

The
Music Box

Volume 20 Number 3 Autumn 2001
Edited by Alan Pratt

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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It's all about sharing



Alan Pratt

One of my missions as Editor has been to stimulate an active 'Letters to the Editor' section in Music Box. Letters in response to items carried in the magazine at least prove that you are reading the contributions of our authors. (I am sure you all read every issue from cover to cover!). Secondly, they give a useful insight into the things which particularly interest you. And, possibly most beneficial of all, they enable everyone to make a contribution to the sum total of our knowledge on all matters concerning mechanical music.

Three very diverse subjects seem to have attracted your interest over recent issues. In-line cylinder/barrel movements keeps throwing up new examples, and I am sure that those members researching the subject have found all the contributions interesting and of value. No doubt in due course this will be the subject of another feature article?

On an entirely different subject, the two part feature on Christie's Old Organ by Paul Bellamy has created more interest

than any other item in the last couple of years. Two more contributions on this series of books are included in this issue and it seems to have captured the interest of many of our readers. I doubt we have heard the last of this matter.

And from the cover of our last issue of Music Box there has been a surprising response to my request for ideas on the date of the event depicted. Three replies are to be found in this issue, but somewhat unusually they come to different conclusions as to the date. Both appear to draw upon authoritative sources, so who is correct? I am sure we will find out.

So what does all this prove? Firstly, that you can never be sure what will attract attention and, secondly, if something is of interest to you, it will probably be of interest to others. So whatever is your present 'pet project' try sharing it with others. Just a couple of paragraphs and a picture may start a whole chain of replies.

As well as sharing your knowledge with others, you may find that you learn more about your project than you thought possible. By sharing we all benefit. Go on - give it a go! ■

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The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editor expressly reserves the right to amend or refuse any of the foregoing.

Any contribution is accepted on the understanding that its author is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in it and the publication of such contributions does not necessarily imply that any such opinions therein are those of the Society or its Editor.

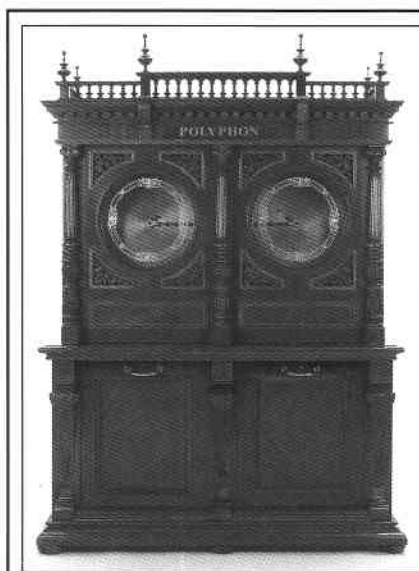
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Front Cover picture

Our cover picture this issue shows one of the new twin disc instruments being built in 19" and 24" disc sizes.

More information on these can be found on page 86 of this issue.

Photo by courtesy of Brian Chesters

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Spring Meeting

**Guildford,
April 20th - 22nd**

Following our usual pattern, this meeting kicked off with dinner at the hotel on Friday, although a number of members had arrived early to explore Guildford. Unfortunately an arctic wind was blowing through the streets which caused an early retreat back to the warmth of the hotel.

After dinner we enjoyed an excellent video of the Musée Baud of L'Auberson presented by Arlette Rustichelli and Michel Bourgos of the museum. Arlette's commentary provided some excellent background to the Musée Baud and its fine exhibits.

Bright and early on Saturday, we set off - in a double decker bus - to visit the collection of Daphne Ladell, our host for the weekend. Throughout the house, musical delights awaited with something interesting at every turn. Outside in the sunshine Keith and Richard entertained on the barrel pianos with Clive tuning the Raffin.

Your reporter was most disappointed by Daphne's workshop, which was open for inspection. Every work surface was spotless; every tool clean and in its rack; every part of the current restoration labelled and laid out for re-assembly! How can we possibly live up to that? But seriously, it is always a delight to see someone else's workshop and see how they tackle different jobs.

The three presentations of the day were given in the marquee which had been set up on the lawn. First off was Kevin McElhone on the subject of "Peculiar Actions". His first example was a 14 note Gately Automatic organette. This is a gear wheel driven instrument with a keyed action playing a linen roll. Altogether a most complicated mechanism to achieve a result which could be reached by a simple paper-as-valve approach!

The second of Kevin's instruments was the 27 note Orchestreon. Another keyed machine, it is really the big brother of the 16 note Euphonia. The operating cranks are on show on the outside of the case and the whole top lifts up to thread the roll through. The brass reeds are in the top of the instrument. Both gave an interesting insight into the ways in which different makers approached a similar problem.

New Members

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

2774 Nicholas Lyles, Surrey
2775 Louise Nolan, London

2776 Robin Biggins, CA, USA
2777 T. Augsburg, OH, USA
2778 C. A. Harper, Essex
2779 R. Stacey, Kent
2780 Tim Wates, Sussex
2781 John Lloyd, Dorset
2782 Eva Harding, Lincs

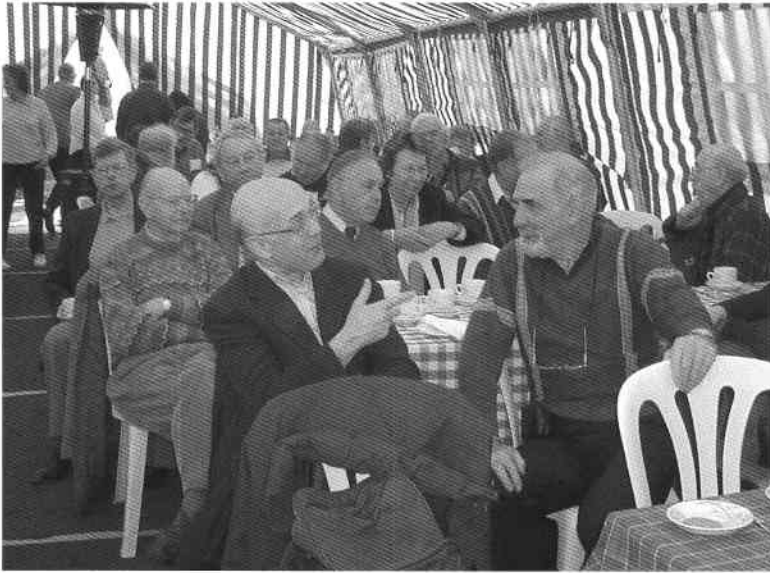


Fig. 1. Members gather in the marquee for the presentations.



Fig. 2. Kevin McElhone with one of his 'Peculiar Actions'.



Fig. 3. Kevin's 27 note Orchestrion.



Fig. 4. Alan Pratt with his 20 note organ.

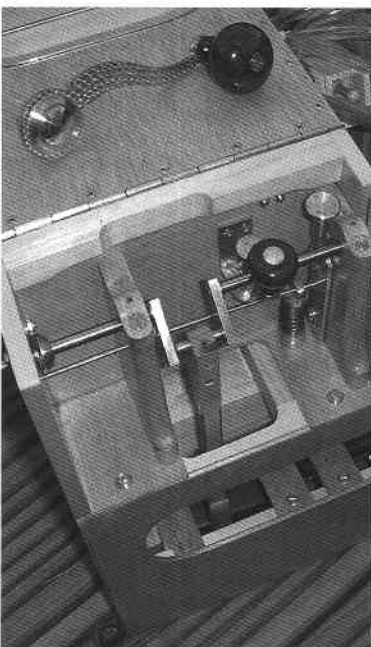


Fig. 5. A close up of the 'works' (of Fig. 4).



Fig. 6. Nicholas Simons plays Daphne's Kalliston.

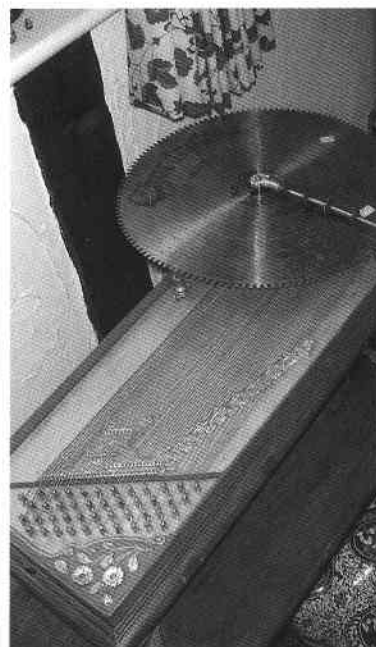


Fig. 7. From Daphne's collection.



Fig. 8. Another instrument from Daphne Ladell.

The next presentation was by Alan Pratt, our Editor, who had brought along his recently built 20 note busker organ. Based on the John Smith design, Alan has changed many of the construction details and produced a finely engineered instrument housed in a highly decorated case for which he was also responsible.

Nicholas Simons completed the trio of presentations with "the world's smallest organette!" This was a Mignonette of very rudimentary design. It is pressure operated with a single bellows, with paper-as-valve feeding 10 reeds. An unusual feature is the arrangement of tracker bar holes. These are in two rows of 5, with odd and even numbered holes 20mm apart!

To say that this makes tune arranging interesting is possibly an understatement! Nicholas played four of his own arrangements of Bach minuets on card strips together with two airs copied from originals. Fascinating stuff.

And so to lunch - also taken in the marquee. Daphne and her band of helpers served an excellent lunch during which we were entertained by music on the Racca piano. As there was a considerable slope on the ground where the marquee was pitched, the Racca was secured to the floor to prevent it rolling away! The image of a Racca piano disappearing down Box Hill came to mind, but thankfully did not happen.

Jost Mucheyer, one of our German members, who came over for the meeting bravely volunteered to play a truly massive rendering of Tannhauser which must have taken nearly 15 minutes

of strenuous handle turning. Incidentally, Jost was accompanied by his 12 year old daughter - there's nothing like starting them on mechanical music young!

After more music outside with tea and cake, we returned to the hotel to

prepare for our usual Society Dinner which this year was followed by a magic show. To round off the evening a Society auction was held in place of the more conventional raffle. Conducted with his usual panache by Christopher Proudfoot this raised £159.00 for Society funds. Altogether a fantastic day.

Sunday gave the opportunity for a visit to another collection - this time at Peter Webbs. A wide variety of instruments were on display but the Rutt organ and the player pianos enjoyed a good workout. After lunch some members went on to a steam fair taking place locally.

More than 70 members attended this weekend and there was universal praise for the wonderful organisation. When things go as smoothly as this, you know that a lot of hard work has gone into the preparation! Our thanks to Daphne and Clive and all their 'team' for a memorable meeting. ■



Fig. 9. President Ted Brown with Peter Webb.



Fig. 10. Alan Godier and Jost Mucheyer examine work in progress on an organ at Peter's.

Society Auction

Following the AGM and lunch the annual Society auction was held. With more than 140 lots there was something for just about everyone - books, materials, movements that had seen better days, and a fair selection of cylinder, disc and barrel instruments.

Christopher Proudfoot was,

once again, our auctioneer and kept the event going along at a cracking pace. A small Hicks type barrel piano, with two barrels, sounding far better than most of these instruments do, realised £1900, whilst a very elegant musical chair made £260. A pair of Imhof barrels found a new home very readily, but recordings of mechanical music found little

interest, although books on the subject continue to be in demand.

Our thanks to all who helped make this such a successful event, especially David and Daphne Walch for organising and displaying the lots so efficiently, Richard Kerridge for looking after the finances, and Christopher Proudfoot for conducting the sale with his usual blend of wit and wisdom. ■

Chanctonbury Ring

Despite the 25th March 2001 being the first day of British Summer Time, thirty five enthusiasts managed to rub the sleep from their eyes, shake off the after effects of one lost hour of sleep and again concentrate on mechanical music. A female robin sat snugly on her nest in the nearby schoolgirls toilet block, reminding us that this day was also Mothering Sunday.

Back in 1982, a Society member bought an 8 air box with an eleven-inch cylinder. The deal, conducted under unfavourable conditions in poor light, was effectively a 'blind purchase' resulting in a not surprising series of disappointments when the instrument was properly examined in the cold light of day. The need for extensive remedial work resulted in the box being put to one side for nearly twenty years before it was handed to Anthony Bulleid, as the ultimate restorer's challenge. Anthony took us through the various tasks involved, including repair to a cracked bed-plate. Having suffered a 'run' at some time during earlier life, only seven tunes were now available,

the snail cam having been modified by removal of step 4. The owner now gets an encore every time tune three is played! The financial viability of a complete cylinder re-pin to re-instate tune 4 is a matter for personal assessment. In this case the owner decided against. The last element of the blind purchase is therefore unresolved - because the tune sheet has been replaced with one containing only seven titles, we do not know the name of that eighth tune.

The intense interest in the subject of automata was obvious from the numbers who jumped from their seats and jostled for a better view, as soon as Mike Start began his presentation. Using a comprehensive range brought from his Camden Passage premises, Mike illustrated the mechanisms by which movement is so realistically achieved. The exquisite faces of some of the 'human' examples invited a description of the manner in which the sculptor's master led to a mould from which a paper maché copy was obtained. Seven members of the group kindly displayed eleven beautiful (and sometimes amusing)

examples of early and late automata for our enjoyment. Our sincere thanks go to all for allowing us such a rare and pleasurable experience.

For the last few minutes of a very full programme, five boxes provided hymns to reflect the day of our meeting.

The next Chanctonbury Ring will be held on 19th August, when Scottish tunes and musical novelties will be the order of the day. ■

From John Turner

Joyce and I would like to thank all members of the MBSGB for their numerous telephone calls, Get Well cards and general good wishes for my recovery during my recent stay in hospital and period of recuperation. We were particularly touched by the card received signed by all the members who attended the recent Annual General Meeting - this was a very kind gesture and much appreciated. I am pleased to report that there are now more plus days than minus ones and progress is being maintained. ■

The deal, conducted under unfavourable conditions in poor light, was effectively a 'blind purchase'

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 18th - Sunday 19th August

The Lincolnshire Steam and Vintage Rally is on at Lincoln on August 18th and 19th. With over 100 steam engines, tractors etc. plus a host of fabulous organs this promises to be a great weekend. County Show Ground - A15 - near Lincoln.

