

The Music Box

Volume 21 Number 2 Summer 2003

Edited by Alan Pratt

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue:

- A Symphonion in British India
- A Flight of Fancy
- We Made an Offer
- Makers Marks - A Guide
- Sixshooter
- Swiss Style (Part 1)
- All the Regular Features

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Makers Marks

Identifying musical boxes can sometimes be quite difficult. In the absence of a clearly stamped maker's name, we have to rely on makers' marks which are found on combs, bedplates and sometimes on tune sheets.

In this issue of The Music Box we are publishing a table of 56 makers' marks as part of the Society's efforts in collecting and disseminating information. This does not compare with the Tune Sheet books or the Organette Book but could prove invaluable in pinpointing a particular maker's work.

The chart was originally prepared by Arthur Ord-Hume and published in the 1987 Silver Jubilee issue. In those intervening 16 years some additional information has come to hand which has been incorporated in this revised version. But it is a tribute to Arthur Ord-Hume's original research that only four amendments to names have been required.

As part of the revision process, the list has been rearranged in alphabetical order which will, hopefully, make it easier to look up specific details. We are grateful to Anthony Bulleid for his work in

bringing this information up to date but, as he points out, a project of this nature is never completed. Further makers' marks may be identified and can be added to this present work in a continuing revision process.

It would be ideal if one of our members would take on the task of co-ordinating this work. It is unlikely to be greatly time-consuming, but they would provide a focus for the work and be a central point to which new information would be submitted. Could you be that person? If you think this is something you would like to do, then contact me at the Editorial office, or any member of the Committee.

For any member who has joined in the last 15 years, this will be new information. For the "old hands" the revisions should prove helpful. Let us hope that someone will continue the revision process so that we can publish another update in a few years time. Of course, to make the process work we need information, so if you have come across marks not on our list, or extra information on those that are, then please get in touch. A Society like ours works best when everyone feels able to contribute - however small that contribution may be. ■ *Editor*

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Alan Pratt

Our cover picture

A fine and rare monkey orchestra automaton barrel organ, circa 1870, the probably French nine-piece chamber ensemble having 43 separate movements overall and dressed in flamboyant costume, within music salon setting with mirror panels and windows with painted landscape backing, the base with 48-note German made crank-wind organ playing a choice of seven tunes on a 27" pinned wooden barrel connected via chain to the automaton, in rosewood veneered two-part case with ogee cornice above glazed top and panel base, on bracket feet, width 97cm. From the collection of the late Roy Mickleburgh.



Picture courtesy of
Bristol Auction Rooms

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.

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Annual General Meeting and Society auction

The next event in the Society calendar is the AGM and Society auction. The date, if you have not already marked it in your diary, is Saturday June 7th. Registration is from 10am and the meeting starts at 10.30.

Our venue this year is the village hall in Roade, Northamptonshire. Near to the M1 motorway, this venue should make life easier for those members living in the more northerly areas. Don't forget to bring along those items for the auction. David Walch (0117 9684701) will help if you have any queries about auction entries. Elsewhere in this issue there is mention of our efforts to raise money for the childrens ward at Addenbrooks Hospital. Perhaps you may wish to donate something for the auction with all the proceeds going to the fund?

Easy directions to arrive at the Roade Village Hall, Northants:

Leave M1 at Junction 15 and turn off south on the A508 towards Milton Keynes for approx. 2 miles to Roade Village. Take 1st turning on the right - Bailey Brook Lane. The second building on the right is the Village Hall with plenty of parking off the road and good access to the hall.

Beware of speed camera as you enter the village! See you there!

Spring Meeting - Birmingham

Once more the sun shone upon our endeavours when around 50 members gathered in Birmingham for the Spring meeting.

After a demonstration of musical boxes brought by members, John Harrold opened the proceedings on Friday evening with a talk on 'Musical Box Comparisons'. Using a Lecoultré of about 1840 and a Nicole Overture box of 1870, he compared the arrangements of the airs, highlighting the outstanding quality achieved in some of the earlier boxes, although both boxes would be welcomed in anyone's collection!

New Members

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

2818 Dr Michael Walker,	2828 Michael Barrington, Dorset
Tyne & Wier	2829 Mr. R.A. Moss, Herts
	2830 Mr. J.A. Watson, Surrey
	2831 Nigel Penberthy, Lancs
	2832 S.P. Simpson, Devon
	2833 Marianne J Coslett, Wales

On Saturday, Ted Brown started the morning session with 'It doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg'. Using items from his collection he showed some lower cost instruments, many made as novelties or children's toys, some of which played surprisingly well. Ted brought his usual humour and anecdotes mixed with technical information to make an interesting insight into this aspect of collecting.

After coffee Christopher Proudfoot, our President, talked on 'Gramophones - the pursuit of portability 1897-1960'. Using slides, he showed how the early, bulky gramophones evolved to meet the demand for portability. Some of the early examples needed a team of sherpas to take them on a picnic, but towards the end some extremely compact examples had emerged.

Nicholas Simons teased us all with the title of his presentation - 'How to build an Orchestrion in thirty minutes flat!' What he presented was 30 minutes of an overview of his wide experience in building and restoring orchestrions. Fascinating stuff which left many of us wondering how he finds the time to carry out such outstanding work. To complete our enjoyment he played recordings of the instruments shown whilst explaining the technicalities of each one.

(But I still don't think I can build one in thirty minutes! - Editor).

Saturday afternoon gave an opportunity to see some of the new areas of Birmingham and to enjoy a trip along part of the City's canal network which, it is claimed, is more extensive than the canals of Venice!

The Society Dinner on Saturday evening gave more opportunity to talk mechanical music after which our meeting organiser, John Ward, gave a convincing display of magic. Most impressive.

Three more presentations awaited us on Sunday, starting with Coulson Conn from the American Society with a very full half hour looking at some of the more unusual systems of playing mechanical music.

Keith Reedman and Joan Rippengal entertained us with a delightful tale of youthful memories of a 78rpm record which led to the

production of three new organette rolls. 'Beautiful Soup' was a barely remembered song which by one of those exceptional quirks of fate turned up on a cylinder box owned by the late John Young and which was playing when the Society's members visited his home after the Lincoln meeting. Joan persuaded the audience to join in with a final rendition of the song.

Our final presentation was by Paul Bellamy entitled 'Totally Potty' and drew upon his considerable knowledge of Crown Devon musical ware and the Fielding family that produced it. With several excellent examples to listen to this provided a fascinating insight into the development of this product range which has become so collectable.

For a small number of members the weekend continued on Sunday afternoon with a visit to the collection of John Harrold in Stourbridge. Every item sounded great and it is always a delight to see and hear mechanical music playing as it should. From snuff boxes to street organs to Orchestrelle we enjoyed it all, sustained by tea and cakes from his wife Angie. Many thanks to them both for inviting us into their home.

Thanks go, as always, to all the presenters and a special mention to John Ward, our youngest member, for organising such a memorable meeting.

For technical reasons we have been unable to include pictures with this report.

Childrens Hospital Project

Dear Friends,

It has come to our attention that the Childrens Ward at Addenbrookes Hospital Cambridge had, many years ago, been given an upright 15.5 inch Polyphon. Unfortunately this has not been in working condition in anyone's memory.

Daphne and myself felt, being members of The Musical Box Society, we would like to get this non playing instrument either repaired or replaced. Having contacted the President and Vice President for their approval to undertake this in the name of the Society and getting their total support we have proceeded with this project.

On visiting the Hospital we found the instrument in the Childrens

Cancer Ward, C2. We removed the existing Polyphon and with other members advice we decided the work involved to restore this would be long and costly. It was at this stage we came across a really good machine for sale which Daphne and I purchased and were able to install in the Ward straight away. We are funding this ourselves but would like to give members an opportunity to subscribe to the project should they so wish. Roy Ison, the Meetings Secretary, is happy for fund raising to take place at our meetings via Raffles or donations and should anyone have an 'Organ Grind' they may wish to consider supporting us. Perhaps you could bring along something for the Raffle at our meetings or perhaps to the Annual Auction for this fund. A suitable plaque will be attached to the Polyphon recording the Presentation by the Society.

We are most touched by the immediate support we have received from members who are already aware of what we have done to bring a little happiness to the lives of these children. God Bless

Sincerely, Alan & Daphne Wyatt.

Roy Mickleburgh Collection

Older members may remember the collection of the late Roy Mickleburgh, the majority of which was sold around 1986.

