic Scale, embracing over 7 octaves. Tunes, 27 ins. diameter. Case in oak or mahogany. Size, 34 x 20 x 12½ ins.

£36 10 0

Extra Tunes, 7 6 each.

MUSICAL CLOCK - The "Scarboro'" Polyphon Drawing Room clock, size 80 x 20 x 13", price £23. Highly finished Carved Walnut Case. Can also be had with Penny-in-Slot Attachment. Tunes 11½" diameter. Extra tunes 1/8d each. THE PRICE OF EACH CLOCK INCLUDES SIX TUNES

TUNE SHEET from a key-wound Nicole Freres, No. 28687

U. AIRS
Dumme N° 1125.

MUSIQUE de GENÈVE

1. *Cricket Polka* By Tullien
2. *Hermine Walther n° 1. (The Bridal)* id.
3. *Eclipse Polka n° 2.* id.
4. *Alexandrine Walther. by Labitzky.*
5. *You are going far away. Jeannette and Jeannot*
6. *Olga Walther n° 1. by Tullien*

N° 28687.

de **NICOLE FRÈRES**



LETTERS Mr. Graham Webb, 93, Portobello Road, London, W.11, writes:

TO With regard to Ralph Moss's article on interchangeable discs

THE in the Summer issue (excellent thought, by the way), I

EDITOR have found that a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " Symphonion disc for an ordinary Symphonion also fits a 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " hand-operated Monopol. Also of interest is the fact that although the disc has a "saw edge", both machines work on centre drives.

Mr. G. Planus, 6, Vanbrugh Fields, Blackheath, London, S.E.3, says:

I have a key-wound musical box in a plain oak case, typical of the early period. The base-plate is brass and on the top left-hand corner is the maker's name 'F. Alibert'. Has any Member any information on this maker? I also have a similar box by ALLTEZ a BERGEUR of Geneva, the name again being stamped in the top left-hand corner of the brass bed-plate. A disc I have is 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter and bears the name 'KOMET'. The serial number is 4125 but the title is written in 'gothic' German and French and I cannot read it. I also have some Fortuna discs 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter, code-lettered M.

Thanks, Gerry, all these little pieces of information fit together in the historical development of the musical box.

Mr. D. Tallis of 83, Moss Lane, Pinner, Middlesex, says:

I possess a musical box in an ordinary oak case, key-wound, bearing the name 'Nicole a Geneva' on the bedplate. The serial number is 10349. It is, however, suggested by Members who have seen this that it is not original in some way. There is no name on the comb. It plays six airs and the tune sheet, instead of being on the lid, is fixed on the inside back, behind the cylinder and is of unusual layout, having the tunes listed in two columns of three. A plain sheet of glass slides over the end-flap and into grooves in the front and back board of the case to cover the works. Also in my collection is a musical photograph album with a laminated comb movement. This comb is in groups of five teeth and there is stamped on the brass base by the second wheel the letters 'A.R.F.' I do not recognise this make. A very late cylinder box I own plays six airs on a six-inch cylinder and is called, on the tune sheet, 'The National Musical Box'. Who was the maker of this, I wonder? I also have a cylinder box which I believe to be unusual. It is a Nicole mandoline forte-piano and I cannot think that many of these were made.

Can anyone answer Mr. Tallis's queries?

Letters and contributions for THE MUSIC BOX should be addressed to The Editor, THE MUSIC BOX, Musical Box Society of Great Britain, 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole Street, London, W.1.