Saturday 24th November

Roy Ison - Lincoln (tel: 01522 540406)

Saturday 1st December

Ted Brown - West Sussex (tel: 01403 823533)

Saturday 8th December

Alan Wyatt - Cambridge (tel: 01233 860332)

Meetings are from around 11.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. with a light lunch provided. Please phone the above numbers if you wish to attend as places are limited.

Sunday 5th May 2002

National Vintage Communications Fair - 2002, Sunday 5th May and Sunday 29th September. see ad for September 23rd 2001 on page 96.

President's Message

At the AGM in June those of you present were kind enough to elect me to the post of President. I feel deeply honoured by this, and I am also slightly puzzled by it; the Presidency of this Society combines the role of President with that of Chairman. For a Chairman, I am the world's worst administrator and, as for a President, I am, I think, the first to hold the post who has not owned a collection of mechanical music. (Gramophones are not really mechanical music, and lawnmowers certainly aren't!).

I am conscious, also, of stepping into the shoes of Ted Brown, who brought to the post a welcome touch of the down-to-earth, of the no-nonsense, and all-too-rare ability not to take himself too seriously. The Honorary Life Membership which was awarded to Ted was a well-earned reward not just for his years as President, but for all the many years in which he has been active on the Committee before that, notably in charge of advertising, and it is good to know that he is to continue in that role.

Ted's Presidency saw the achievement of something I had long ago advocated; the extension of our publications beyond the confines of a quarterly Journal, in a book that has already become a vademecum for every musical box collector. The high quality of The Music Box has perhaps tended to absorb all our efforts in publishing, and there is undoubtedly room for specialist studies like the Tune Sheets book, which draw together within one volume a corpus of information on a particular topic. I hope to be able to continue this new trend.

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain exists to further the enjoyment and understanding of mechanical music, and research and propagation of knowledge of the subject is no less important than the meeting of fellow collectors. Some collectors, in any field, inevitably, become so knowledgeable that they attract the 'anorak' or 'train-spotter' epithet, but the benefits of their microscopist's approach are enjoyed by all collectors, even those who never stop to wonder where information comes from. I certainly intend to uphold this tradition over the next three years. ■

Christopher Proudfoot





Keith Harding

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...and finally-

Dear Fellow Members,

Having served four years as your President, a job I have been proud and honoured to do, I felt it necessary to stand down while my health is still reasonable. I would love to have continued going on the continental trips and would like to have been able to continue enjoying the cut and thrust of Society politics but my health must come before this. Alan Wyatt, our Membership Secretary, has spoken admirably for the Society on the continental trips on my behalf.

I have now, rather humbly, joined the names of past Presidents, all of whom added their mark to the good name of the Society. Having spent twenty or so years on the committee, I appreciate the large amount of unpaid work done by all committee members. It is easy to sit at the back of the room and criticise, but to many of us old stagers it is often a case of "been there, done that". Although our membership has

been falling steadily over the last two decades, it has finally appeared to have levelled off.

However, on the positive side, during my term of office we presented the Tune Sheet book, which is rated by experts and other collectors as filling and correcting a very out-dated collection of varying inaccuracies with a good, clear reference book that will stay with us for a long time to come. Its first free supplement will be available shortly to everyone who has a copy. We have also adopted Associate Membership and are acting on our Membership census. Next year is our 40th anniversary and we are hoping to have another reference book that will spread the name and aims of our Society.

I would like to take this opportunity of sincerely thanking everyone on the committee for all their help in the continued success of the Society over the last four years and to you, the members, who

I regard as personal friends, I offer a big "Thank You".

I have handed over my position of President to Christopher Proudfoot who, unlike me, knows what he is talking about. Christopher has been a member for many years and, being in one of the big auction houses has the day to day pleasure of seeing different musical boxes and is able to pass on more unusual details to our researchers and Archivist. Having been on our committee even longer than me, the day to day running of the Society will be nothing new. Paul Bellamy has taken up the post of Vice President and brings with him a wide knowledge of many aspects of mechanical music including the older ceramic musical novelties.

I am staying on the committee as a committee member and Advertising Secretary and will, of course, see you at all the meetings. Kay and I would like to thank you all for your continuing friendship. ■ **Ted Brown**

Switzerland - July 2001 - the MBSGB tour

The drive to Interlaken was notable only for the dull and rainy weather. Even on our overnight stop at Reims the rain made exploring the city a rather damp experience.

Hoping for the best, we set off on Sunday for the second day of the 12th International Organ Festival at Thun, a delightful lakeside town in central Switzerland. Some 242 organs (Fig.1) were registered at the Festival, so there was, literally,

something for everyone. The oldest instrument was a Gavioli Harmonipan of 1864, but there were also many recently built organs to reinforce the view that there is still considerable interest in building and playing organs. One group of players put on an



Fig. 1. Two of the 242 organs at Thun.

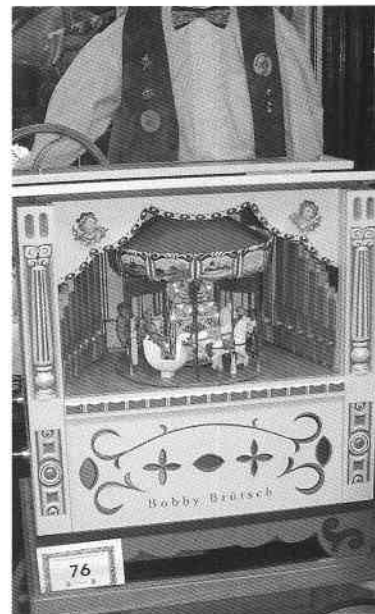


Fig. 2.

One group of players put on an impressive performance playing three organs in sync,...



Fig. 3.

impressive performance playing three organs in sync, whilst others showed novelties like the organ with a built-in carousel (Fig.2). Despite the weather there was so much to see and hear that everyone considered the day a success.

The following day we visited the Museum für Uhren und Mechanische Musikinstrumente at Oberhofen. Housed in a restored 16th century building, the clocks and instruments are presented in an impressive manner. With so many on display it is possible to describe only a few. A Bacigalupo (Fig.3) sounded excellent, but more unusual was a Coelophone

Orchestra made by Thibouville, although it was invented by Claude Gavioli. A powerful instrument, it was originally described as "powerful enough for 60 to 80 persons to dance to". (Fig.4). An automaton of an old couple arguing on a park bench (Fig.5) was amusing and an Orpheus mechanical harp playing Ariston discs sounded good.

For clock enthusiasts there was a huge collection of very early timepieces dating back to the 14th century.

From Oberhofen we went on to the private collection of Kurt Masser where he and Ursula provided welcome refreshments



Fig. 4.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 7.

whilst listening to many of their instruments. (Fig.6). The large Bruder was impressive and the Phillips orchestrion under restoration with its 12 roll revolver capacity should sound fantastic - next time perhaps? Our thanks go to Kurt and



Fig. 8. Singing bird mirror and walking figure at Chateau des Monts.

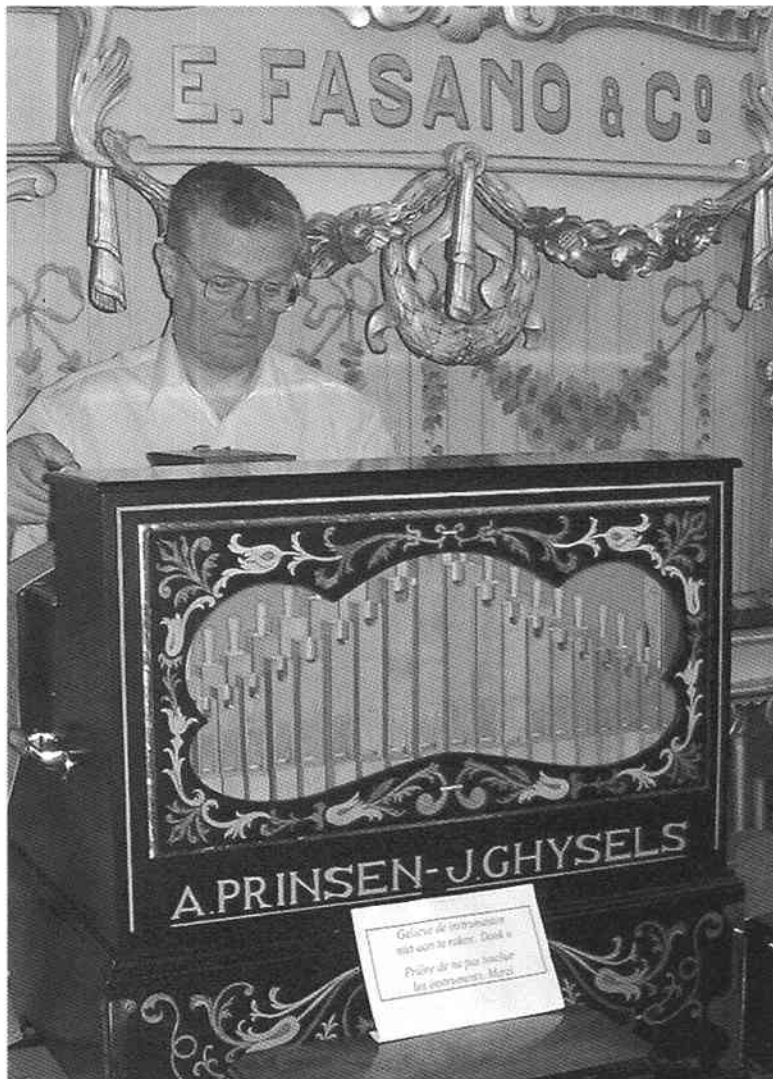


Fig. 9. Jeff Ghysels plays one of his organs.

Ursula for their hospitality. (Fig.7).

Tuesday was a free day and members made their various ways by boat, train and cable car and funicular to some of the attractions of the area.

Our first two visits on Wednesday were to horological collections - to the Musée International D'Horlogerie at Chaux de Fonds where the fabulous collection of clocks and watches was equalled only by the workshop tools and instruments on display. Several musical clocks were displayed but not demonstrated. A great pity!

After lunch we went on to Le Locle where the Musée D'Horlogerie is housed in the Chateau Des Monts. The greeting from a carillon set the tone for the delights to follow. Among the clocks and watches were several outstanding examples of automated figures and singing birds - one built into the frame of a ladies hand mirror (Fig.8). This visit was notable for the way in which our guides brought to life the many exhibits with their background and historical details. Sheer delight!

Later that day we went on to the Musée d'Art et Histoire at Neuchâtel which houses the three unique automata by Jaquet-Droz. Details of these will be in the next issue of Music Box as they deserve a fuller report that we can give here.

And so to our final day with a visit to Jef Ghysels and Arthur Prinsen in Brussels. We were greeted by a sumptuous buffet, consumed to music on a selection of Jef's instruments. Afterwards Jef played more of his wonderful collection (Fig.9) including an arrangement by Arthur of Flight of the Bumble Bee on the mighty Mortier (Fig.10). We also heard the Limonaire Orchestrophone (Fig.11) sounding as sweet as the rest of the collection. Music for dancing was provided by the Decap Dance Organ, and much too soon it was time to leave. (Fig.12).

So much was packed into these few days that we shall

recall special moments for many months to come. Thanks, as always, to Alan and Daphne Wyatt for all the arrangements and to all our hosts for the warmth of welcome extended to us at every venue. ■



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

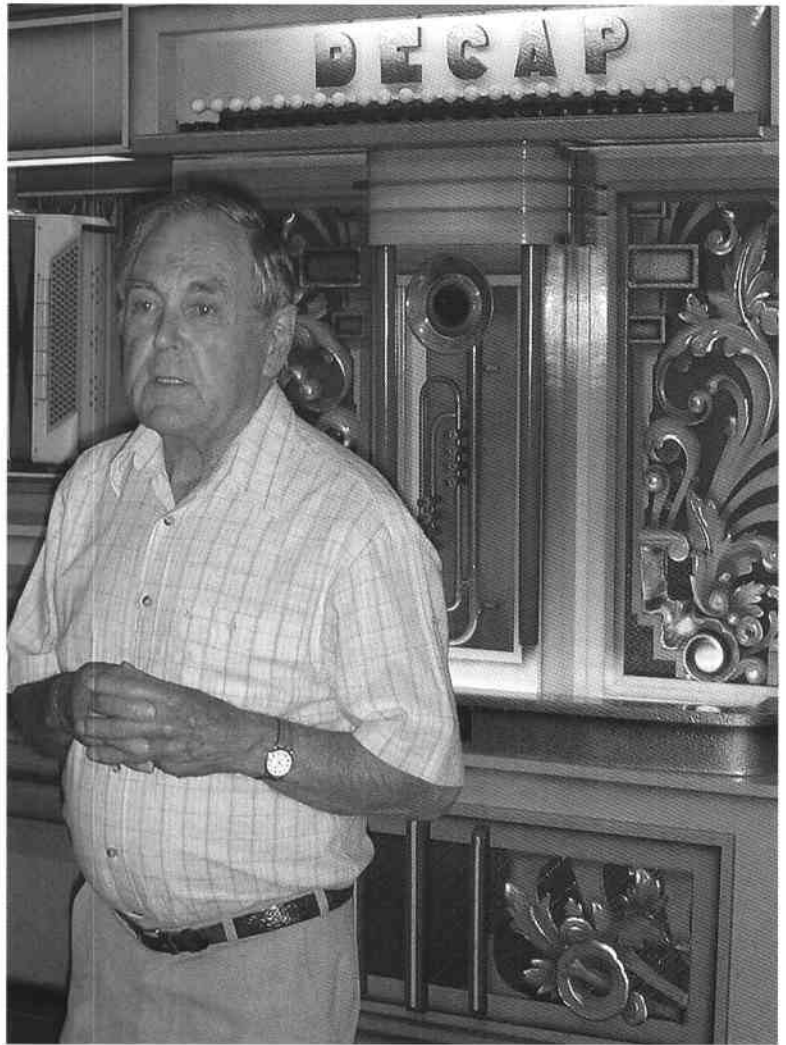


Fig. 12. Alan Wyatt thanks our hosts.