The balance of the collection, around 50 or so items, is to be sold at Bristol Auction Rooms on June 24th. A couple of the instruments are pictured here and full details can be obtained from David Rees on 0117 973 7201. David tells me that the full catalogue will be on their website by the time you receive this issue of The Music Box (see their ad on the inside back cover of this issue). ■



April in Paris

It is some years since the Society visited Paris but the displays and the weather were as bright and welcoming as ever. Although only five days we managed to visit some amazing collections starting with the Musee des Arts et Metier. This museum houses a wide range of early technical exhibits covering the development of steam, electricity, internal combustion engines and some notable examples of automata by such makers as Vichy, Rouillet-Decamps, Lambert and Phalibois.

The Museum's star exhibit in this section is the Dulcimer Player - a young woman seated at a dulcimer which can play eight tunes on a 46 note instrument. The mechanism, placed under the stool on which the figure sits, consists of a clockwork drive powering sixteen sections of cams and sixteen rows of wedges. The cams actuate the movement of the player's forearms while the wedges control the movement of the hammers. And all of this in a figure about 400mm high! We had hoped to see this automaton actually play but the figure is fragile and is now kept behind glass, so we had to be content to see a short video.

The Dulcimer Player is similar to, but much smaller than the Organ Player by Jacot Droz which we saw in Neuchatel and was made by the engineer Kintzing and the cabinet maker Roentgen. It was made in 1784 for Queen Marie Antionette and one must marvel at the ingenuity and craftsmanship of these early makers.

That evening we went to the Musee des Arts Forrain. This fine collection of fairground exhibits has now found a permanent home in the de Bercy district of Paris which is where our hotel was. This new development is basically the old winery which has been refurbished to house not only these exhibits, but also shops and restaurants. Our charming young guide, Diane, took us through the three areas of the collection taking in the music, the art and the rides. One of the earliest carousels was 'people-powered' and we found ourselves pedalling furiously to provide motive power. Great fun!



Fig. 1. The Dulcimer Player



Fig. 2. One of the fairground organs of the collection.



Fig. 3. Members enjoy one of the fairground games.

The separate salons are divided by tree-lined 'streets' which even have chandeliers hanging from them. Work is continuing to extend the collection but even in its present form it is a 'must' if you are visiting Paris.

On Saturday we visited the Paris street markets in search of bargains. First to Porte de Vanves and later to Le Marche aux Puces at Porte de Clignancourt, which is claimed to be the largest antiques market in Europe. With over two thousand dealers it is possible to see only a small part but we did manage to find a very nice Piano Melodico and a planchette-playing piano. However, vigorous bargaining failed to result in a purchase!

In the evening we visited the Musee de la Magie. As well as a display of automata they also put on an excellent magic show where Jerome, the resident magician managed to baffle us all. There is also a wide ranging display of magic artifacts and illusions.

Sunday was for sightseeing and the weather provided the perfect setting to enjoy Paris. After a three hour guided tour, which seemed to pass so quickly, we continued on to Versailles for the Palace and gardens. In the evening, we were joined by Christian Lecorne the President of AAImm, the French Society, (accompanied by his wife) and Etienne Blyelle and Philippe Rouille for dinner and the usual talk of mechanical music.

It is sad that Brian Campsie who had done the early preparation for this meeting was

not able to enjoy his efforts. But Alan and Daphne Wyatt stepped in to complete the arrangements which resulted in a truly

memorable meeting. ■

Pictures by: Peter Howard, Bob Blunn and Alan Pratt.



Fig. 4. Antique carved figure.



Fig. 5. Raring to go!.

Chanctonbury Ring

The March Chanctonbury Ring took place as usual at The Old School in West Sussex with about 35 members attending. Anthony Bulleid took us through the minefield of 'who made my musical box'. This is a subject dear to many a heart, but it's brave soul who aims to pin a box down to one maker. Anthony gave us details of a box market VALOGNE and then described marks also found on both Lecoultre and early Nicole. Now in the age of the computer we may be able to identify some of the many blank makers, repairers, dealers and agents who left marks on movement. We could make good use of members wishing to act as collators of these details.

The second part of the morning was filled with the sound of musical boxes. Members brought a Forte piano Metert, a hidden bell and drum Metert, an early Nicole Freres, an overture box and a Langdorff, just to name a few of the cylinder boxes. We then heard a 12" Thorens twin comb disc box, which we compared with an 11" Polyphon (also twin combed).

After a lunch of sausages and mash, onions and baked beans with wine, followed by puddings and coffee we were ready for a twin reed Varetto street barrel organ which sounded extremely good and revitalised us for the rest of the afternoon.

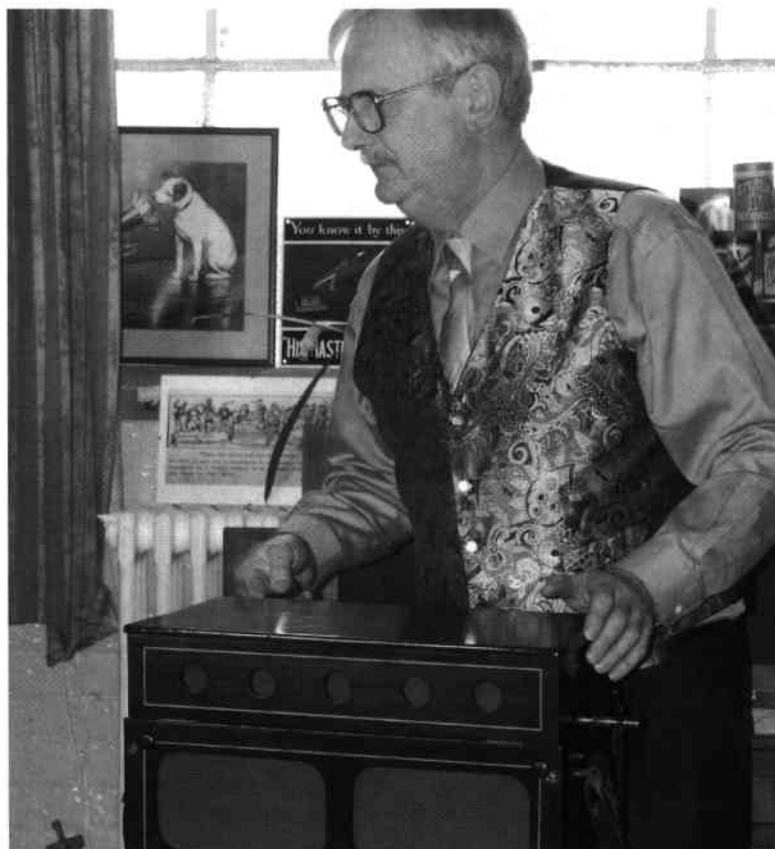
A Hicks barrel dulcimer that had a replacement barrel was compared with an original. The two instruments were exactly 100 numbers different on the serial numbers. A selection of Swiss musical Chalets were demonstrated along with a few anecdotes regarding their history.

After a few tunes on the Steck and the Orchestelle it was time for afternoon tea and the journey home.

The next meeting at this venue is the Summer Open Day on Saturday, 17th May (please ignore the odd dates in the last journal). Food will be included as usual. The next Chanctonbury Ring is Sunday, 10th August. Please bring a packed

lunch for this one and we will supply the puddings. Please contact

Ted Brown to book either of these days in plenty of time. ■



Richard Kerridge and Varetto.



Paul Bellamy

A Symphonion in British India

by Hendrik H. Strengers

This is the remarkable story of a European mechanical musical instrument in the largest sub-continent of Asia, brought there by Roman Catholic sisters from the Netherlands.

A bit of history

Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to India in 1498. The Portuguese founded business offices in different places and especially in Goa (till 1961). In the middle of the 17th century Dutch merchants settled at the coasts of Malabar in the south-west and Coromandel in the south-east. The British East India Company built up political power from 1624, and England extended its influence by the conquests by Lord Clive about 1760. By 1858 India was ruled by the English Crown. The Governor General got the title of Viceroy, and by the law of April 20th 1876, Queen Victoria was granted the title 'Empress of India'.

The Mission of the Roman Catholic sisters

The congregation of the Sisters of Jesus, Mary and Joseph was founded by Father Mathias Wolff, a Jesuit priest in 1822. In 1898 the first sisters were sent to the Dutch Indies (now Indonesia) and in 1904 to British India. From the Netherlands about 60 or 70 girls joined the congregation every year in those days. On January 29th 1904 seven young sisters left the Netherlands to settle a mission in Guntur, a village on the Madras to Calcutta railway.

The Symphonion disc musical box

Several missions followed from 1904 onwards and the Mission in Nellore was settled in May 1911. In the same year or in the first months of 1912 the central nunnery



Fig. 1. British India; see Guntur, Nellore and Madras.