LIST OF MEMBERS

95. C. W. Cramp, 4, West Street, Horsham, Sussex
96. J. Barham, 1, Salcombe Way, Ruislip, Middlesex
97. J. Griffiths, 5 & 6, Church Street, Teston, Nr. Maidstone, Kent
- 98*. Dr. H. Levon, Box 497, Welkom, O.F.S., South Africa
99. T. S. Savery, Flat 2, i, Hyde Park Square, London, W.2
100. R. de Vere Green, Kings Ridden, Chelmsford Road, High Ongar, Essex
101. T. de Vere Green, 14, St. Mary Abbots Terrace, London, W.14
102. David A. R. Tallis, 83, Moss Lane, Pinner, Middlesex
- 103*. Findley E. Russell, 3355, Crestford Drive, Altadena, California, U.S.
104. J. S. Gunn, "Kildonau", Eastcote Road, Gayton, Northampton
105. Mrs. Clarence W. Fabel, P.O.Box 5744, Greenville, Mississippi, U.S.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

8. R. Bayford, 10, Oakley Road, Wimborne, Dorset

* denotes Associate Member

WHEN DOES THE MUSIC BOX APPEAR?

Your Journal is published four times a year at approximately three-monthly intervals. The titles of these issues have been finalised after our first few issues as Easter, Summer, Autumn and Christmas, being published somewhere around March, June, September and December. The last issue was delayed for two reasons - the postmen were not switched on and also your Editor got involved in an aircraft construction project for a film.

In this issue, again we have had to hold over several items due to various reasons. Nevertheless, some fine material is being submitted and the Editor and your Committee are indeed appreciative of the support you are providing for THE MUSIC BOX.

~~~~~

All material published in THE MUSIC BOX remains Copyright by the Author. Brief extracts may be quoted provided that due acknowledgement is given both to the Author and THE MUSIC BOX. In all other cases, the Author's written permission for reproduction must first be obtained through the Musical Box Society of Great Britain.

~~~~~

THE MUSIC BOX is published four times each year by The Musical Box Society of Great Britain at 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole Street, London, W.1.

Autumn, 1964

NEW EDITION, FEBRUARY, 1966

LIST OF MEMBERS

95. C. W. Cramp, 4, West Street, Horsham, Sussex
96. J. Barham, 1, Salcombe Way, Ruislip, Middlesex
97. J. Griffiths, 5 & 6, Church Street, Teston, Nr. Maidstone, Kent
- 98*. Dr. H. Levon, Box 497, Welkom, O.F.S., South Africa
99. T. S. Savery, Flat 2, i, Hyde Park Square, London, W.2
100. R. de Vere Green, Kings Ridden, Chelmsford Road, High Ongar, Essex
101. T. de Vere Green, 14, St. Mary Abbots Terrace, London, W.14
102. David A. R. Tallis, 83, Moss Lane, Pinner, Middlesex
- 103*. Findley E. Russell, 3355, Crestford Drive, Altadena, California, U.S.
104. J. S. Gunn, "Kildonau", Eastcote Road, Gayton, Northampton
105. Mrs. Clarence W. Fabel, P.O.Box 5744, Greenville, Mississippi, U.S.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

8. R. Bayford, 10, Oakley Road, Wimborne, Dorset

* denotes Associate Member

WHEN DOES THE MUSIC BOX APPEAR?

Your Journal is published four times a year at approximately three-monthly intervals. The titles of these issues have been finalised after our first few issues as Easter, Summer, Autumn and Christmas, being published somewhere around March, June, September and December. The last issue was delayed for two reasons - the postmen were not switched on and also your Editor got involved in an aircraft construction project for a film.

In this issue, again we have had to hold over several items due to various reasons. Nevertheless, some fine material is being submitted and the Editor and your Committee are indeed appreciative of the support you are providing for THE MUSIC BOX.

~~~~~

All material published in THE MUSIC BOX remains Copyright by the Author. Brief extracts may be quoted provided that due acknowledgement is given both to the Author and THE MUSIC BOX. In all other cases, the Author's written permission for reproduction must first be obtained through the Musical Box Society of Great Britain.

~~~~~

THE MUSIC BOX is published four times each year by The Musical Box Society of Great Britain at 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole Street, London, W.1.

————— NEW EDITION, FEBRUARY, 1966 —————

Autumn, 1964