Help needed

Phil Proctor writes from Leeds to say, "I have recently purchased a fairly early (approx. 1828) small three air box by Nicole. It has a 125mm long cylinder which is 31.6mm dia. over the pins. The relevant details have been sent to our Registrar so that it can be added to the list.

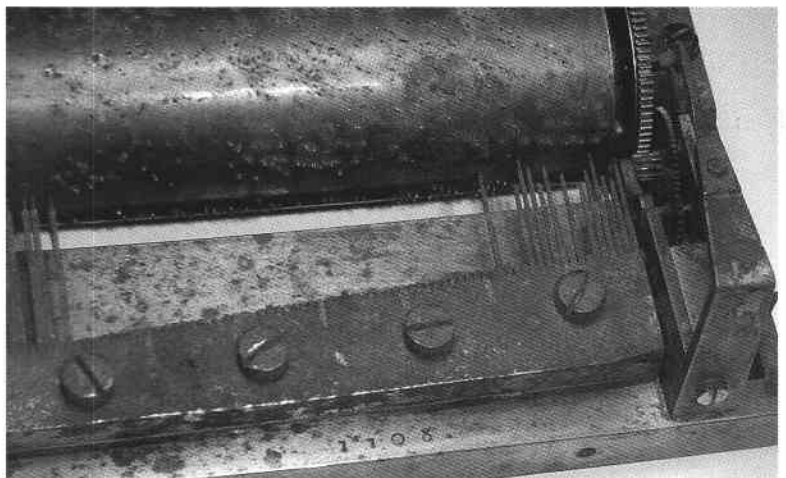
It seems that another box does exist (Serial No. 5523 which is No. 2072 on the register) with the same three tunes as mine, but details of its keeper are obviously not recorded. I was hoping that you might ask the current owner of the box to contact me through the letters page of the Music Box in order that we can maybe exchange information etc.

The main information which I need to determine is the original tuning scale for the comb and the tune names etc. Unfortunately, this one has only about a third of its original teeth remaining.

The cylinder and comb are both inscribed 7703 which is the serial number of the box. However, there are also three other separate numbers scratched on both the comb and cylinder which are 467, 537 and 538. It is these three tune numbers which are the same as on No. 5523, so therefore the comb

should be identically tuned."

Editor's Note: As you know, the Register does not record any details of ownership. If the owner of No. 5523 wishes to help Mr. Proctor but would prefer to remain anonymous he (or she?) may make contact via the Editorial Office. Let's hope Phil is able to bring this box back to life. ■



One or two teeth need replacing!

Sussex Open Day

Old School at Bucks Green was once more the location for another successful summer open day.

Anthony Bulleid adopted a novel approach in a talk about re-dampening combs for cylinder boxes. Many of us know about inserting the damper wire and forming it to shape, but few will have given consideration to the stages which should precede this. Anthony emphasised these matters and also highlighted how the weight of damper pins becomes an increasingly significant proportion of the total vibrating mass, affecting tuning as you approach the treble end. Hence the need to identify each withdrawn pin with the associated tooth and ensure correct replacement.

Three Society members sought assistance in identification of unknown musical box tune titles. Our collective resources were unable to help with any of the ten tunes in question. This dismal failure was turned to success by one of the membership who has obviously been influenced by politicians' use of statistics in the recent general election. "When you consider how many of us are here today, multiplied by the many tunes we do all know, then we do know millions of tunes that these are not!"

Robin Timms observed how not knowing the tune titles had not diminished our enjoyment of the

tunes themselves and went on to propose that we should not place too much importance on actual tune titles. He illustrated this by playing twenty-one different eleven-inch Polyphon discs selected as diverse and spectacular examples of the arranger's art. Many were tunes we had not previously heard, and many would be passed by if judged by the title alone. There was the rippling arrangement of 'The Silver Fish', the simplicity of the hymn 'Memories of Galilee', and the delicate decoration of 'Waldandacht'. We heard how the miss-match of tune length and disc playing time was turned into an asset with a pretty little additional ending to the Danish tune 'Fly bird Fly'. The disc 'If I were a Bird' provided a contrast of two parts, the first being the simple melody and the second an elaborate ornamentation. Here was another example, which bears out the previously recorded opinion, that it helps in the enjoyment of an elaborate arrangement if you already know the basic tune.

Robin concluded by closing the gap of thirteen months between twin-comb eleven inch Polyphons s/n 165268 of December 1901 and s/n 168677 of January 1903, bringing them into unison with the simultaneous playing of pairs of the same disc. A time of great concentration!

Barry Wilson again demonstrated his skills with the video camera, showing excerpts from Society activities as diverse as the UK Spring

2001 meeting, the 2000 Berlin trip and a day in Oxford Street, London.

Ted Brown directed his efforts to demonstrating some lesser-known items from his substantial collection. These included the Autophone on a stand, which may be operated by foot or by hand, the Hicks, a whistling man, the disc driven glockenspiel, Triola, Tanzbar, Sonora, Diana and twin-reeded Ariosa.

Our thanks go to everyone who played their part in providing us with superb lunchtime refreshments and the accompanying organ playing. ■

Obituary

Just as we go to press with this issue we have learnt of the death of David Snelling.

David was a longstanding member of the Society and will be missed by everyone who had the pleasure of meeting him.

He was an avid collector of all types of mechanical music and has made many contributions to Music Box - most recently on his research into Karrer-Hoffman cylinder boxes. He brought boundless energy and enthusiasm to everything he did and I, for one, will miss his cheery phone calls and e-mails.

The condolences of all members go to his family at this sad time.

Alan Pratt

We heard how the miss-match of tune length and disc playing time was turned into an asset...

Stolen Symphonion

We have been advised of a Symphonion clock (Style 25st - Bowers p.220) stolen around April 21/22. This is the model with the 8" clock dial; plays 11½" discs/serial number 828955.

If you see one of these offered for sale, please check the serial number. If it is the stolen instrument please contact Ted Brown immediately on 01403 823533 or your local police.

MBSGB AGM 2001

On the Sunday following the A.G.M. in Kettering a number of members gathered at the Orchard School in Kettering to listen to "Disc" instruments. These were displayed on tables around the school Gymnasium and were played in turn. There was plenty of time to ask questions, indeed one musical box was dismantled to examine the unusual mechanism so willing were the exhibitors to please.

We heard Organettes such as Amorette of 16 and 24 note, including twin reed models, Diana, Mexon, Ariston and disc musical boxes such as Kalliope with bells, Polyphon, Symphonium.

It is always interesting to take time to compare different machines, even of the same make, as very few sound alike. It was very much a relaxed atmosphere after the time pressures of the meetings the day before and well worth staying overnight. As last year, members visited two homes of local collectors.

There was a lovely buffet lunch provided by the same firm of wedding caterers who had provided the refreshments and food on the Saturday, in fact there were a few 'pack-ups' left over for those travelling long distances home to see them on their way.

Precis to 2001 AGM Meeting can be found on the next page. ■

MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Precis of AGM 2001

Precis of the minutes of the AGM held at the Athletic and Working Mens' Club, Kettering on Saturday 2 June 2001. There were over 70 members present.

Apologies for absence

Seven members sent their apologies. John Turner wished to thank all members who had wished him well during his recent illness.

Minutes of the previous meeting

These were taken as read and adopted. There were no matters arising.

President's Report

Ted Brown presented his final report as President of the Society. He noted that the Society was in a very sound state though smaller in numbers than twenty years ago. He said that the Society would be 40 years old next year and that would be an important milestone in our history. Ted's report was well put and well received.

Subscription Secretary's Report

Richard Kerridge confirmed that our present membership stood at 554 including 36 Associate members. The Society was growing in numbers slowly.

364 members from the U.K.
81 members from the U.S.A.
72 members from Europe.
31 members in Australia and the Far East.
6 members from Canada.

Membership & Correspondence Secretary's Report

Alan Wyatt told the meeting that it had been an encouraging year with 47 new members joining. The Society website was bringing our existence to the notice of many more people. Correspondence still continues to arrive, especially from children who wish to know how to make a musical box.

Meeting Secretary's Report

Roy Ison reported that he was still looking for venues to hold meetings. He appealed for all to help in this matter. Meetings had been arranged in Blackpool, St Albans, and Birmingham. Details would be placed in the Journal.

Treasurers Report

Richard Kerridge reported a most successful year for the Society having made an operating profit of £7,796.45. Much of this was due to the sales of the Tune Sheet Book. Total funds in hand now stood at £31,169.

Editor's Report

Alan Pratt said that after four years as Editor the task had in some ways become easier as the style of the magazine had developed but that getting contributions was still the major problem. As well as main feature articles he welcomed what he called 'snippets' - those short pieces of news, views or personal experiences which help to make Music Box more interesting.

Archivist's Report

Kevin McElhone told members that archive material could be examined by arrangement and that a limited photocopy service based on costing was available. Large numbers of pages could not be copied however.

Auction Organiser's Report

David Walch informed the meeting that the auction last year had brought in excess of £1,000 for Society funds. He thanked all who had worked so hard to run the auction and also those who sold and bought the large number of items.

Subscription Levels

The Treasurer proposed that subscriptions should remain the same for the coming year. This was agreed to by the meeting.

Election of Officers

The following were elected to serve the Society for the coming year:-

President	Christopher Proudfoot.
Vice Presidents	Ralph Heintz. Paul Bellamy.
Treasurer	Richard Kerridge.
Editor	Alan Pratt.
Membership/Correspondence.	Alan Wyatt.
Meetings Secretary	Roy Ison.
Archivist	Kevin McElhone.
Auction Organiser	David Walch
Recording Secretary	Arthur Cunliffe.
Committee Members	Ted Brown. (Also Advertising Secretary)
	Robert Hough.
	Hugh Morgan.

Any Other Business

Bob Ducat Brown offered to explore and extend links in the Society website.

Nicholas Simons rose to thank Ted Brown on behalf of himself and many other members for his dedicated work during his term in office. Christopher Proudfoot then took over the running of the meeting and formally presented Ted with a framed certificate of Life Membership. This was enthusiastically welcomed by the members.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am

Materials for Restorations

- the answer is here in Black & White

In Music Box Vol.18/8 (Winter 1998) we reported on alternatives to ivory and tortoiseshell in restoration work. The original animal-based materials were used extensively in many different types of mechanical music instruments, but the use of such materials today is illegal.

The alternatives offered by GPS Agencies are of excellent appearance and would be

indistinguishable from the natural material in use.

In addition to the materials reviewed in 1998, GPS also have a material resembling plain ivory (Ref. Bone col.415/TM) which is available in 3mm sheet, 25mm x 35mm bar, and 20mm diameter round rod. The 3mm is ideal for key facings in piano and organ keyboards and also for stringing and

inlays. They also have a grained Black Ebony alternative available in 3mm sheet, 25mm x 35mm bar and 25mm round rod as an addition to their list of stock materials.

Axminster Tools and Craft Supplies stock a limited range of the 'alternative ivory' but only in round rod. For the full range and for further details contact GPS Agencies, Units 3 and 3A Hambrook Business Centre, Cheesemans Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, W. Sussex PO18 8XP. Tel: 01243 574444. ■

Computer Report

- by David Snelling

This was to have been the first in a series relating to mechanical music on the Internet. David's death means we can no longer look forward to this, but I am sure he would have wanted this feature to appear. Editor.

The first item will appeal to disc music box fans and does not even make the ownership of a disc music box a prerequisite. If you go to the following address on your browser you can download a virtual disc music box program known as Music Box 15 - <http://www.gdae.com/>

When the program is run you will see a page featuring a 15½" Regina with a stack of discs which can be

played visually and audibly. The program will also play other Midi music files in the tonal style of a disc music box. The free program is partly disabled and will limit the replay of the virtual discs to a short excerpt but the program can be fully enabled on payment of a small fee by credit card over the internet.

The next item is a real treat for all mechanical music enthusiasts. By going to Minnesota's Public Radio "Pipedreams" page - <http://pipedreams.mpr.org/index.html> - which is dedicated to pipe organ music you can experience a 90 minute sound tour of the magnificent Jasper and Marion Sanfilippo mechanical music collection located in their huge private mansion just north of Chicago. The tour is a

recording of a public radio broadcast and every chosen instrument is discussed by the interviewer with the curator of the museum, Robert Ridgeway before it is played. This collection is the largest and most complete mechanical music collection in the world bar none and everything is in near perfect working order. To listen to this program you will first have to download RealPlayer 8.0 (A free but lengthy download) and then select program 0112. Whilst listening to the program you can also view pictures on the site including some pictures of the Sanfilippo mansion. Don't miss this experience on any account - who knows how long it will remain out there for everyone to listen to totally free of charge. ■



Happiness is a street piano! Picture courtesy of Brian Chesters.

PLEASE TO READ THE FOLLOWING
PRESS NOTICES AND TESTIMONIALS

THOUSANDS OF TESTIMONIALS]

IN FAVOUR OF

[THOUSANDS OF TESTIMONIALS

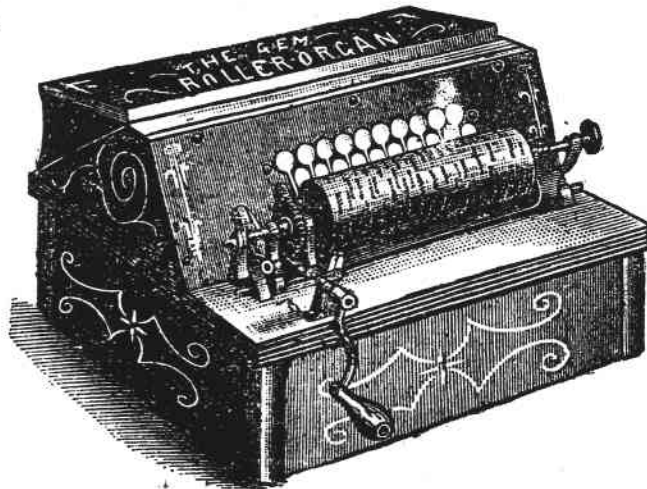
The New 'Gem' & 'Cabinet' Roller Organs



ENGRAVINGS showing WOODEN STEEL-POINTED ROLLERS
as used in 'GEM' and 'CABINET' ROLLER ORGANS.