Fig. 2. Twelve Mission postcards in copperplate printing. Price 75 cents. This is the cover.

of the Congregation in 's-Hertogenbosch (= briefly: Den Bosch, the capital of the Province Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands) issued a series of '12 Mission postcards in copperplate printing. Price 75 cents' (£1 was 12 Dutch guilders in 1912). The proceeds were spent on behalf of the mission work. The text of one of these 12 postcards reads "Foundlings of the sisters of the Congregation Jesus, May and Joseph at Nellore, listening to the musical box (Madras Mission)". My postcard was postmarked 's-Hertogenbosch with the date June 26th 1912 and sent to Oudenbosch, a small village in the Province of Noord-Brabant.

The main question is: how did the Symphonion come to Nellore? There are several interesting possibilities:

- 1 the box was sent from the Netherlands to British India, possibly by a benefactor;
- 2 the box was bought by the sisters or a benefactor in India. Is that possible?

The Nicole Records Company Limited of London (the successor of Nicole Freres at Geneva) was incorporated on the 3rd July 1903. They had agencies in British India: (1) Nicole Freres Ltd., 3-4 Council House Street, Calcutta; (2) Nicole Freres (India) Ltd., 2/1-3 Corporation Street, Calcutta and 37 Parsi Bazar Street, Bombay; (3) M. Tara & Co., 186 Broadway, Madras.

During 1904 M.L. Shaw, 23-5 Dharamtala Street, Calcutta, had been appointed the authorised agent for 'Nicole Record' and 'Nicolephone' talking machines for India. In July 1904 John Watson Hawd and Stephen Porter travelled to organise recording sessions in Calcutta and to set up an Indian branch office of Nicole Freres Ltd. Thomas Usher, the Chairman of Nicole Freres Ltd., put forward a proposal in September 1905 to separate the operations of the company in India and form a separate company (see under B). Although Nicole Freres Ltd. in London was liquidated in December 1907 the business in India went on. In 1906

The main question is: how did the Symphonion come to Nellore?



Fig. 4. American catalogue "Symphonions" 1894. Reprint.

SYMPHONION.



No. 6 N.

SPRING MOVEMENT.

(10 5/8")

Walnut Case, Panel Top, Moulding Base ;
84 Steel Tongues ; 2 Combs.

Height, 10 1/4 inches ; Width, 18 inches ; Depth, 13 3/4 inches.

Each, \$ 57 50, without Music.

Steel Music Discs, No. 6, each, \$ 0 80.

See Page 26.

American catalogue "Symphonions", 1894.
Reprint.

Fig. 3. Foundlings of the sisters of the Congregation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph at Nellore, listening to the musical box (Madras Mission).

and 1907 George Holland was sent to India to make more Indian recordings for Nicole Freres (India) Ltd., During the later months of 1907 Nicole Freres Ltd. In India, managed by Adolf Muhlberg, had expanded its activities with the opening of a shop in the name of Nicole Record Depot at 1 Churchgate Street, Bombay. Muhlberg left India after setting up an office in Bombay at 37 Parsi Bazar Street (see under B) along with the retail shop.

In April 1908 a selection of Tamil recordings was issued on the 'Nicole Record' label, followed by a selection of Telegu recordings (= the language at the Mission in Nellore), taken at Madras and Bangalore by George Lawrence Holland in 1906/7, Nos C-860 and following numbers. These new releases were pressed as solid shellac composition discs along with Hindustani and Bengali selections. For southern India the distribution was handled by M.

Tara Y Co. in Madras (see under C). There were several takeovers and fusions but the last related firm in India was dissolved on the 26th July 1912.

It is an interesting thought that the Nicole shops in India had a clearance sale in 1911 and 1912 because the 'Zeitschrift fur Instrumentenbau' (Leopzig, July 21, 1912) mentions that the Kalliope-Musikwerke had taken over the gramophone department of Symphonion in Leipzig and Nicole Freres Ltd. were the actual distribution agents for the Symphonion company from October 1901. The 'Nicolephone' talking machines are believed to have been built by Symphonion Musikwerke A.G. in Leipzig. So there were strong ties between Nicole Freres and Symphonion.

The instrument on the postcard is probably the No. 6N, walnut case, panel top, moulding base with 84 teeth, 2 combs and 10 3/4" (=27cm) discs. In 1984 the price

was US\$57.50. I could not find special discs with Indian music (Polyphon issued more than 20 Indian discs). ■

Sources

- A. Kijkjes in de missies van de zusters van het Gezelschap van J. M. J. in Britsch-Indie (Sidelights on the missions of the sisters of the Congregation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in British-India), 1925.
- B. Missies der zusters van het Gezelschap van J. M. J. in Oost-India (= the Dutch East-Indies) en Britsch-Indie, September 1927.
- C. Nicole Record, by Michael Kinnear, 2001.
- D. Catalogue "Symphonions, 1894
- E. Collection of the author.

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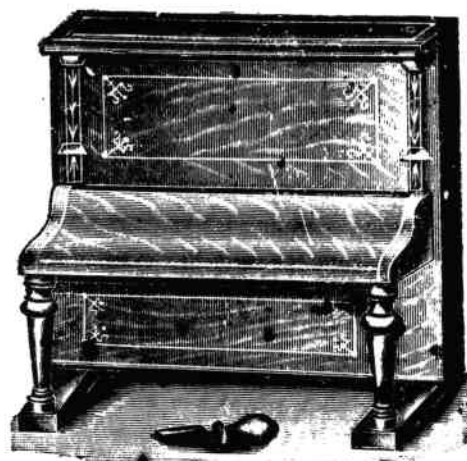
Old Adverts of Yesteryear — Music Box

MONOPOL MUSICAL BOXES (30 Tongues).

No. 30, 31, 32, 33, 130, 300, Motor Car, Mail Cart, Piano, and Motor Bus Models



No. 300.
Size $9\frac{1}{2} \times 8 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



No. 33.
The Tunes are placed upon the back.
Size $9\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches



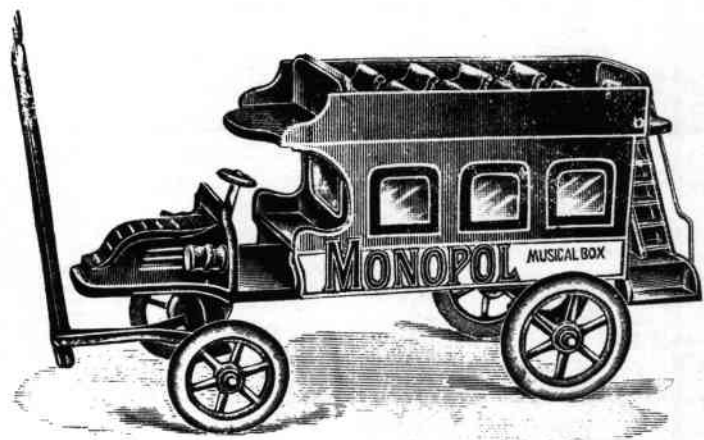
No. 32.
Size $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



No. 30, 31 & 130
Size $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ inches.

In ordering it is only necessary to quote the number of the Tune required.

TUNES CANNOT BE EXCHANGED.



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Mail Cart.



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New Singing Bird Cages

Musical Jewellery Boxes

Clockwork Musical Gifts & Collectibles

Mechanical Music CD's, Cassettes & Books

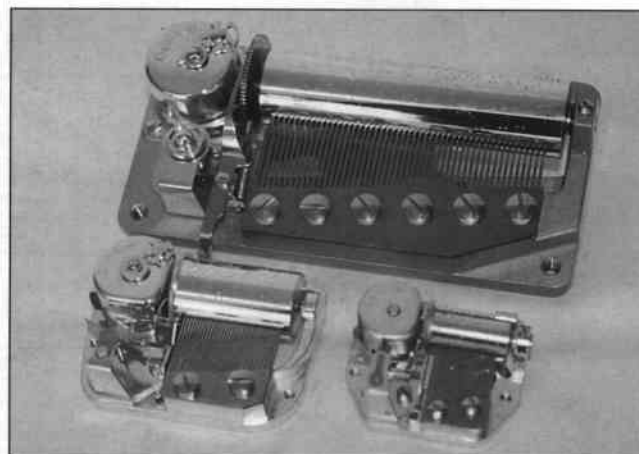
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Now Available For Your Own Boxes

18, 30, 50 & 78 note Pinned Cylinder Movements

48 Key Disc Movements with 6 Brass Bells



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Dean Organs, "The Music Box", 40 Bristol Road, Whitchurch, Bristol.










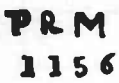

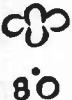












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Makers Marks

*A revised edition of the information first published in
The Music Box in 1987*

Mark	No.	Description
	1.	Allard & Sandoz - Printed on tune sheets.
	2.	Ami Geneux - Stamped on brass components.
	3.	Ami Rivenc - Stamped into top of cock and reversed image printed on tune sheet.
	4.	G. Baker-Troll - Stamped into top of cock and tooled into inner lid strap. Also on tune sheets.
	5.	Barnett Samuel & Co - Printed on tune sheet.
	6.	Berens, Blumberg & Co - Stamped top left bedplate. Lecoultré agent.
	7.	Berens, Blumberg - Stamped into comb. Lecoultré importer. L.B. denotes Lecoultré & Brechet.
	8.	Jean Billon-Haller - Printed on tune sheet.
	9.	Bontems - Stamped into brass plates, 1/4 in. x 1/4 in.
	10.	B. A. Bremond - Stamped into top of cock.
	11.	B. A. Bremond - Stamped into top of cock.
	12.	B. A. Bremond - Stamped into top of cock.
	13.	F. Conchon - Printed on tune sheet ("Star Works").
	14.	F. Conchon - Printed on tune sheet "Star Works".
	15.	F. Conchon - Stamped into top of cock, 1/16 in. wide.
	16.	J. Cuendet - Printed on tune sheet and stamped into bedplate.
	17.	Freres Rochat - Stamped into brasswork, also sometimes in a circle.
	18.	Heinrich Hermann - printed on discs for Celeste.
	19.	Ernst Holzweissig Nachfolger - Printed on tune sheets. Very large Leipzig agent.
	20.	Junod (?) - Mark stamped into bedplate (variations).
	21.	Adolph Karrer - Etched into comb, and A K as casting mark = Adolf Karrer.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | 22. Landorff - Stamped into top of cock, also printed on tune sheets. |  | 34. Paillard - Stamped into top of cock and into comb. |
|  | 23. Lecoultr Freres - Very small mark stamped into bedplate. About 1/16 in. long. |  | 35. Paillard, Vaucher, Fils - Stamped into comb. |
|  | 24. Lecoultr Freres - Stamped into comb. |  | 36. Caroline Paillard - from Oct 1865, for E. A. Paillard Stamped into top of cock. |
|  | 25. Ludwig & Wild - Printed on discs of Orpheus disc machine. |  | 37. Ch. F. Pietschmann - Printed on discs of Celesta disc machine. |
|  | 26. Mermod Freres - Printed on tune sheet and stamped into combs. |  | 38. Piguet et Meylan - Stamped into music disc (different numbers). * |
|  | 27. Mermod Freres - Printed on tune sheets - stamped onto accessories. |  | 39. Piguet et Meylan - Stamped on music disc. |
|  | 28. Mermod Freres - Printed on tune sheets - stamped onto accessories. |  | 40. Richter & Co. - Attached medallion (stamped) and bedplate, cast. |
|  | 29. Mermod Freres - Printed design on discs for Stella. |  | 41. Polyphonmusikwerke - Printed on discs, stamped on medallions. |
|  | 30. Henri Metert - Repair work stamped into bedplate. |  | 42. Sibler & Fleming - Printed on tune sheets. |
|  | 31. Mojon, Manger & Co. - Printed in tune sheets. |  | 43. Soc Junod - Stamped on accessories with patent numbers. |
|  | 32. Nicole Freres - Very small mark stamped into bedplates of some early specimens. About 1/16 in. long. |  | 44. J. Thibouville-Lamy - Printed on tune sheets, mostly L'Epée boxes. |
|  | 33. Nicole Freres - Mark registered, Chas Eugene Brun Aug. 2, 1882, ref. 28,834. Printed on tune sheets. |  | 45. Thorens - Cast into bedplate (Edelweiss disc machine) and on tune sheets. |

	46.	Ch. & J. Ullmann - Printed on tune sheets.		51.	Adolphe Woog - Printed on tune sheets.
	47.	Ch. & J. Ullmann - Stamped into comb, also top of cock.		52.	Adolphe Woog - Mark registered Dec. 8, 1876, ref. 10,100. Printed on tune sheets.
	48.	Ch. & J. Ullmann - Stamped into bedplate, 3/16in. wide. Also found cast into underside of bedplate.		53.	Adolphe Woog - Stamped into top left of bedplate (early importer of L'Epée). Also on Tune Sheets
	49.	Weill & Harburg - Printed on tune sheets.		54.	Samuel Woog - Stamped into top left of bedplate (early importer of L'Epée).
	50.	Weissbach & Co. - Printed on discs for Komet. Sometimes image reversed in cabinet door design.		55.	J. H. Zimmerman - Printed on discs for Adler and Fortuna.
				56.	(Unidentified) Stamped into brass on automaton, believed Leschot/ Maillardet workshop.

* Footnote: Only made small movements - 1810-1830.

This information was originally prepared and presented by Arthur Ord-Hume. We are indebted to Anthoy Bulleid for their work in reveiwing and updating the chart. Anyone discovering Makers Marks not included, or new information on those shown is invited to advise the Society via the Editorial Office so that further revisions can be made.

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We Made an Offer They Did Not Refuse

by Geoff Mason

It all started with a visit to a local car boot sale looking for cheap music boxes, we like to collect at the bottom end of the hobby mainly novelty items, swiss chalets, unusual souvenirs (not more than £5). As we had not found anything worth having we noticed there was an antique fair at the racecourse in the opposite field, so we decided to go up market and look around, keeping my hand firmly on my purse so as not to get carried away we had already spent £3-50 entrance fee. Shortly we came across a stall selling what I would call a load of junk, however we noticed an odd looking box with an ashtray at one end a miniature table lamp at the other end and a friendly looking owl in middle. On lifting the lid there appeared to be holes where cigarettes were kept, on the underside was a key, ha! a music box.

How much for the box? I asked (a typical Yorkshire phrase is 'How Much') £45 was his reply a very rare box in working order he said and proceeded to wind it up, nothing happened, it just wants a bit of attention he said, I think many have come across that remark. We calmly walked away without comment.

However as the afternoon came to an end and we had not bought anything, I said to my wife go make the chap with the cigarette music box an offer of £10 as I enjoy a challenge which she did, to my amazement he said 'Done' and I thought which of us has been.

By now we were eager to get home to inspect our little treasure having spent more than usual. The first thing was to remove the four screws holding the bottom panel on in order to gain access to the movement.

This revealed a rather sturdy unit with aprox a linch drum but no apparent makers mark or name, but what was noticed were a number of wires and contacts indicating the box did more than play music. A spray with WD40 (careful not to get any on the

comb or drum soon had the movement working). A very tasteful Japanese tune began to play. Being an electronic engineer I quickly traced the wiring to a battery compartment at the rear, the wires appeared to go to the left, centre and right-hand



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

...(a typical
Yorkshire
phrase is
'How Much')...



Fig. 3.

compartments. The easy way was to connect a battery and short out the switch contacts on the movement panel. This done the box lit up from every point, the fretwork panels illuminated on

each side, the owl's eyes lit up the panel behind the lid in the cigarette box lit up. The movement was now refitted and the whole article put into action.

On winding up and switching

on the movement played a pleasant unknown tune, the panels not only lit but the colours changed in the fretwork grills and owls eyes. When cigarettes were placed in the holes they began to move up and down enabling you to remove them. On the right-hand side is a figurine of a black cat supporting a lampshade, beneath is a short pull cord which when pulled operates a cigarette lighter on the top.

Looking back I don't think we did bad for £10 (sorry £13-50, £3-50 admission Charge)

However to be serious we would be grateful if any member has any information, as it must have been bought in Japan as a souvenir. The writing on the lampshade says in English "Memory of Japan". The tune definitely sounds Japanese, the unit is well made, the fretwork designs on the front give the appearance of being 40's or 50's, but I didn't think the Japanese came on the scene of making music boxes until the 60's. ■

*The tune
definitely sounds
Japanese...*



Fig. 4.



»Gramophone EMG Mod. Xb«
with giant paper maché horn.



The Kalesh, approx. 1750 (!)
Beautiful children carriage drawn by a
goat or dog – Extraordinary rare!



»The Chef« or »Pumpkin eater«
Exceptional musical automata by Gustave
Vichy, Paris, approx. 1870



Extraordinary,
Elegant Gramophone by
Paillard & Fils, 1906



Famous Swiss Bear Hall
and Hat Stand from Bern,
approx. 1895
Extremely rare.



Swiss Musical Box
by »Ami Rivenc«
with 6 interchangeable
cylinders.



»Steel Piano«, approx. 1790
Extremely rare keyboard carillon.



Rare Phonolamp
»Fairy, 1920«
Superb and elegant
collector's item.



»Excelsior, 1905«
Extremely rare
German coin-op
phonograph.



Hupfeld HOT-AIR Orchestrion
»Concerto No. 11« (1900)
Only 3 x known worldwide!



Organette »Metallonett«, 1890
The only one known example worldwide!