THIS musical marvel EMPLOYS NO PAPER; but its music is obtained from a ROLLER furnished with pins similar to those of a music box. These pins operate upon valve keys, made of hard steel, the Roller being driven by suitable gearing, which also works the bellows. All the working parts of the Instrument are easily accessible; and are made of solid metal, the Roller and Keys being mounted on iron castings, and the whole as durable and well made as the best sewing machine. Nothing has been omitted to give this GRAND INSTRUMENT its crowning qualities of EXTREME SIMPLICITY AND DURABILITY. Specially suited for SACRED MUSIC.



MUSICAL SEASON, 1891-1892.

The great demand last season for the Patent Roller Organs took us somewhat by surprise, and caused some delay in the execution of Customers' orders. This season we have prepared ourselves for a much larger demand, and we can send off all orders on the days after reception of same.

P.S.—At 30s the "Gem" Roller Organ is simply given away.

THE ROLLER ORGAN does not belong to the large class of instruments, most of them mere toys, which depend upon a perforated sheet of paper, frail and easily torn, to produce their music. The grand peculiarity of these fine instruments is their ROLLERS—which are made of light wood, with metallic bearings, and filled with pins, which are almost indestructible. Each Roller, as a general thing, plays one tune; and, to prolong its action, is made to move spirally before the keys, returning automatically, at the end of the tune, to the place of beginning, and repeating the music as long as desired. This makes it very suitable for the performance of DANCE MUSIC.

The Musical Editor of "THE CHIEF" says:—

"Those who believe in the humanising influences and the educational advantages of music will feel grateful to Mr. John Campbell, of the firm of Campbell & Co., 116 Troughton and 26 East Howard Street, for introducing into this country, from America, so elegant and unique a musical instrument as the Roller Organ, which will discourse the most dulcet strains and rare classical airs, no matter how ignorant of the theory and practice of music the player may be. Indeed, a child of ten years of age can, by aid of this wonderful Instrument, play the 'Adagio' from Beethoven's 5th Sonata, or Schubert's 'Praise of Tears'—to say nothing of more popular airs—as well as a professional musician."

The Editor of the "MERCANTILE AGE" says:—

"To Messrs. Campbell's already large business has been added this season the sole agency for the Roller Organ Company, Ithaca, New York, which Instrument the head of the firm, Mr. John Campbell, is pushing with his usual energy, tact, and ability—so much so, in fact, that the demand already exceeds the supply, for orders are pouring in just now from all quarters. The Roller Organ has been rightly designated the most marvellous Musical Instrument of the age. We have, therefore, the greatest pleasure in recommending our subscribers in all quarters of the globe to place their orders at once with Messrs. Campbell & Co., Glasgow, for we regard this latest musical marvel as indispensable to all happy homes."

THOUSANDS OF TESTIMONIALS AND PRESS NOTICES.

High Park, Northiam, Sussex.

Dear Sirs,—I am very much pleased with the Roller Organ I purchased from you. It gives me the greatest satisfaction, and is the finest toned Instrument I have ever heard. All my friends are delighted with its powerful yet soft and sweet tone, and all pronounce it a splendid Instrument. It is very strong and handsomely made, and the music rollers being made of wood, with steel points, never get out of order, and are always in tune.—I am, yours truly, EPHRAIM MANSER.

Coastguard Station, Curracloe, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

Dear Sirs,—Received the "Cabinet" Roller Organ and Rollers quite safe. I am more than pleased with it, as it is beyond my expectations. I did not expect such a good Instrument for the money. Must also thank you very much for the good selection of Rollers you sent. Feeling greatly obliged for your kind attention to order, please forward me on 30 Rollers, for which I enclose £1 1s 3d.—I remain, yours respectfully, HENRY OLIVER.

26 Hazlewood Crescent, Upper Westbourne Park, London.

To Mr. John Campbell.

Sir,—I received the "Cabinet" Roller Organ, also extra Rollers, quite safe, and I am very well pleased with it. All that has been said in its favour is quite true. Those who have seen it say it is very cheap. A friend will send for one as soon as she can. I shall be very pleased to show it to every one. I was afraid to send for what I could not see, as

my income is small, and one cannot afford to lose money, but it is not lost, for everything is so true and straightforward about it. Thanking you for your kind attention to order,—I remain, yours faithfully,

E. CRAME.

Eastington House, Ampney, Cirencester, 1891.

Sirs,—With much pleasure I acknowledge receipt of the "Gem" Roller Organ. I am delighted with it, and it gives me entire satisfaction. I was surprised that so small an instrument could give forth such a volume of grand, soul-stirring music. Everyone is astonished at its splendid full, rich tone.—I am, respectfully yours, W. POOLE.

12 Kirkham Street, Openshaw, Manchester, 1891.

Dear Sirs,—This is to certify that I duly received the Grand "Cabinet" Roller Organ. I am extremely pleased with its splendid tones, and its appearance is fit to adorn any home. All my friends are delighted with its full, sweet sound. For sacred music it is equal to any harmonium, and I shall have great pleasure in recommending all my friends to have one of those beautiful Instruments.—I am, yours truly, VALENTINE ASHCROFT.

Lower Bagnal Street, St. Albans, Herts, 1891.

Gentlemen,—I received the Grand "Cabinet" Roller Organ on Thursday quite safe. It is, beyond any doubt, a splendid Instrument, both as regards its tone and beautiful appearance. It gives me every satisfaction, and delights all who hear it—Yours truly, A. GROOM.

For Descriptions and Drawings of "GEM" and "CABINET" Roller Organs see next Pages.

More on Christie's Old Organ

Comments from M J Ryder

I found these articles most interesting and compliment Paul on his research. I have a couple of comments that may be of interest. In 1874 Mrs. Walton would have submitted a hand written script to the publishers and from then on would have had very limited control over the book's production other than possibly reading the proofs once type set. Like Paul, I believe she fully understood what type of instrument she was writing about - a "busker's" street reed organ.

The publishers would have commissioned an artist to produce illustrations showing the drama of the story. It is likely that the artist either did not know what type of street instrument was in the text or used artistic licence in interpreting the image. Looking at most of the illustrations in the articles the 'organ' dominates the pictures by being taller than the surrounding people. A Hicks barrel piano is

some 3ft high (well the one here at The Musical Museum is) and with a peg base would stand some 6ft or so high. The Victorian poor were much shorter in stature generally than today, so the contrasting height difference would re-enforce the dominance of the instrument in the picture. It is also of note that in almost all of the pictures the instrument is at the centre of the illustration.

Compare Figs 6 and 7 (Vol.20/2) with the others, the instrument is more correct but hardly dominant or particularly noticeable as a key feature of the illustration. While looking at Fig.6 I could hardly imagine a 'busker' having decorative fringes on the weather cover, also the carrying straps would not work as shown, but the main fault with that illustration is the small size of the instrument. Fig.7 again shows a smallish instrument, but I have not seen a busker's organ where the handle is co-axial with the barrel, they have the handle at a right angle to the barrel. More artistic licence.

Books from this period had very few illustrations and the publisher would require the illustrator to present as dramatic a picture of the theme of the book as possible, and artistic licence would be encouraged if it helped sell the volume. The old adage about a picture being worth a thousand words was as good a selling point then as it is today. Those who looked at the book would have recognised that a street instrument "a barrel organ" was a key element of the story



OLD TREFFY PLAYS A TUNE

Fig. 2. Old Treffy plays a tune. This is a Hicks-type barrel piano.

and would not be particularly interested in the technical difference between one type and another. I doubt if Mrs. Walton had any say in the matter. ■

I could hardly imagine a 'busker' having decorative fringes on the weather cover,...



Fig. 1. Christie finds the clergyman with Treffy. Wood engraving by Edward Whymper, whose name can be found in the left corner beneath.

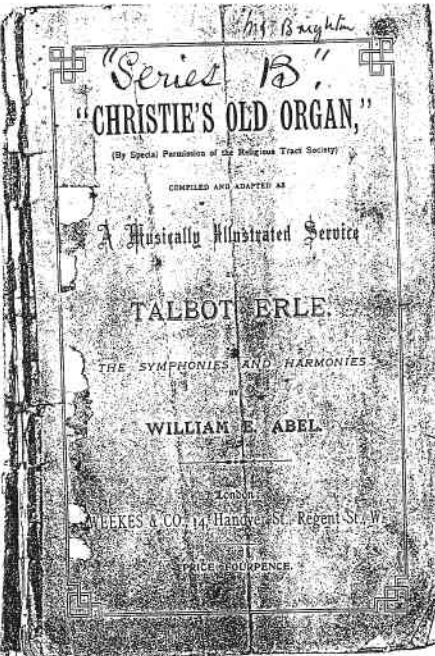


Fig. 3. Front cover of a booklet with a musical version of Christie's Old Organ.

More on Christie's Old Organ

Comments from Hendrik H. Strengers

Mr. Paul Bellamy tells an interesting story in the *Music Box* (Spring 2001) about Amy Catherine Walton, the wife of Octavius Frank Walton. What was her girl's name? Is it "Deck" as Mr. Bellamy mentions her father as "the Reverend Deck"? Anyway, I have done some research of which the results are given here.

1. My copy of the book with 127 pages has a dark blue cover with the figure of Christie carrying his organ in exactly the same way as in the wood engraving by Whymper; the characters "Christie's Organ" are gold coloured and the word "Old" was printed in red. The addresses of the Religious Tract Society are given as: London, 56 Paternoster Row and 65 St. Paul's Churchyard. The book was printed by Butler & Tanner, The Selwood printing Works, Frome and London.

2. My book mentions Mrs. O.F. Walton as the author of "Shadows", "A Peep behind the Scenes", "My Little Corner", "My Mates and I", "Saved at Sea", etc. Many years ago I found a list of works by Mrs Walton in some encyclopaedia (I regret that I cannot remember which one!): Little Dot 1873; A Peep behind the Scenes 1877; Saved at sea 1879; Christie's Old Organ 1882; Nobody Loves Me 1883; Taken or Left 1885; Poppy's Presents 1886; Nemo, or the Wonderful Door 1893; Audrey or Children of Light 1897. There are some other titles known: "Shadows", My Little Corner" and "My Mates and I", all before 1882 and "Olive's Story", Little Faith", "The Lost Clue", "Was I Right", "Doctor Forester" and "Scenes in the Life of an Old Armchair". I cannot date these titles. Who can make a reliable chronological list of her works?

3. Edward Whymper (see wood engraving, figure 1 on page 14 of *The Music Box*, Spring 2001) was born in London on the 27th April 1840. Artist, explorer and mountaineer, son of an artist, he was at an early age trained in the profession of a wood engraver. In 1860 he was commissioned to make a series of sketches of

Alpine scenery. He was so gripped by this scenery that he decided to become a mountaineer himself. He climbed the Mont Pelvoux in the Dauphine Alps in 1861, the Pointe des Ecrins in 1864 and to the top of the Matterhorn on the 14th of July 1865. During the descent four men out of a group of seven died.



Fig. 1. Magic lantern slide: Treffy plays in front of a servant girl.



Fig. 2. Magic lantern slide: Christie comforts old Treffy.

In 1867 and 1872 he visited North Greenland and in 1879/1880 he explored the Ecuadorian Andes where he collected fossils, plants and animals. He was the first to climb the Chimborazo in 1880 and equipped expeditions in Canada from 1901 to 1905. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, 1910/1911). Some of his books are: Ascent of the Matterhorn (1871), Scrambles amongst the Alps (1871 - his most famous book), Travels amongst the Great Andes of the Equator (1892), Chamonix and the range of the Mont Blanc (1896) and The Valley of Zermatt and the Matterhorn (1897). F. S. Smythe wrote the book "E. Whymper" in 1940 concerning this pioneer. Whymper died at Chamonix, France, on the 16th of September 1911. This interesting and many-sided man has engraved the illustration of Christie with his old organ which is, in fact, a barrel piano. In the Alpines Museum in Zermatt there is a special room dedicated to Whymper with pictures, photos, drawings and documents.

4. Interesting is the fact that Mrs Walton states on page 9: "There was not much variety in the tunes old Treffy could play. There was the "Old Hundredth" and "Poor Mary Ann" and "Rule Britannia"; the only other was "Home, Sweet Home" but that was old Treffy's favourite." How about these tunes? In the first place it is remarkable that the cylinder of the barrel organ had only four tunes; normally six tunes is the minimum. The "Old Hundredth", probably by Louis Bourgeois (1510-1561) with the words "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below"; "Poor Mary Ann" (anyone know this?); "Rule Britannia" by Thomas Augustin Arne (1710-1778) words by Thomson; "Home, Sweet Home" by Sir Henry Bishop (1786-1855) from his opera Clari, or The Maid of Milan, first performed in 1823; the words are from John Howard Payne, born in New York on 9th June 1791, died at Tunis on 9th April 1852. This

tune was the favourite and is the subtitle of the book. The complete text and the notes you can find on page 127 of my book.

5. There is a very interesting booklet with a musical version of the story by Mrs Walton. I have only a photocopy of the undated front, originally owned by an unknown Mr. Brighton. The text reads: "Series B. Christie's Old Organ (by special permission of the Religious Tract Society), compiled and adapted as a musically illustrated service by Talbot Erle. The Symphonies and Harmonies by William E. Abel. London, Weeks & Co., 14 Hanover Street, Regent Street, West. Price Fourpence." Any ideas about this intriguing version?

6. Professor Dr. Willem Albert Wagenaar, the emeritus rector of the Leiden University in The Netherlands is a well known admirer of mechanical musical instruments. Occasionally he gives shows with his magic lantern. In his collection is a marvellous series of about 50 slides with the story of Christie's Old Organ. I am proud to show you two slides: no.1 - Treffy with his barrel organ playing in front of a servant girl, and no.2 - Christie comforts old Treffy. Does anybody know the maker of this series?

7. There is even a Dutch translation of Christie's Old organ with the title "Christoffels Oude Orgel", dating from 1909 and published by the famous publishing firm G. F. Callenbach at Nijkerk in the province of Gelderland. The book has a large format, 23 x 29cm, with 24 pages. So, it is a very abridged version of Walton's book, but there are five splendid chromolithographs in it, of which three show the barrel piano. The draughtsman has placed his initials "W S G" or "W.S.S" on one of these drawings but I could not trace who he is.