Original James Watt Copier, 1780
World's 1st patented copying machine.



Locomobile »Richard Garrett & Sons,
Leiston, U. K.« from 1910
With history and documents. Street-size!



»Early Barrel Organ, approx. 1840«
Excellent working condition!



Original Wooden
Carousel Horse, 1910



»Tricycle, 1870«
Early European bike
carriage.

»Mechanical Music Instruments«

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A Flight of Fancy - A Flight Robson Organ

by Roy Ison

I have just acquired a new organ for my collection and thought that perhaps the following details may be of interest to some of our members.

The organ is a 58-keyboard clockwork and finger barrel organ by Flight Robson and as far as I have been able to ascertain, through my own research, it appears to be the only complete one surviving unless any member knows differently.

The full history of the barrel organ is recorded. It originally belonged to the Courtauld family. Samuel Courtauld was born in Albany, New York in 1793. In 1824 he established textile factories in Braintree and Halstead and was living at Folly House in High Garrett, Essex. In 1854 Samuel Courtauld moved from Folly House into Gosfield Hall, Gosfield, Essex. (Fig.1). An entry in the house book gives details about his private house organ being moved from Folly House into Gosfield Hall, it states that for taking down the organ,

*...for taking
down the organ,
moving it and
rebuilding it...*

*...the charge
would be
£4.13s.3d.*

moving it and rebuilding it in the main hall, known as the grand salon, at Gosfield the charge would be £4.13s.3d. Fig.2 shows the organ in the grand salon about 1890.

The organ remained in the Hall until 1946 when the house and all the contents were sold. See auction catalogue front page. Cedric Arnold, an organ builder and dealer, bought and later sold it to St. Luke's church in Kinoulton, a small village south east of Nottingham. The organ was installed in the church (Fig.3). The clockwork fusee motor was removed and stored in a cupboard in the vestry and six barrels were kept in their original boxes in the gallery. The organ was regularly used as a manual church organ until 2001.

The barrel organ mechanism is operated by a large fusee clockwork motor. The engraving on the tune change dial reads "Flight Robson organ builders to H.R.H. The Prince Regent, 101 St. Martins Lane, London" (Fig.4). The Prince Regent was crowned King George IV in 1820. The bellows originally were



Fig. 2.

operated by a foot lever at the bottom left hand front of the case but could also be operated by a hand lever on the left side of the case. These have now been disconnected and the pair of cuckoo feeders removed, but the double rise reservoir bellows with inverted fold still remain and the whole is now powered by an electric blower.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 3.

There are six barrels with the organ, each 41 inches long by 8.75 inches diameter, they are numbered as follows, 4425, 4426, 4427, 4328, 4429, 4430. Four of the barrels each play eight secular tunes, two barrels are spiral cut, one playing The Hailstone Chorus by Handel and the other plays an overture which I have yet to identify. They keyboard is retractable and the hand stop controls have ivory knobs with engraving as follows:

Principal
Fifteenth Treble
Fifteenth Bass
Stopped Diapason Treble
Stopped Diapason Bass
Dulciana
Open Diapason
Flute

To change the barrel the keyframe is raised and the barrel is removed by drawing it forward out of the case.

The organ contains 270 pipes, 175 metal and 95 wood. The case is polished mahogany with gilded dummy front pipes backed with scarlet silk. Dimensions of the case are: height 8ft.8ins, width 5ft, depth 2ft.7ins. There are 58 notes on the keyboard and keyframe, both supplied by separate pallet feeds, Fig.5 shows the organ installed in its new home.

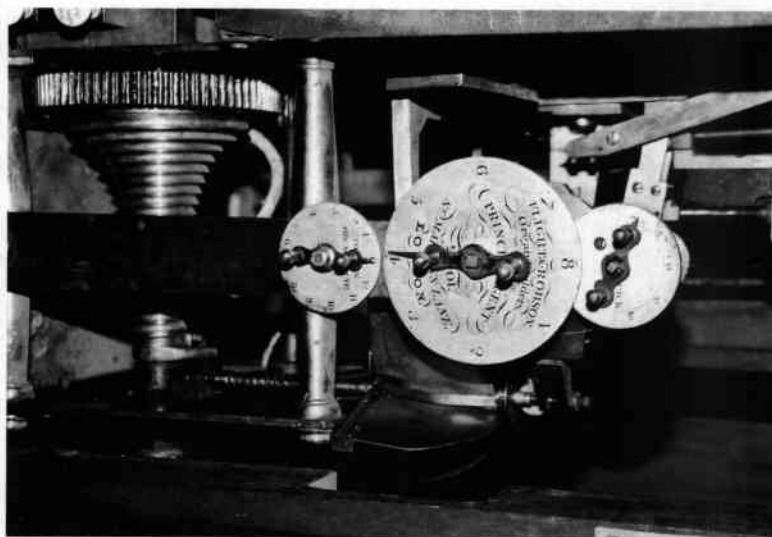


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

Specification

GG-f3 retractable keyboard, small ivory knobs short draw. General swell lever pedal without hitch. Blowing originally by pedal or handle, now by electric blower. Two shifting pedals, one above the other, the lower one cuts down to Dulciana, the upper one to Stop Diapason Dulciana Principal, the Dulciana is to C. The lower four pipes of the principal are of wood. The treble stop including flute and open diapason descend to C.

The Builders

Benjamin Flight junior and Thomas Robson were partners from 1805 till 1833 when they went bankrupt. During this time they traded from their shop at 101 St. Martins Lane. They were responsible for building The Apollonicon, an enormous finger and barrel organ, which could be played from three barrels simultaneously, or five organists could play it manually at once. This organ was demonstrated in a room at 101 St. Martins Lane from about 1818 through to 1835. The full story of this remarkable instrument is given in detail in Ord-Hume's book "Barrel Organ".

Similar Organs

A clockwork barrel organ, without a keyboard, with a 39 key action, barrels 35ins by 8ins, made by Flight Robson, was sold through Sothebys in November 1973 (Fig.6). It had 33 barrels and was sold again through Christie's in September 1986, this time with only four barrels; it would appear that the other 29 barrels were destroyed by fire in a garage where they were stored.

Another Flight Robson was sold at the Rudolf Nureyev sale at Christie's, New York, in January 1995. This organ has a 58 note keyboard, the same type of eight hand stops with ivory knobs as my own flight Robson organ but with a difference that the barrel organ mechanism is not machine driven and can only be hand operated from the large handle on the front of the organ (Fig. 7).

In the book "The English Chamber Organ" by Michael I Wilson, a Flight Robson organ, the property of R.T. Boston of Winchester is described, "This organ was originally a finger and barrel organ although the barrel mechanism has now been removed. This organ is contained in a large

Gothic case, has a central flat of three compartments and two square end towers on carved supports, the keyboard is a modern replacement."

Another Flight Robson barrel and finger organ is illustrated in Ord-Hume's book "Barrel Organ". This organ is installed in the Great Hall which is now used as a chapel of Leigh Court Hospital in Stapleton near Bristol. Only one barrel exists and the barrel mechanism is hand powered.

I have been unable to discover the present whereabouts of the first two of these organs, but if any member can help please contact me, as I would like photographic records of the mechanism.

References

Wilson, Michael, I - The English Chamber Organ
Ord-Hume, Arthur W. J. G. - Barrel Organ

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mr. Douglas Mullins, Gosfield Hall, for archive material and photographs, and to Rev. Stephanie Fahie, St. Luke's, Kinoulton, for helping in acquiring the organ. ■

Another Flight Robson was sold at the Rudolf Nureyev sale at Christie's, New York,



Fig. 6.

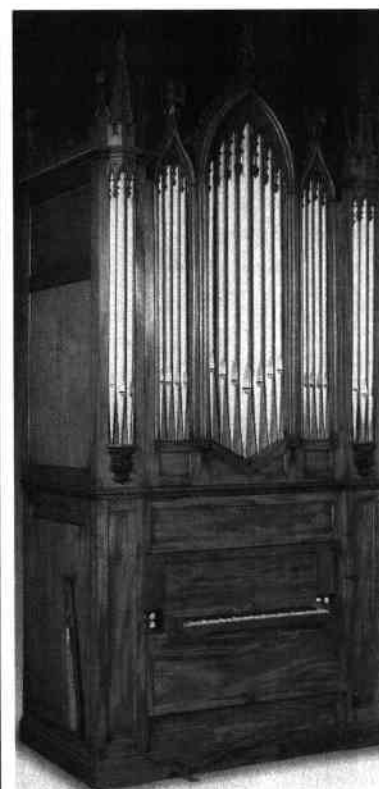


Fig. 7.