I am afraid that I have raised more puzzles than I have solved but probably some members can help anyway. ■



Fig. 3. Front cover of Dutch book dating from 1909: "Little Mabel and Charlie admire Christie's barrel piano."



Fig. 4. Also from the same Dutch book dating from 1909: "Old Treffy plays for a farmer's wife who offers him bread and cheese". The draughtsman signs with his initials "W.S.G."

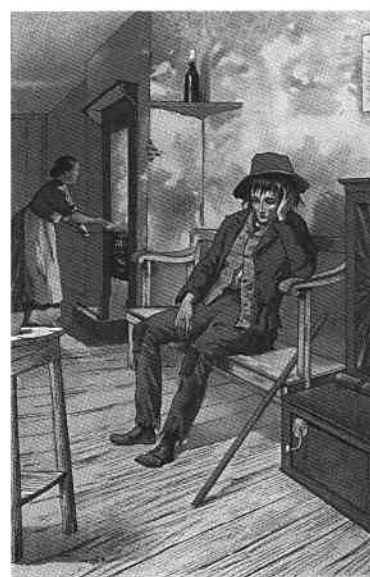


Fig. 5. "For many days little Christie hung between life and death."

Automata Salon

- automata makers meet in France

- A Report by Michael Start

The 2,3 and 4th of June saw the first 'Salon' (exhibition and meeting) of contemporary automata makers, held at the Musée d'automates Marcu in the Champagne region of France, about 120 miles from Paris.

Monsieur Marcu, a well known creator of automata, organized and hosted the event which allowed visitors to admire the magnificent work on display, many of which were for sale.

The exhibition was housed in a large hall adjoining the museum and in one corner of which was the workshop of Marcu, It is always a treat to see inside the workshop of an 'automatier' and this was no exception. A particularly large Equilibriste (ladder acrobat) stood in the centre of the workshop with side covers removed, displaying the massive mechanism with its secret twist. The machine tools were mostly English and the stocks of raw material were neatly lined up and stacked ready for their moment of use.

Around the hall stalls had been set up with flowers and each of the 12 exhibitors set up their displays, some of the noisier compressor driven beasts straggling out to the open air.

It was interesting to see many displays featuring 'works in progress' which allowed those of us with a more anatomical automata interest to see the innards before the clothes get put on.

The automata exhibited ranged from small inexpensive bisque headed moving dolls through marvelously complex clockwork automated tableaux and life size figures, to high tech computer controlled installations.

Coming from France, Germany, Switzerland and the U.K., highlights were: *Elodie Delbert* - a young Parisian maker, her use of beaten copper, linked into the sculptural form of a cat, was ingeniously powered by a purring phonograph motor.

Automates Costes - inspired by the imagery of cinema to raise Marilyn Monro's skirts at will.

Giles Maurin - Using flat board and bold colours in Kitsch confections for advertising scenes.

Boarreto - An accomplished maker of complex and commercial automata, with fantasy tableaux on display.

Letrun - Stunning large floorstanding robotic sculptures with a myriad of smooth graceful movements and flickering hearts of red light within the masses of levers, cogs and crystal orbs.

Clepsydra - from Souillac where they maintain the Decamps collection, this creative company displayed a small version of the famous mask seller, using original Decamps small masks produced for a version never made until now, and faithfully capturing the magic of the original.

Ciburs - with a unique range of bisque headed fine lady automata.

Fanny Cabhout - very adventurous futuristic polished metallic versions of classic automata.

Duchaussois - an array of classic clockwork fantasy figures and dolls.

Duquet - Life size electro-mechanical people, playing trumpets, drinking and talking, very high quality.

Dahler - precision Swiss complex automata, acrobats, bird trainers, bubble blowers, dancing dolls.

Trinquier - high tech computer controlled installations of raw hydraulic power, tamed to come crashing down within inches of the spectator.

Start & Start - a large clockwork Moon headed dandy tapping with his silver cane at the revolving world held in his outstretched hand.

These highlights of the exhibitors were complemented by a selling exhibition of fairground artworks by Monsieur Mazier and various fairground organs playing in the grounds as well as the delights of the Museum.

Each exhibitor received an impressive certificate signed and sealed by Marcu and the Mayor of the region, at a Champagne reception which was indicative of the fine hospitality shown by our host.

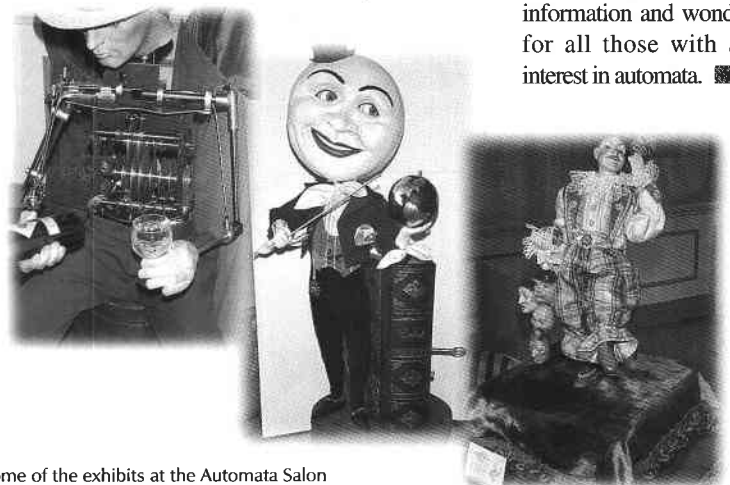
Although contemporary automata are a difficult subject for selling at auction, sales were happening in the Salon, with the less expensive pieces selling more easily, although at least one of the high value sculptural installation pieces changed hands.

Hopefully an annual event, this 'Salon' should attract even more of the many contemporary makers in years to come.

With the growing realisation that all things computer 'virtual' are precisely that, the art of mechanics is undergoing something of a renaissance, and substantial gathering like this Salon of Marcu's will help accelerate the movement and be a source of inspiration,

information and wonder for all those with an interest in automata. ■

It is always a treat to see inside the workshop of an 'automatier' and this was no exception.



Some of the exhibits at the Automata Salon

More on In-Line Cylinder Barrel Movements

- by Alan Godier

Referred to in-line cylinder and spring barrel musical box movements, recently mentioned in the journal by Mr. Shrouder and also Lyn Wright, I have recently had a similar type of movement for repair.

Fortunately there was a tune card marked with the Cuendet trade mark under tune no.10. This movement is a 10 air, the cylinder is 11 ins long and 2 1/8 ins diameter; the governor is at the left hand end of the bedplate; it has the register lines on tune no.1; there are 62 teeth on the comb with JM cast into the bottom of the comb base. It has a heavy cast iron bedplate and the serial number 12351 stamped into the left hand cylinder bridge, and scratched on the bass lead was the number 8. The spring barrel was somewhat different from the barrel referred to by Lyn

Wright as instead of having ratchet teeth there were ordinary wheel teeth, the teeth being on the left hand side. When the barrel is assembled you have to remember

to put the right hand cylinder bearing on the arbor first, otherwise you have to take it all off again! I trust this additional information is helpful. ■



The Double 24 inch Polyphon

- A classic recreated

After many years of research and development, production has started in the UK of brand new 19 and 24 inch Polyphons. All the parts are available now with no waiting, 'off the shelf' as it were, and only need assembling. Or they can be purchased fully assembled, but there is a waiting list.

But why build a Mikado Polyphon that plays only one disc when for not a lot more money, you can build a machine that plays two or even three 24 inch discs at the same time?

Brian Chesters in St Annes on Sea advises that production of new Double

and triple 24 inch and machines has begun in the North of England. The first of the doubles has been finished and the first triple is well under way as we go to print. All the machines are to be built in the horizontal or side-by-side style, which it is felt is more aesthetically pleasing than the vertical or one on top of the other style favoured by some.

The main parts of the mechanisms are built by the "Cheshire Polyphon Centre Ltd" of Liverpool. Brian Clegg of Norfolk assembles and supplies the heavy-duty spring motors; The mechanisms are then tuned and assembled by staff at our workshops. The cases are constructed mainly out of 100 year

old walnut obtained from old wardrobes and the like and are built to a specific design by Fredy Gerer of Tutzingen in Germany, in imitation of a 'stretched Mikado'.

As with any musical box, it is a waste of space if it fails to produce the desired effect, but those who have heard these machines have attested to the wonderful quality of the sound and how they surpass many of the Polyphons made in the late nineteenth century, no matter how well they have been set up.

For more details contact: Brian Chesters, 80 North Promenade, St. Annes on Sea, Lancs FY8 2QW Tel. 01253 711666 ■

As with any musical box, it is a waste of space if it fails to produce the desired effect,...



L'Epée the Chinese Musical Box

- by John Turner

In 1998 I acquired a L'Epée musical box no.22282 pinned with six Chinese tunes. This prompted me to carry out research into the box I had purchased. In Music Box Volume 13/6 1988 the article by A.J.L. Wright "L'Epée - 39 steps towards Enlightenment" indicated that my box was manufactured between 1855 - 1860. With this information I was spurred on to find out more about the "Chinese Musical Box". What a wealth of knowledge has been written and published, and still is, in the MBSGB Music Box journal over the years by eminent members past and present of our Society. I can thoroughly recommend new members to consider purchasing back numbers of the journal; I am sure they will find a key to their researches amongst its pages.

The manufacture of musical boxes in Sainte-Suzanne, France, started around 1833 by P.H. Paur where he lived and worked until he death in 1839. Auguste L'Epée, who had become a partner, successfully continued the business and won a reputation for the quality and excellence of his products. He not only made musical boxes but also produced musical watches and manivelles.

With the assistance of Dr. Delia Davin, Head of the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Leeds, I was to learn that the six tunes listed on the tune sheet are written in a non-standard romanisation of a southern Chinese dialect (not Mandarin); therefore, it would appear that the original Chinese music would have been imported from one of the major ports exporting to Europe at this time, i.e. Canton or Macau. The six tunes are:- One nam te ha; She-pah-mah; E-wang; Sinfa (the old National air); Quot-

chong; Pontzi. Regrettably the English meanings remain unknown until such times as their names become available written in Chinese characters of the period. I hope at some future date to be able to compare the names of the tunes given with those on a similar box. There is a discrepancy which may or may not be a scribe's error, between the "Chinese" Paillards box listed in the journal 1980, Vol.9/5, page 235, List of Tunes, Paillards Musical Boxes. If any fellow member possesses or knows of the existence of a "Chinese" 6 air box with an original tune sheet it would be much appreciated if they would contact me.

It is well recorded that the musical box manufacturers of Geneva, Sainte Croix and the Vallee de Joux owed their successful export trade to China to the Bovets of Fleurier, especially Fritz (1824-1914), a talented violinist, who transposed the well known Chinese tunes very precisely, which was no easy matter, in order that they might be pinned onto the cylinder. Up to this time it had been almost impossible to sell China any musical boxes as the Chinese were unaccustomed to the sound of Western music.

In order to give you some idea of the Chinese music scale. A Chinese child singing a folksong might well be supposed by a casual Western listener to be singing a Scottish (or for that matter Irish or English) folksong. This is because the most typical Chinese melodies make use of a group of five notes only - doh, re, mi, so, la (Pentatonic) and were extensively used at one time in China (and their influence persists). The skeleton of Chinese melody is conspicuously one of five notes. But the scalar structure of a Chinese tune reminds us of a five note structure of many

Western folksongs, e.g. "I'll take the High Road - You take the Low Road". In "Red River Valley" the melodic is different. Chinese melody flows on without repeating itself, whereas Western tunes tend to build up by repetition.

These five notes - do, re, mi, so, la - are also harmonically agreeable chords and the Chinese were aware of this harmony well over 2,000 years ago. There is evidence from song lyrics that the Chinese were playing free M-reed mouth organs as early as the 7th century BC and such instruments are to be heard in China, Korea and Japan today.

I hope that my research into the Chinese musical box will be of interest to you and that the findings will in some small part add further to the knowledge of Auguste L'Epée already published in our journal over many years.

A most interesting historical and highly informative article on L'Epée by H.A.V. Bulleid was printed in the MBSGB journal 1986, Vol.12/7, pages 268-269. ■

References to L'Epée in the Music Box journals:

- (a) Vol.8/1, page 8, L'Epée. Plate finish.
- (b) Vol.9/5, page 235, Paillards List of Tunes.
- (c) Vol.10/2, page 78, Photo Fernihough collection.
- (d) Vol.12/7, pages 268-269, H.A.V. Bulleid.
- (e) Vol.13/6, page 269, A.J.L. Wright.
- (f) Vol.13/8, page 267, Letters to the Editor.
- (g) Vol.14/5, page 142, Letters to the Editor (2).
- (h) Vol.17/1, page 8, List of L'Epée boxes now registered.

Editor's Note: Back issues of Music Box can be obtained from Roy Ison - see list of Officers for address.



Fig. 1. The top half of Bremond's 1896 invoice, printed in blue except for the golden lyre which is in gold. Litho by Duc, Geneva.

Restoration by Bremond.

Etienne Blyelle kindly sent the Bremond invoice shown in Fig. 1. Dated 28 Sep. 1896, it is signed by B.A. Bremond and refers to a repair done on serial 10981 which cost 15 francs. Bremond has also added and signed a note stating that serial 10981 was made and sold in 1869. (Luckily that fits OK on my dating chart).

The original tune sheet survived that repair and is shown in Fig. 2. It has the shaped top fancied by Bremond to emphasize the maker's name. The serial number is added in the top right margin corner. The 15" (38cm) cylinder plays 87 comb teeth - fortissimo, as written by Bremond on the invoice, but not mentioned on the tune sheet. It is a perfectly fair claim as there is ample volume for its programme of twelve dance tunes, ending with the (expected) galop. Latest tune was quite up-to-date, - the polka from Offenbach's *La Belle Helene*, 1868.

L'Epée Rechange.

Fig. 3 shows a rare L'Epée rechange sublime harmonie movement, serial 283. It has three 6-air cylinders and was made in accord with the L'Epée -

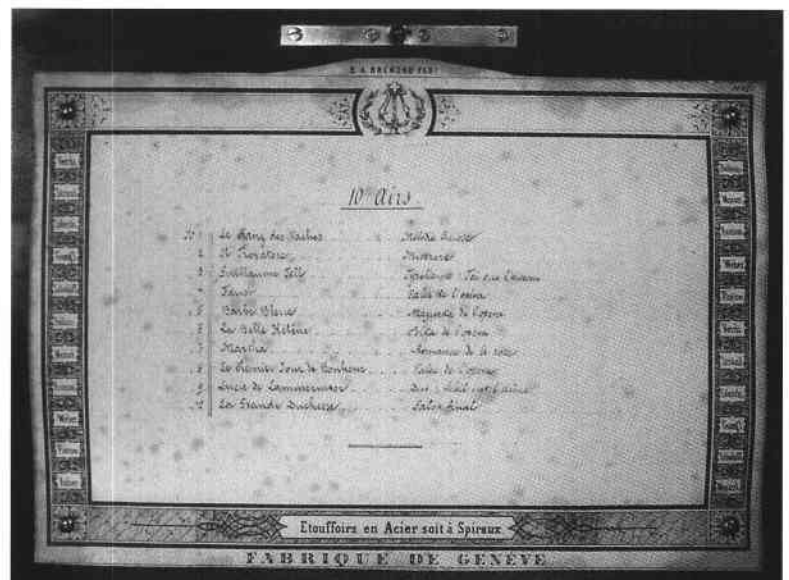


Fig. 2. An extended version of a common Bremond tune sheet with lyre and white cross at top centre. The composers in panels are up from 5 to 11 each side. Printed in blue. The writer could with advantage have enlarged her/his writing.

Thibouville patent, no. 16,087 in England, dated Dec. 1886. It was made about 1890, the low serial number not yet explained but possibly kept for rechange or special boxes.

It has all the usual L'Epée characteristics, including .018" tune tracks and tune 4 of 6 on the cylinder dots. Unusually, the cast iron bedplate is ribbed by planing and painted, and the tune indicator lies flat at the treble end. It is actuated by a long rod linked to the bass end of the cylinder.

Each 331mm (13") cylinder plays six airs on two 58-tooth combs, giving high quality sublime harmonie performance. Tunes last one minute. Some tunes have very good piccolo effects. The tune sheet for cylinder no.1 is in the Tune Sheets book, no.209.

Of the many rechange and interchangeable cylinder patents, this is the most compact. The governor and large gear wheel driving it are at the bass end, by the spring motor.

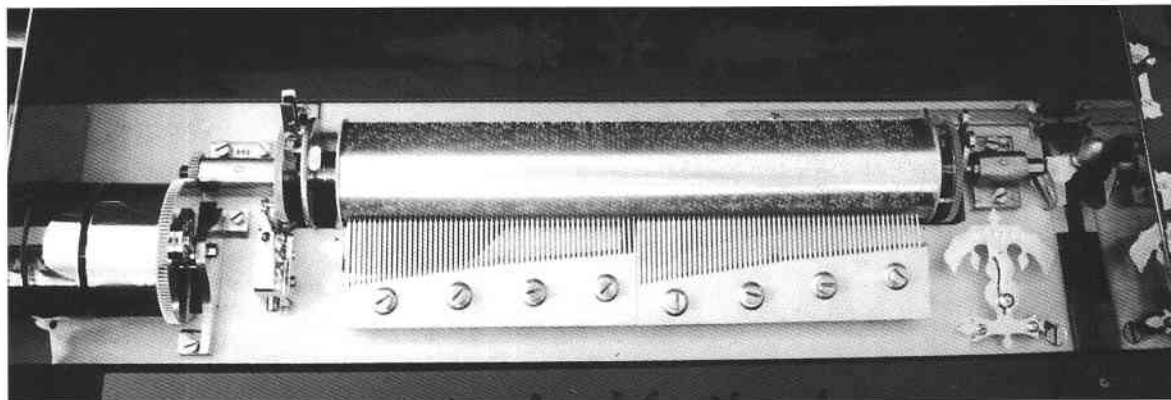


Fig. 3. L'Épée rechange serial 283 with drive and governor at bass end; conventional cylinder except knurled handling disc added at bass end; and flat-on-the-bedplate tune indicator. Narrow guides each end protect the comb during cylinder change.

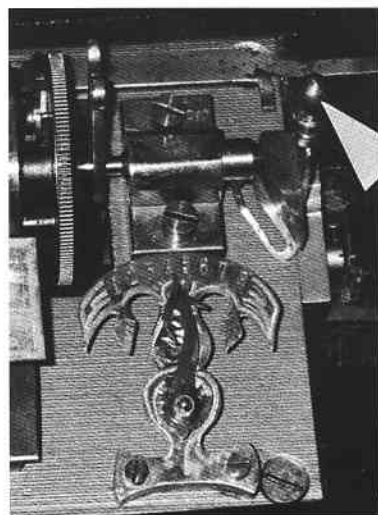


Fig. 4. Treble end of L'Épée serial 280, an 8-air rechange box. The arrowed lever has been pulled to the playing position. When pushed back its tapered block releases the sprung female centre holding the cylinder arbor. It also pushes the tune change lever (via a small right-angled extension) to the repeat position, clear of the snail cam, so that the cylinder can be lifted out.

Each cylinder has its great wheel with snail cam, with a knurled disc added at the bass end. The arbor has a centre at each end, and when a cylinder is lowered into the guides a lever at the treble end slides it into its working position.

Another box made to the same patent is shown in Fig. 4. It came with twelve 21cm (8") cylinders playing 8 airs on 55 comb teeth with zither. The cylinders were supplied in boxes of three; all their tune sheets are lost but they are sure to have been the same Thibouville Lamy type as no. 209 in the Tune Sheets book.

Niko Wiegman, who recently restored serial 283 and kindly supplied these photos and data, says that the patented cylinder-changing design is too compact to

be really "user-friendly." That probably accounts for both its rarity and the terrible condition of 283 when it limped in for repair.

Interestingly, the 16,087 patent is extended to cover "petite musiques" and manivelles with interchangeable single-air cylinders. L'Épée made vast quantities of these in many different types. A listing of them would interest their many collectors.

Harpe Harmonique Piccolo

Five of the 60 pages in the Ste. Croix Book of Tunes are devoted to the wide range of Harpe Harmonique Piccolo boxes. Cylinders range from 8" to 19" (20 to 48cm) and comb teeth from 80 to 120. It is the third biggest section in the book, after standard and mandoline types. I am sure the range includes Harpe Harmonique boxes which only differ from H. H. Piccolo by having fewer of their teeth at the extreme treble end - and are the more common variety.

Almost all these boxes come with two combs, the longer one at the bass end. A 13" 8-air box will have its main comb of about 62 teeth and treble comb about 31. The stiffness of the teeth is the same in both combs, so there seems to be no reason for having the comb in two parts.

Strangely, the two combs do not give a continuous scale from bass to treble; at their junction there is always an overlap of one or two tones, so the top notes on the main comb are higher than the lowest on the treble comb.

I have never succeeded in finding a plausible explanation for

this oddity. All the many different makers seem to have done it. Then some of them realized that a single-comb version could be as good but cheaper to make, and several started to appear. Two were described in Vol. 17 page 218. They introduce the annoyance that, if they have lost their tune sheet, who is to know that they are Harpe Harmonique?

But now a new twist is revealed, with Baker-Troll serial 6950. Its 11" cylinder plays 6 airs on 104 comb teeth. Its tune sheet is no. 170 in the Tune Sheets book. And yes, you've guessed it, the single comb has the usual discontinuity; teeth 67 and 71 are the same pitch but teeth 68, 69 and 70 are one tone lower. And luckily the comb base has stamped pitch numbers 1 to 7 for the teeth, and they clearly confirm the discontinuity.

Therefore, if without tune sheet, such boxes can safely be described as Harpe Harmonique or, if with appropriate treble end, as Harpe Harmonique Piccolo.

It couldn't last. Thanks to Tim Reed a later Baker-Troll Harpe Harmonique has turned up, serial 8473, and its comb scale is continuous. So, somewhere between serial numbers 6950 and 8473, made between 1877 and 1880, an interesting gimmick was obliterated, - but perhaps only by Baker-Troll?

Combs with discontinuous scales.

A more logical attempt to combine the scales of separate combs was made by the Paillards, about 1890. I think the only reported example is on Pailllard 84796 whose 74-

I have never succeeded in finding a plausible explanation for this oddity. All the many different makers seem to have done it.

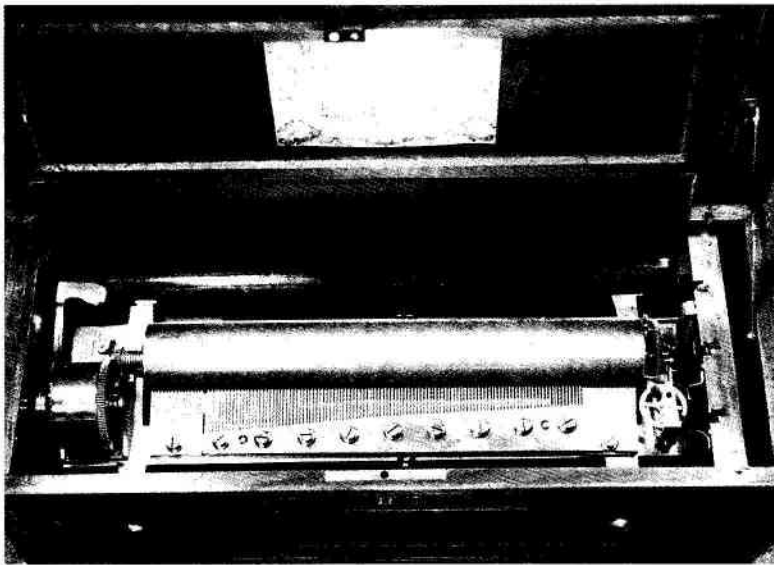


Fig. 5. Lecoultre 27740 with separate combs for hidden drum and bells.



Fig. 6. Two teeth and two hammers for each of the eight bells.



Fig. 7. The fixed end flap. X marks a rough circular cut-out to clear the end of the spring arbor. Y marks one of the four holes under the drum, presumably to prevent any loss of volume. There are four more under the bells.

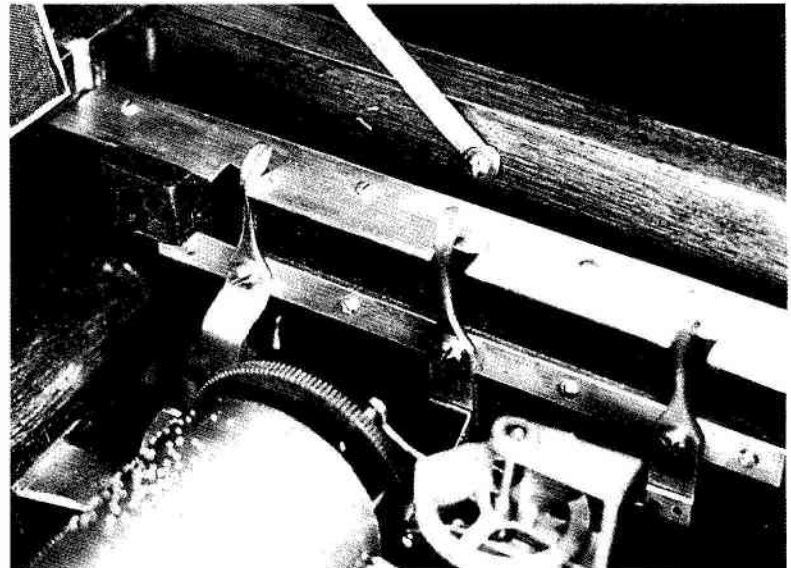


Fig. 8. The new control levers and the block marked B to support the hinged panel behind the glass lid.

They give some of the very best music-for-money currently available.

tooth comb had three separate scales. It is described in my second book page 123, and the box was good, but the idea was probably short-lived.

Hidden drum and bells.

These boxes have been out of favour for a long time, probably because seeing the bells being struck is often deemed all-important. In contrast, a modest 6" cylinder 8-air box with 3 bells fetches very good money if a couple of pseudo mandarins wield the hammers. The better hidden-drum-and-bell boxes have 100 or more music teeth plus two for each of about eight bells and ten or more for the drum. They give some of the

very best music-for-money currently available.

On the debit side is the noisy drum; an on/off lever was seldom provided. My inelegant cure is to fix thick cloth like green baize over the drum face in the region of the strikers. Fixing the strip of cloth at each end to the side of the drum with sticky tape is crude but effective, out of sight, and easily removed. Its effect is to remove stridency but retain the crisp sounds of drum rolls and march beats which many listeners find fairly attractive.

If you simply cannot abide drum noise, insert a strip of card about half a mm. thick, like a post card, under the front of the comb

base. That will hold the tooth tips clear of the cylinder. Leave a bit showing at the bass end, to show what you have done AND to undo it quickly if noisy drums suddenly get popular.

A typical box of this type is Lecoultre serial 27740, gamme 5817, made in 1855, see Fig. 5. It has a 14 1/4" (36cm) cylinder playing 6 airs with three combs - 16 drum teeth at the bass end, 112 music teeth, and again 16 teeth at the treble end for 8 bells with two hammers each, allowing a bell to be played twice in quick succession, Fig. 6.

The 22" (56cm) case is typical of the key-wind period, with red interior and it was converted for

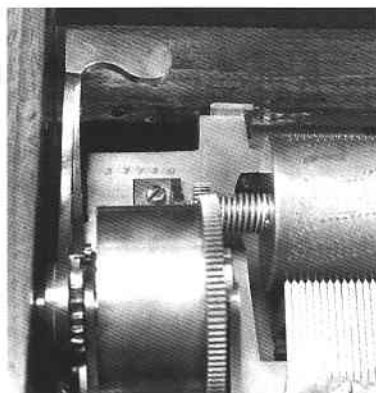


Fig. 9. Lever added for winding. The finger cut-out at the front of the handle should be at the back!



Fig. 10. Bird craft mark, 5mm square, at right back corner of brass bedplate.



Fig. 11. Music comb of serial 27740 with "L F / GVE in lozenge" stamp.