Sixshooter - Swiss Style

Part 1

by Mike Tucker & John Simpson

Occasionally, a previously unknown and significant music box is able to take its rightful place amongst the giants of its kind - unfortunately all too often these marvels have suffered badly during their long period in the wilderness.

This is the story of one such giant - a six-cylinder revolver box of truly heroic proportions. (See Fig. 1)

Some time in the 1950's, a permanently blind enthusiast bought a large music box in a distressed state, with the parts (those that were still there) rolling around the bottom of the case.

The new owner succeeded in assembling the mechanism and getting it to operate after a fashion.

The dual opposed spring barrel assembly and associated gearing were missing, so he added the motor and governor from a disc music box to provide the motive power. (See Fig. 2)

The music box stayed in this condition until the death of its owner.

John Simpson, a serious collector of mechanical music and a long time friend of the owner, was able to obtain the music box in 1990.

He realised that the only approach was a sympathetic and complete restoration, but clearly this was going to be expensive and needed to be undertaken locally to avoid the additional high expense and risk associated with transporting such a large music box to another country and back.

In 1995 John was in a position to proceed with the restoration and was able to obtain the services of Ken Hose, a very experienced and capable local restorer.

This was the beginning of a five year long program to return the music box to its original glory.

Ken has provided notes on the restoration commencing with his goals and objectives in restoration.

* Over many years of restoring clocks and musical boxes, a set of rules was developed that take into consideration not only the styles of a particular maker but also the conservation techniques for a satisfactory outcome.

Some of these as follows:-

1. Only yellow brass is used, which is specified to match the original.
2. No holes are to be drilled or altered, including locating pins or mounting holes.
3. Tapped holes must not be retapped to accommodate a modern screw and as the musical box industry used a unique thread pitch, all mounting screws were machined individually to fit existing threads in the bedplate.
4. If any or all parts made are deemed to be unsatisfactory, simply by removing them the item can be returned to the condition when first sighted.

THE PHOTOGRAGHS

The photographs used in this article range from those taken at the time of its acquisition, with silver frosted bedplate and gold painted cylinders, through to its final restoration with polished surfaces which were more difficult to photograph.

THE MUSIC BOX

Six cylinder revolver, with bells and reed organ. (See Fig. 3)

MANUFACTURER:

Unknown. One cylinder end disc carried a casting name of Ducommun Griod imprinted in the casting mould (not stamped) and although not entirely clear, was enough to identify the name.

TUNE SHEET:

Missing. As there were no marks where a tune sheet may have been affixed to the lid, it is assumed that there were individual tune sheets for each cylinder and these were kept loose.



Fig. 1.

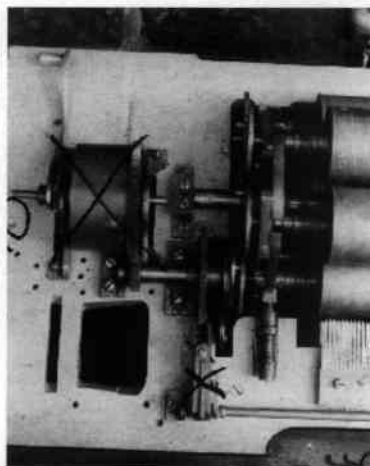


Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

...a six-cylinder
revolver box of
truly heroic
proportions.

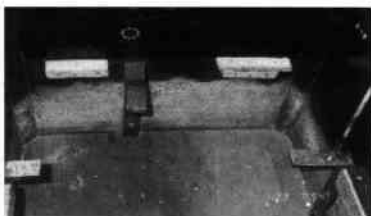


Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.

SERIAL NUMBER:

6519 stamped on the left-hand end cap of each cylinder, on the front of the treble comb base, the side of the bell comb and on the last lead of the bass comb (stamped not scribed).

MOTIVE POWER:

Lever wound double (opposed) spring assembly. Spring barrel sizes 2 1/4" (55 mm) width x 3 3/4" (97 mm) diameter. (See Fig. 4)

BEDPLATE:

Ribbed cast iron (See Fig. 5). Dimensions are: - Length 39 3/4" (1010mm) Width 15 3/4" (400mm) Thickness 3/8" (15 mm).

The bedplate does not have any casting numbers or marks. It has two flat steel bars screwed to the underside, used to mount the bedplate on four matching steel brackets. Two of these are screwed to the inside front and two to the inside back of the case. These brackets extend down to the soundboard (See Fig. 6). A fifth and similar bracket is attached to the inside left hand (spring barrel) end of the case. This bracket is not physically attached to the bedplate, which merely rests on it to gain additional support. The bars and brackets are 1 3/8" (30mm) wide and 3/8" (10mm) thick.

MUSIC COMBS:

The treble comb, located to the right, between the organ lifters and the bell comb, has 30 tongues, and is 4 1/2" (115mm) long. The base comb is on the left, has 39 tongues, and is 5 7/8" (150mm) long (See Fig. 7).

ORGAN:

The organ has 26 notes and has a single bellows with centre moving board. Reeds are in pairs and have external pallets. The mounting block for the organ followers is brass and is numbered 7480 (See Fig. 8).

BELLS:

There are 9 tuned German silver bells, each chased with a different design (See Figs. 9 and 10). These have a disengagement lever, which can be seen on Fig. 7.

CYLINDERS:

There are six cylinders mounted on

a carousel. Each cylinder is 16" (450 mm) long and 2 1/2" (68mm) diameter (See Fig. 11).

The end caps on each cylinder are of slightly larger diameter (2 5/8" - 71mm) and are smooth edged.

Pins were originally raked. The organ bridgework is in the center, and the nine tongue bell comb is on the right hand end.

The cylinders are numbered 1 through 6, but the parts for each cylinder are numbered 7 through 12. i.e. cylinder 1 has all component parts numbered 7, cylinder 2 has all component parts numbered 8 and so on.

RESTORATION NOTES:

The spring barrel, great wheels and winding wheel diameters and mounting heights were established by measurements taken from machined areas in the casting openings. Patterns were fabricated and castings made in yellow brass, which was then machined, gears cut etc.

The governor had to be made to fit between 2 existing points, the foot on the release bar and mounting cock at the end of the bar. Furthermore the governor had to be released by the foot.

The wheels and pinions were calculated using musical box knowledge and engineering practices together with a balanced decision.

As the bell activating pins were totally ruined and the comb pins extensively damaged, both ends of each cylinder required repinning.

Pins used are not cut wire as this is not a good practice, producing a burred end, that damages the pin hole.

The pins used have a ground taper end to facilitate a good fit and not cause damage.

CASE:

The case measures 50" (1270mm) long by 27 1/2" (699mm) deep, and 18" (457mm) high with mitred corners, 2 3/8" (60mm) wide (See Fig. 12).

The outside is veneered figured walnut on all sides including the lid. This is relieved by a double line of banding to the front, ends and top of the lid. All four mitred corners contain a single strip of banding and the inside of the case is ebonised.

It has an ebonised ogee moulded base 3" (77mm) wide with corner feet. This base is relieved, midway, with a single strip of banding.



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.

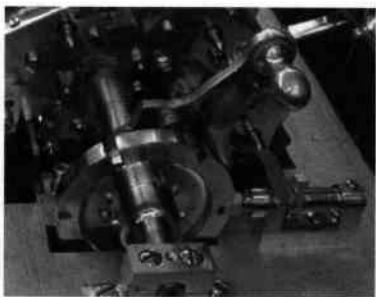


Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.

The inside of the lid is figured walnut in a quartered pattern with an ebonised outside edging and a strip of banding in between.

The domed lid is fixed with a piano hinge rather than separate hinges.

A small leather strap fixed to the underside of the lid loops over a brass knob on the underside of the glass frame. This strap is to hold the glass open while the carousel is being rotated.

To protect the mechanism the designers used a simple and effective idea, which has a spring loaded wedge or pin that drops into a cut out/slot on the edge of a disc, to lock the left-hand carousel wheel, the change mechanism and each of the cylinders.

THE CAROUSEL MECHANISM:

This is assembled on a central steel shaft $\frac{1}{2}$ " (16mm) thick and 27" (686mm) long and attached by bearing blocks to the bedplate. A brass disc, with equally spaced slots, $\frac{7}{8}$ " (191mm diameter) and $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) thick, (See Fig. 13) is located towards each end of the shaft, 19" (485mm) apart, and held in place by steel pins. The slots are used to locate the six cylinders, which are mounted between these discs, and the slots in the left-hand disc also provide a secondary purpose. They are used by the spring loaded wedge shaped lock to secure the carousel. This is fitted to the bedplate adjacent to the governor (see fig. 4).