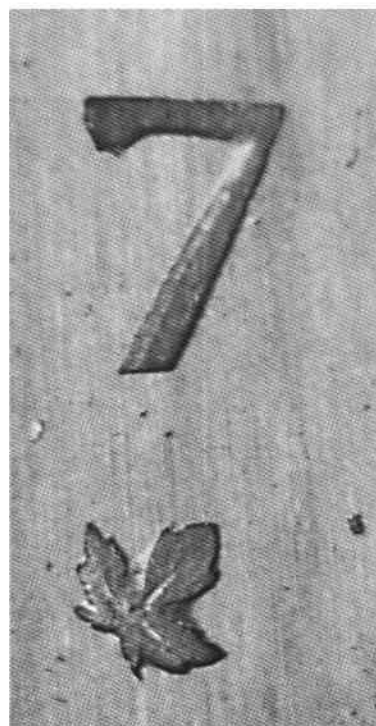


Fig. 12. The 5mm square maple leaf craft mark.

lever wind by gluing the end-flap in its closed position, see Fig. 7.

These hidden boxes had a fixed insert with a fretwork cut-out pattern immediately behind the glass lid; after conversion this had to be hinged for access to the winding lever. It therefore needed a support at each end, see Fig. 8 which also shows the new set of control levers. The winder conversion is in Fig. 9.

The blank number or mark is a plain 111 on the bedplate edge and spring and great wheel with 740 (from the serial number) on a few details including the glass lid. Gamme 5817 is scribed on the bass lead and the combs.

There are two craft marks on the bedplate: "rampant puppy" as usual under the spring, and a bird beside the tune change lever, shown in Fig. 10.

The music comb has the usual Lecoultrre Freres stamp, Fig. 11, and the tune sheet (shown at no. 15 in the Tune Sheets book) is the L. B. type, meaning Lecoultrre & Brechet, partners from 1844 to 1854. A dancing couple in marquetry on the box lid could be said to introduce the dance tunes. Three are from operas of which the latest is *Zerline* by Auber, 1851; but the latest tune is the hearty polka, *The Camp*, by D'Albert, 1853.

The 112 comb teeth provide a finely detailed accompaniment to the tunes, further enhanced by the 8 bells. It is a real puzzle why so

many 1850s boxes also fitted these drums, needing 16 or more teeth and a very large quantity of cylinder pins. They must have sold largely on novelty value; when percussion came out of hiding in the early 1860s bells were most often seen without a drum. But, during a drum roll, this one does provide a rare sight - all 16 teeth marching along in perfect order.

More craft marks

A maple leaf craft mark is stamped on the block (not the cock) of the governor on 4-air Ducommun Girod 7695, made about 1872. With it is a large and unexplained figure 7, both shown in Fig. 12.

I think craft marks including initials were used only for the names of makers or agents as for example in Fig. 11, above. Fig. 13 shows a one-piece personal stamp used for or by Amédée Paillard who led the Paillard company from 1832 until it became E. & A. Paillard in 1848. During that period they made large quantities of tabatieres (which they always called *petites musiques*) of which serial 10287 is probably an early example - they had been making them many years before 1832. It has 30 comb teeth in six sections of five teeth each and the comb base has this AMDP stamp. It is very seldom seen and was found by George Worswick who also kindly supplied the maple leaf photo. ■

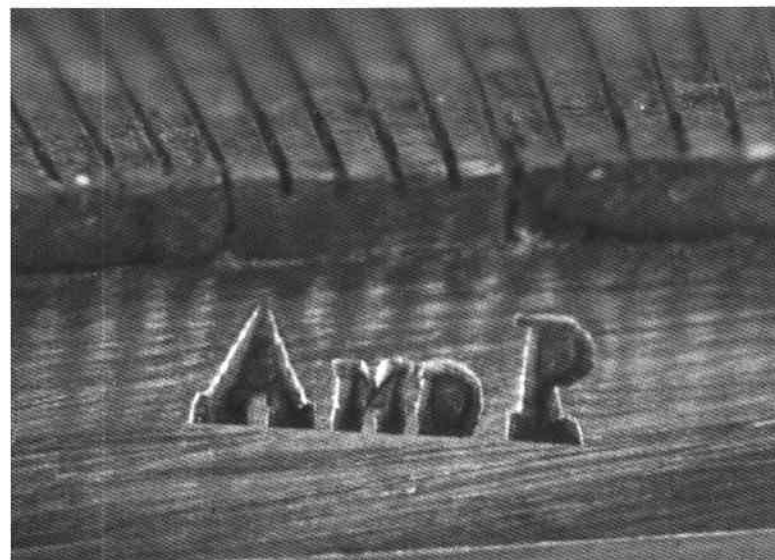


Fig. 13. Amédée Paillard's stamp on comb base of tabatiere 10287.

It is a real puzzle why so many 1850s boxes also fitted these drums, needing 16 or more teeth and a very large quantity of cylinder pins.

From my collection

- A Monopol story by Alison Biden

One of the less obvious enjoyable aspects of collecting mechanical musical items is that, certainly in the case of my own collection, each piece seems to have its own colourful history. Here is the story of one:

Several years ago, early in my collecting "career", I was introduced to a 12½" Monopol table top box by a then member of the Society who was expecting to sell it to a third party. When the sale fell through, I asked if I could buy it at the same "special" price, and so became the happy owner of a very pretty-sounding and mellow-toned, if somewhat modest, disc musical box. My simple satisfaction was fortunate, as I was warned that it hardly represented a good investment, its compliment of discs amounting to just seven. With many boxes this would not necessarily be a problem. I believe it is possible to substitute some Symphonion discs for some Monopols - but not for this particular size. Nor, it seemed, had anyone ever come across or heard of another 12½" Monopol, let alone discs, which might be copied or traded.

Thus I lived for a number of years owning an antique, the very rarity of which paradoxically limited its value rather than increased it. From time to time I'd enquire after extra discs, more as a challenge than with any expectations of success.

Then, quite by chance, I received a catalogue from Steve Ryder in Summit, New Jersey, and instead of setting in on one side, as was my wont, I glanced through it. To my surprise he was advertising for sale a 12½" Monopol disc musical box. Moreover, it came with 16 discs. The temptation was too great; a telephone call confirmed that none of the discs was a duplicate of the seven I

already had. All I had to do, therefore, to increase my collection of Monopol discs, was to buy the box from Steve, ship it to England, and have the discs copied before selling it on. Sounds simple.

Steve was a little mystified when I explained my motive for buying the box. He had never heard of another 12½" Monopol and, consequently, wondered, since I already had one, if perhaps they were common in the UK! Ironically, this was not an occasion to relish cornering the apparent world market!!

But the shipping company Steve Ryder approached couldn't locate Winchester. However, by extraordinary coincidence, our Winchester neighbour was living at that time in the next town to Summit - and was about to make a lightening trip home - so I arranged for him to bring the box over. Not only did it solve the problem, but speeded up the delivery process and avoided a lot of hassle also.

The box was duly delivered and I couldn't wait to try out my "new" discs..... We then

...this was not an occasion to relish cornering the apparent world market!!



Fig. 1. One of a kind?

discovered that Steve had forgotten to send them! Not being au fait with musical boxes, my neighbour hadn't checked that he had them before leaving Summit.

Time for fate to lend a hand again. About that time, my sister, resident then in Florida, mentioned that she was due to go to New Jersey on business and volunteered to pick up the discs on my behalf. Moreover, when she checked her destination, it turned out to be none other than Summit itself. And when she called Steve from her Summit hotel to ask for directions on how to find him it transpired he was no further away than "across the block" and he obligingly dropped the discs round to her. At this point my luck ran out for a while, as my sister and I decided the discs could stay in Florida, believing it would only be a matter of a few months before we saw each other. Business trips got cancelled, and months turned into years, until finally I brought the discs back myself at the end of a holiday.

Once again things took a turn for the worse. We were burgled and, although not much was stolen, the haul included an Alexandra smoker's cabinet and the mis-matching Monopol discs! My despair and irritation was compounded by the thought that I now had not one, but two boxes, without any discs to play, and the thieves had over 20 discs but no means of playing them. Even more frustrating, they would most likely throw the discs away after a newspaper report described them as "extremely rare".

But..... within days the thieves were caught, and the property returned. (Another long story!). Eventually I selected 12 discs from the two combined collections and tentatively telephoned Brian Clegg to see if he would be able to copy these "rare" discs. Seemingly quite blasé he told me to send them to him immediately, as his equipment was already set up for copying 12½" Monopol discs. Besides this being yet another bizarre coincidence, it also

begged the question 'what 12½" Monopol discs was he copying and, given their rarity, how had he come by them?'. It transpired he had borrowed about half a dozen from a museum in East Germany, something which had only recently been facilitated by the advent of glasnost. (Unfortunately I forgot to enquire why he wanted to copy them or whether there was another of these "rare" boxes in East Germany). This enabled me to commission for myself additional copies of three of the borrowed discs.....

So, after several years, I had achieved what had once seemed the impossible: despite several setbacks through a series of amazing coincidences, my collection of 12½" Monopol discs had grown from a meagre seven to a glut of 26. This tale of persistence may provoke a wry smile of familiarity by some of our more seasoned collectors. Or it may serve as a warning - or inspiration perhaps? - to the novice. ■

My despair and irritation was compounded by the thought that I now had not one, but two boxes, without any discs to play,

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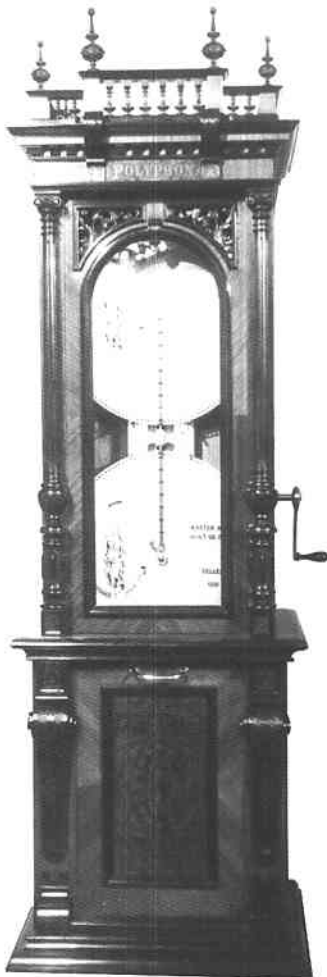
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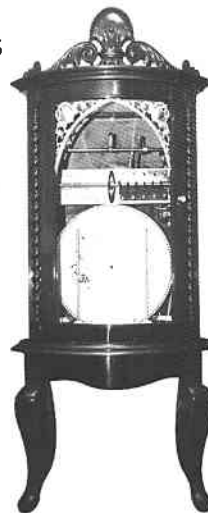
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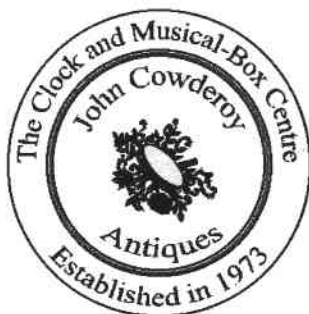
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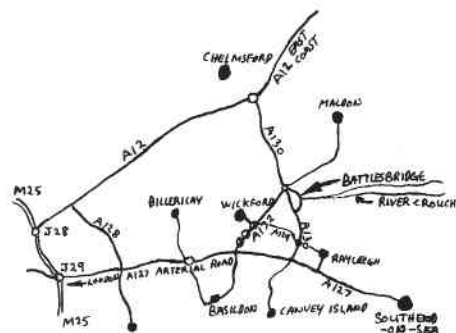
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Orphan Cylinders

A Register for loose and wanted interchangeable musical box cylinders

by John Powell

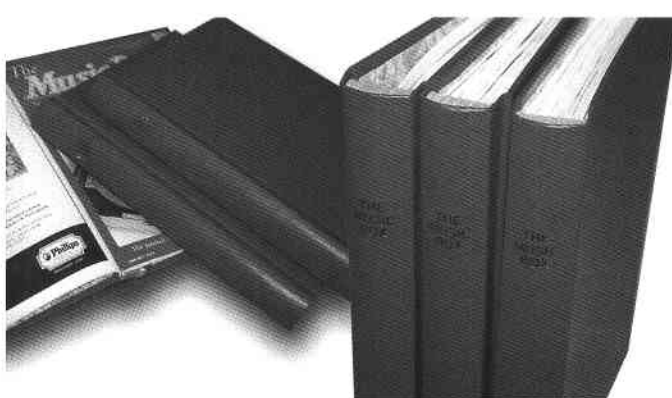
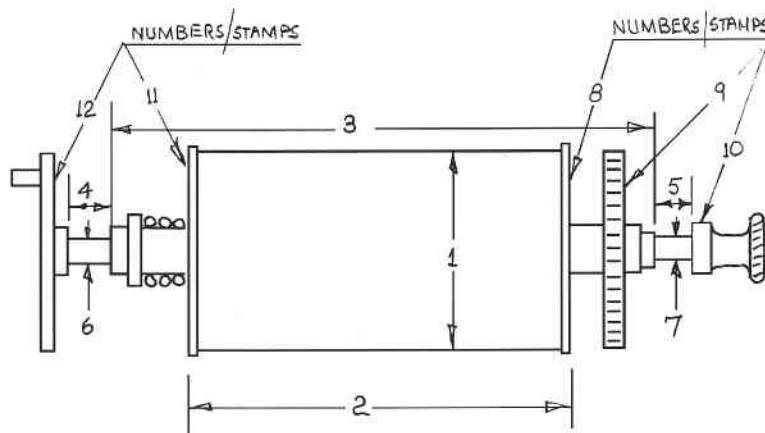
This proposal follows on from MBSI member Beatrice Robertson who has co-ordinated a similar successful scheme in the past to repatriate lost interchangeable cylinders with their matching instruments. One of my incentives in volunteering to initiate a similar scheme is that I have need of some cylinders myself, but am sure that others will also benefit.

For those of you who attended the AGM on 2nd June at Kettering and had doubts about the sanity of the purchaser of Lot 117 at the subsequent auction, I have a certain sympathy. In that lot were two interchangeable cylinders matching the serial number of the remnants of the accompanying movement and were similar to two movements that I already have. One had a set of four cylinders and the other has only one. My gamble partly paid off in that the two cylinders fitted very well into the machine that has only one. The comb marking, number of teeth and tuning of all three is identical and all identified to J.M. & Co. as the maker. The downside was that one of these two cylinders marked no.1 matches two also marked no.1 which I already have. I now have three cylinders all no. 1 playing the same operatic

programme of six tunes which, I think, must be some sort of record. However, my two original machines cannot use each others cylinders although identical in tuning.

A phone call to one of our Committee members suggested that this register could be of value to the Society, and I am quite happy to look after this if there is a reasonable response. I would hope that we would have an exchange with the MBSI and other Societies who may consider this of value. If you have need of interchangeable cylinders or have some lost ones with no apparent homes, I would be very grateful to hear from you at 33 Birchwood Avenue, Leeds, West Yorks LS17 8PJ. Tel: 0132 663341. Or via our Editor or Society e-mail.

I anticipate that any financial considerations would be between buyer and seller with, perhaps, a nominal charge to Society funds to cover operating costs and maybe provide a little surplus. For starters, I have numbered all the features on the line drawing that I believe are significant to allow contributors to record dimensions and features against these. If the scheme becomes popular I will make out a format for easier recording. Measurements can be made in imperial or metric, whichever you find more convenient. The more precise these measurements are makes for a more positive match, but don't let that put you off. As an incentive to get you to register your wants and disposals, matchmaking will be made on a first come first served basis. ■



MUSIC BOX BINDERS

Now that Volume 19 is complete together with Index, this may be a good time to remind you about binders for your magazines. Each binder holds eight issues plus the index (which is included with this issue) and ensures that they are kept in good condition for future reference. The binders come packed two in a stout cardboard postal box price £12.00 plus postage as follows:

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

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

Members will have read elsewhere in this issue of the theft of a Symphonion musical clock which was taken in April of this year. Details of the clock were kept, but unfortunately it was not on the Register. The only photograph available of the item showed it in the background and not as the main subject.

I cannot emphasise too much the need to take clear photographs of each and every item in your collection. Have two or three prints made and distribute as follows:-

- a) One print saved at home in a known place
- b) Keep a second set of prints off the premises either at a Bank or with a trusted friend. This is in case of a fire.
- c) Send the third print to the Registrar when you register your boxes.

Of course this does not guarantee your property will be recovered, but it does increase the chance of it being found. Any insurance company will be less likely to argue about a claim when all these precautions have been taken.

Looking on the positive side, the Register is still progressing well with the greatest changes being made in recording the doings of the Nicole workshop. Thanks again to all who are helping so much especially some well known and respected members of the restoration trade. Please send in any material via the Lincoln address. The internet is wonderful but not all mail seems to get through.

Those who are able to get onto with Society web site will now find they can download a copy of the Register form.

I am sure that the majority of members are engineers in some way. We all like to experiment and put things right. The following conclusions I have reached in a lifetime of "messaging about" with wood and metal and have become known as the Registrars Laws of Mechanics.

1. Hammer. This was originally a weapon of war. Now used as a sort of divining rod to locate delicate and expensive parts not far from the part you are actually trying to hit. Can also be used to bring extreme pain to the fingers of the opposite hand.
2. Pliers. A tool used for rounding off bolt heads. (see also mole grips.)
3. Mole Grips. Like pliers these put teeth marks into everything they grip. Can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of the hand.
4. Blow torch. Used almost exclusively to set fire the flammable objects near to hand.
5. Tweezers. A tool for removing splinters and swarf from hands.
6. Stud Extractor. A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is always ten times harder than any known drill bit.
7. Phillips Screwdriver. Used mainly for stabbing holes in tin cans. Can also be used to mangle slots in the heads of Phillips screws.
8. Hose cutter. A very special tool used to cut hoses and pipes

fractionally too short.

9. Electric Drill. Normally used as a tool to spin round the heads of pop rivets. Can also be used to drill holes in metal that is covering up some other delicate part.

10. Hacksaw. A tool that bends in a crooked and unpredictable way. The more you try to control it, the more perverse it becomes.

11. Adjustable Spanner. A magical tool that alters its jaws without being touched so that it is just too slack or too tight for the job in hand. Capable of doing this immediately after you have put it down.

12. Car Body Filler. A remarkable substance possessing mystical properties. It either stays soft to the end of time or sets rock hard before you have had time to pick it up.

Do let me know if you have found any other tools that have distinct qualities! ■

Registrar.

In our next Issue

We had intended to include a feature on a very large revolver box in this issue but technical problems with the pictures have delayed this. It is anticipated that we will include this next time together with more on the Jaquet-Droz automata in Neuchâtel. ■

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Craftsman sought by leading restorers of top quality clocks and musical boxes.

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Good career prospects.

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Northleach, Nr. Cheltenham,
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William Turnour Thomas Poulett, featured on the cover of your Summer 2001 issue, was born on 15 December 1849. He claimed to be the heir of William Henry, the 6th Earl Poulett, who died on 22 January 1899. Your cover scene would therefore have been between 1870 and 1899, during which period he claimed to be Viscount. If the woman and boy shown are his wife and son born in 1870, then the scene would be circa 1878.

He is known to have played his organ in his native Southsea on the steamers between Dover and Calais, and in Islington, perhaps the scene of your cover. There are several references to pulling an organ through the streets, so he may have had more than one.

We have a Poulett Museum here in Hinton House and if you, or any of your readers, should come across any additional material on William Turnour, the Poulett claimant, we would most appreciate a copy, or opportunity to acquire the original, for our Museum and Archives.

Keith Beers

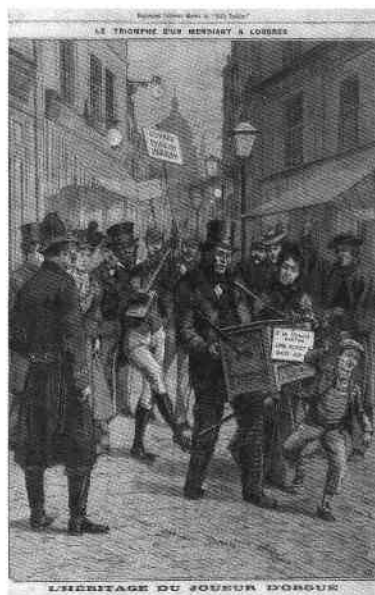
The State Apartments, Hinton House, Hinton St. George, Somerset TA17 8SS.

You will know by now that the illustration on your Summer number of 'The Music Box' shows William Turner Poulett with his organ. He was the illegitimate son of the wife of the 6th Earl Poulett, and was disowned by the Earl from his birth. As he grew older he was forced to eke out a precarious existence playing the organ on the seafront at Southsea, on the cross channel steamers and later on the streets in Islington and London. The organ bore a notice to the effect that he was the rightful Viscount Hinton, the true heir to Earl Poulett. After the Earl's death the case eventually was heard before the Committee of Privileges and the House of Lords and William Turner Thomas was declared illegitimate and the title passed to the Earl's only son by his third marriage.

I have produced a book on the history of the Poulett family and have a large collection of photographs. Your picture is the first one I have ever seen of the

Poulett claimant and it is therefore of great interest to me. Contemporary reports of his life seem to indicate that he started playing the barrel organ in public around 1880 until 1899. It talks about 'turning the handle' and dragging the machine home at night, which would seem to indicate something larger than is shown in your picture, and probably on wheels. Do you know if the Literary Supplement of 'Petit Parisien' contained any information about the picture at all? Its title 'The Triumph of a Beggar in London' might refer to the time in January 1899 when he was told of the death of the 6th Earl, while in the street in Islington, and believed he was now Earl Poulett.

Colin G. Winn, Winchester



I've enjoyed for many years receiving and reading The Music Box, especially on those all too rare occasions when something piques my curiosity or challenges me to respond. Such was the case on receipt of the Summer 2001 issue which arrived today.

The print on its cover depicted a top hatted but indifferently dressed man bearing a barrel organ to which was affixed a sign reading "I am Viscount Hinton Lord Poulett's eldest son". Accompanying him was a bonneted woman bearing a cup (presumably for donations) and followed by a negro minstrel playing a banjo who bears a marked resemblance to

some similarly dressed musical automata I've seen. There is no date but a title reading "le triomphe d'un mendiant a Londres"...which I interpret to read 'triumph of a supplicant from London'.

Maurice Adams, who supplied the photo encourages readers to suggest a date for the publication. Intrigued by the print, I hastened to the Encyclopedia Britannica (1911 scholars' edition vol. 20, pp 958-9) and learned a lot therefrom: Paulet, Poulett or Powlett, an English family of an ancient Somersetshire stock, taking a surname from the parish of Pawlett near Bridgewater. They advanced themselves by a series of marriages with heirs, acquiring manors and lands in Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Devonshire and Hampshire.

The fifth re-settled the family estates in 1853 in order to bar inheritance of one William Turnour Thomas Poulett who, although born in wedlock of the wife of the earl's cousin William Henry Poulett, was repudiated by her husband, afterwards the sixth earl. In 1903, the sixth earl's son by a third marriage established his claim to the peerage, and in 1909 judgment was given against the claim of William Turnour Thomas Poulett, then styling himself Earl Poulett".

Thus the print may be a lampooning of an actual event in 1909, the denial of the petition of William Turnour Thomas Poulett who claimed, as eldest son, the earldom. Such a newsworthy event must have tickled the fancies of publishers in Paris, who delight in the trials and tribulations of the aristocracy, much as do some, such as the National Enquirer or the International Express in Britain even today.

Finally, and I feel it's worth mentioning, I'm glad that our publication has an e-mail address. Odd that for one who opposed computerization for so long I'd make such a statement, but now that I'm on line, so to speak, it certainly does make communication for me a much simpler matter. A push of a button and now it's all yours!

Kind regards, **Olin Tillotson**
 obtill@home.com

classified advertisements

CLASSIFIED SALES

John Ralph 65 note player piano, working but needs some work. With assortment of rolls. Originally from Harrods. Telephone Steve or Barbara on 01462 835202 /835604. (Near Hitchin, Herts).

Imhof and Muckle drawing room barrel piano, 54 keys, 2 barrels. Lovely burr walnut case with incised glass, lovely condition museum piece. **Piano Melodica** 30 key table top book operated mechanical piano. Tel. 01462 647335 or 07950176774.

15½" Upright **Polyphon** and 15 discs. Case and bin well made but not original. £2,850. Also some organettes and music. Tel. 01536 523988.

Ariston Organette and discs. Lovely condition - £395. Standard Phonograph with

beautiful long brass horn and cylinders - £450. Rossi & Spinelli barrel piano, excellent - £1750. Gebrüder Bruder barrel organ, 65 keys, 6 stops, 2 barrels of good music, Superb - £6950. Large Belgium cafe piano, 2 barrels, needs restoration - £1950. 15½" Table Polyphon, duplex combs, 10 discs, perfect - £2750. Collection Sale. Tel. 029 2056 3605.

'**Romance**' (**Reuge**) 72 note movement plays Pachelbel's Canon in 3 parts. Original packing. Unused gift. £120 o.n.o. Tel. 01256 331753.

12½" single comb **Monopol disc box**, with 12 discs. Good playing order - £875 o.n.o. 14 note "Cotswold" organette (modern) made by Pete Watts, with 19 paper rolls. £230 o.n.o. Tel. 01962 843266.

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Organette music wanted. Any **Dolcine** card music any

condition. 14 note **Melodia and Clariona** music (on spools). All other organette music, bands, spools, discs, any condition considered. Contact Ted Brown on 01403 823533.

Any old catalogues and musical box ephemera. Ted Brown - 01403 823533.

24½" **Polyphon Mikado** and 25¼" **Symphonion** and other large disc machines. Top prices paid. Not trade, private collector. Tel. 01253 813128/812639.

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1st April; 1st July;

1st October; 1st February

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

Posting of magazine:

27th February; 27th April;

7th August; 7th November

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LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE: **1st October 2001**

Minimum cost each advertisement £5.00.

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

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Non-members 32p per word
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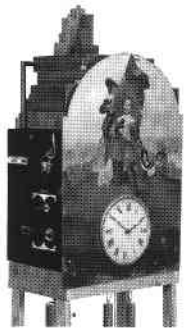
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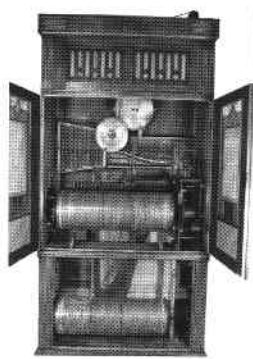
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Orchestrion "Othello"
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approx. 1912

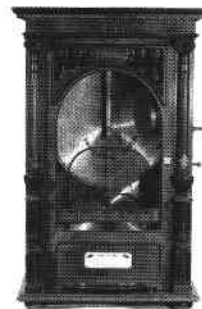
\$ 8,600.-/DM 17,250.-/£ 6,038.-/¥ 1,639,000



"Polyphon No. 104 U", 1890
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£ 4,807.-/¥ 1,135,500



Flute Clock
"Johan Schlegel", 1820
\$ 9,673.-/DM 16,394.-/
£ 5,574.-/¥ 1,213,150



"Polyphon No. 5K (Changer)",
approx. 1900
\$ 24,681.-/DM 43,300.-/
£ 14,289.-/¥ 3,464,000



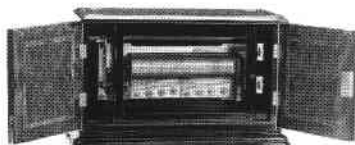
Phonolamp
"Capitol Mod. EA", 1919
\$ 3,965.-/DM 7,210.-/£ 2,524.-/¥ 504,700



"Symphonion Musik-
Automat Mod. 25GS", 1895
\$ 7,524.-/DM 13,200.-/£ 4,884.-/¥ 963,600



"Automatic Music Work", 1880
By C.F. Schulze & Co., Berlin
\$ 9,836.-/DM 16,394.-/£ 5,574.-/¥ 1,311,520



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"Emile Berliner", 1895
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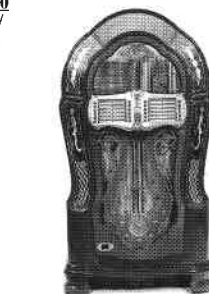
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