A third brass disc, $3\frac{1}{2}$ " (89mm) diameter and $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) thick, is located on the right-hand end of the central shaft (See Fig 14). This disc

also has six slots, in line with the slots in the larger discs, and is part of the cylinder changing mechanism, but in this case the slots are used only to lock the mechanism in place, using a similar spring loaded, wedge shaped, locking device.

The cylinder changing mechanism is activated by a brass handle, which is situated between the large right-hand carousel disc and the smaller disc on the right-hand end (See Fig. 15). This handle can only be activated when the mechanism is in the stopped position and all cylinders are locked into place, i.e., the governor tail must be in the stop gully of the great wheel.

When the handle is pulled forward the wedge shaped locking device holding the small disc of the change lever is released. At this point the mechanism is totally secured by the wedge at the left hand end of the carousel (See Fig. 16). As the handle is pushed back, and the carousel is rotated, this wedge is also released from its socket and both exert a braking action on the edge of their relevant discs and drop simultaneously into the next slot, to relock the mechanism.

This action advances one cylinder at a time and can be repeated until the desired cylinder is in place. These two wedges have a flat upper face and a sloping lower face insuring a positive locking action and preventing anti-clockwise rotation of the mechanism.

Both carousel wheels have large numbers stamped on their edges to indicate the cylinder in play. The number visible at the top of the wheel is for the cylinder in the play position. ■ *To be continued*

UK Rallies for Amateur Organ Builders

John Smith, well known for his designs for amateur organ builders, tells us that there are to be a number of rallies this season where there are to be special entries and provision for amateur organ builders.

Initially there is to be a limit to the number taking part at each event to ten. However, all the events are open to the public so a number of other enthusiasts will, no doubt, come along and join in on the day.

To qualify the entrants will have built their own organ from raw materials, and it is not limited just my designs.

There are three venues lined up at steam fairs. Entrants will be given passes to the show, caravan or camping space (on site but not right next to organ display) and a shelter to congregate and display the organs. The organs will be

played in turn giving lots of opportunity to talk and visit the rest of the shows

The dates are:-

- (1) **Banbury Steam & Vintage Vehicle Rally** at Bloxham (2 miles from Banbury) A two-day event 28th & 29th June
- (2) **Lincolnshire Steam & Vintage Rally** 16th & 17th August
- (3) **The Great Dorset Steam Fair** Tarrant Hinton near Blandford 27th to 31st August
- (4) **Donnington Park Model Engineering Exhibition** 18th to 23rd October

If you are interested in taking part in any of these events please, in the first instance, contact John by email: Johnsmithbusker@supanet.com or send a stamped addressed envelope (overseas needs two reply coupons) to:

Mrs J Smith 55 Willow Way Flitwick Beds. MK45 1LN

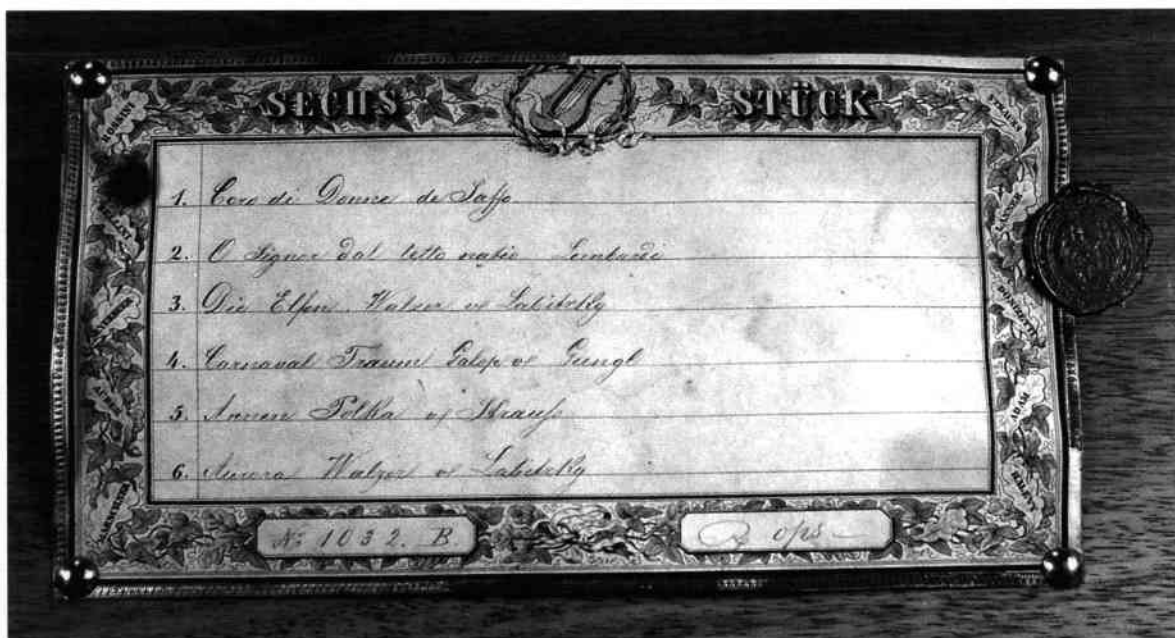


Fig. 1. An agent's early tune sheet, black on white, size 8 by 4½" (20 by 11cm). It is framed with narrow strips of embossed gilt paper. Ten named composers, unusually including Marschner. No mention of steel dampers. The red seal, presumably applied by the agent, shows R B / & / C. Serial no. 1032, tune 1 on the cylinder dots.

Early tune sheets

An agent's tune sheet in Fig. 1 is additionally fixed to its case lid by a red seal showing R B / & / C in a leafy circle. It is on a good 8" (205mm) cylinder key-wind box, maker not known, latest tune no. 5, 1852.

This same tune sheet, with similar red seal, is also recorded on Metert serial 4444, (Ord-Hume page 149, plate 64) which was made in 1847. It must have replaced the current Langdorff and Metert tune sheet, as was done by other agents like Malignon. So now we hope for some clue about those letters on the seal.

There are two more unusual features on this tune sheet. Narrow strips of embossed gilt paper are fixed along the margins, like a frame. Also, the ten composers named in the borders include a rare old-timer, Marschner. This tune sheet may well have been in use for a few years by 1847, when it got onto Metert 4444, so possibly it is quite an early design, when Marschner was still a notable name.

Fifty years after these boxes were made, actually in the year 1902, when the 4-volume edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians was published, composers Marschner and Spohr were rated as the two runners-up behind the famous Weber. This is still valid in 2002. Undoubtedly, many early musical

boxes must play tunes composed by these two so I think they are well worth a brief mention. Listing their most successful works may help to name some tunes, even when the tune sheet is lost.

Heinrich Marschner (1796 - 1861) started as a singer and pianist but soon turned to composing. He worked for a time with Weber, but his first major operatic success came in 1833. Of his twelve operas, the most successful were...

Der Vampyr	1827
Der Falken Brant	1832
Hans Heilig	1833
Das Schloss am Aetna	1838
Adolph und Nassa	1843

Louis Spohr (1784 - 1859) with musical parents, went musical at a very early age and duly developed into a fine pianist and a wide-ranging composer. He composed 9 Symphonies, 10 Operas, 4 Oratorios, 30 violin Concertos and many songs and other works. Those likely to have appeared on musical boxes include the Oratorio *The Last Judgement* 1826 and five of the operas...

Der Zweikampf mit den Geliebten (The Lovers' Duel)	1810
Faust	1818
Zemire und Azor	1819
Jessonda	1822
Pietro von Albano	1828

Has anyone seen the name Spohr on a tune sheet? If so, please say.

Conchon Dating

In the early 1880s François Conchon produced rechange boxes with sets of interchangeable cylinders giving Continuous Play. That was achieved by shifting the cylinder on a uniform helical path during the tune change period. The cylinder pinning continued along this helical track so play was not interrupted. The helical angle is only about 2½ degrees but of course the pinning has to follow it accurately.

Conchon serial 8285, "Rechange, Continuous Play" is in the Murtogh Guinness collection, New York and was described in Vol.16 page 199. It is very complicated and Conchon wrote to its first owner in 1891 giving explanations. But it was actually made in or even before 1883.

My first attempts at a Conchon dating chart appear in Vol.16 page 79 and my second book page 68 and the Tune Sheet Book page 128. All wrong, I hate to admit. They all show several fixes, which are correct, but I drew the dating line to suit Conchon's reported starting date. Now we have unassailable evidence, from Eduard Saluz, that serial 8285 was shown in the Zurich Exhibition of 1883. Also, serial 9686 was shown at Geneva in 1896.

Has anyone
seen the name
Spohr on a
tune sheet?

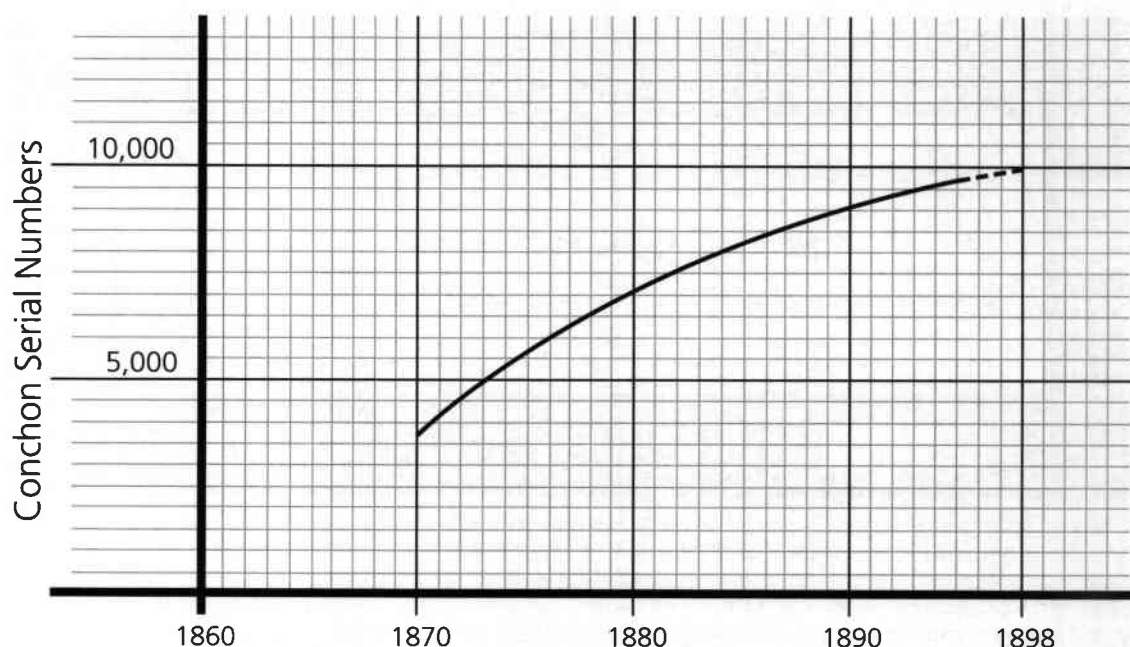


Fig. 2. Conchon dating chart, revised May 2002. It will accurately date Conchon boxes from serial 4000 until he closed down in 1898. His highest serial number so far recorded is 9686. Conchon was making only about two musical boxes per week after 1880, but they were all large boxes and demand was dwindling. He also made orchestrions and a wide range of musical fancy goods.



Fig. 3. Flat lid of serial 11139. The more common marquetry style extends right to the corners, often embellishing the rectangles of stringing.

That means Conchon production, as fixed by several boxes from serial 3946 to 9686, followed the dating line now shown in Fig. 2. As to how? when? and if? Conchon made his first 3000 boxes I have no clue. He may even have said, "Let's start at 3001."

Overture Boxes

Overture boxes seem to have acquired snob value right from the start of their era, which lasted from the early 1830s until about 1885. They attracted the best of the tune arrangers, and they certainly flourished in their early days. At that time illustrious composers including Auber, Rossini and Meyerbeer moved in social circles which could afford these top-of-the-

range musical boxes and they would not have hesitated to complain if they thought their overtures were being trivialized. No such complaints have ever been reported.

Overture boxes were always expensive, because they required at least 160 comb teeth together with "fat" cylinders to allow tunes to run for at least two minutes. They soon started to appear in a wide range of sizes. Probably the smallest were tabatieres, playing them on three or four turns. The largest were at the extremes of Grand Format, with cylinders up to 20" (51cm) long and, exceptionally, up to 5½" (14cm) diameter.

Almost all makers made some overture boxes, and all their blanks were provided by the Geneva blank

makers because scarcely any blanks were made in Ste. Croix before 1870. Very soon a sort of "standard type" emerged, with cylinders about 3¼" (8cm, 40 lignes) diameter by about 11" (28cm) long. Pinned at 0.08 inches per second, they could play four overtures of two minutes each with about 162 comb teeth.

Their blanks all look very much alike, except for minor differences in the governors, gears, cylinder arbors etc. which were supplied to the blank makers by local "cottage industries." Their cases were about 19 by 8½ inches giving soundboard periphery about 50" which allows effective radiation of bass notes down to *c* below middle *c*, 128Hz. The cases almost always had the distinctive feature that the lid marquetry extended to the four corners, see Fig. 3. Rather out of character, they usually carried the maker's or agent's modest standard tune sheet, as in Fig. 4.

It is rare to find one of these 4-overture boxes which fails to please. They all provide entertaining two-minute versions of the overtures from popular operas and operettas, ranging from the still-vastly-popular to the now-entirely-forgotten. Some of the latter rank with the best! For example, tune 3 in Fig. 4.

Fig. 5 shows serial 11139 which is typical of these boxes

It is rare to find one of these 4-overture boxes which fails to please.

musical box oddments no. 97

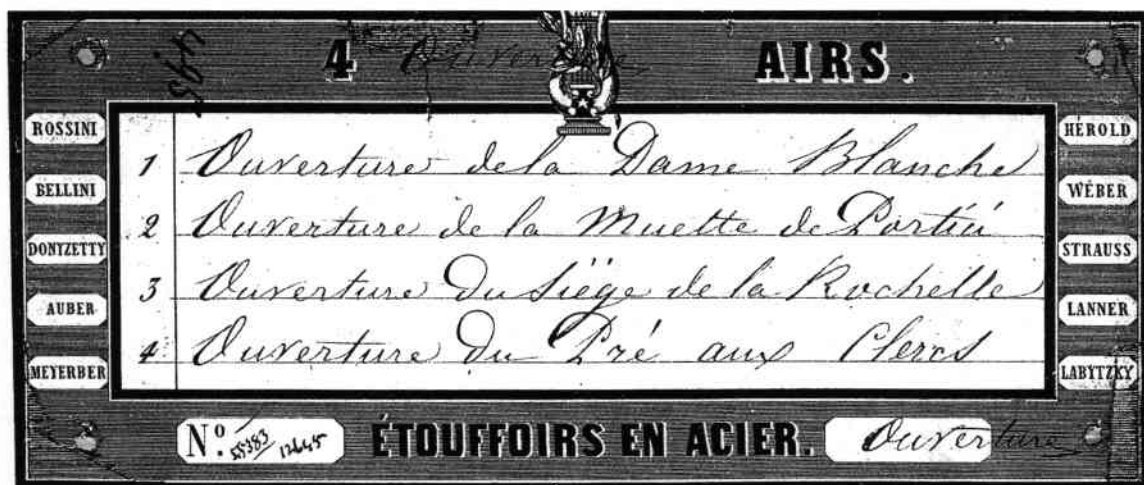


Fig. 4. "Ouverture" written six times but serial number not shown on the tune sheet of serial 11139. Three unexplained numbers in the borders and some unusual spelling of composers. Tune 3 by Balfe, 1835, and tune 4 by Hérold, 1833, are the latest.

and has the tune sheet of Fig. 4. It is in line with the "standard type" except that the cylinder is a bit longer than usual at 11½ inches. It has 164 teeth. The serial number is stamped on the brass bedplate in very small figures see Fig. 6. Tune one being pinned on the cylinder dots suggests that the box was made in the Ste. Croix region. The high serial number for the 1838-1840 period suggests one of the few larger makers, and it is tantalizing to be unable to name him. (The Paillards never used those tiny figures, according to current records.)

The movement has no craft marks nor blank numbers, except 29 scribed on the bass lead and a tiny 46 stamped under the bedplate, - in the position indicated on Fig. 7.

The spring barrel and cylinder gear are comparatively massive on these boxes, as shown with relevant data in Fig. 8.

The comb has two setting-up screws under the bedplate. The 440Hz a tooth is no.49, with relative stiffness 130. Teeth of the same pitch are in eight groups of 4, six groups of 5, and three of 6. As often seen on these comparatively early boxes, the teeth vary in width and in the position of the thinnest area; but the tonal quality is top class. The "fat" cylinder with its raked teeth runs true to within 0.002" and really these boxes, with the greater pinning accuracy demanded when operating at 0.08

inches per second, are marvels of 1838 precision engineering.

The vast majority of overture boxes are in line with this arrangement, the most common exception being the three-overture version, with 9" (23cm) cylinders and up to 170 comb teeth. The cylinders are just under 3" diameter,

tunes lasting about 1¼ minutes. Excellent arrangements, but their small cases and comparatively light weight make them rather weak at the bass end. There are 72 on the Register, mainly by Nicole, including five lever-wound - latest, serial 44233 made about 1869.

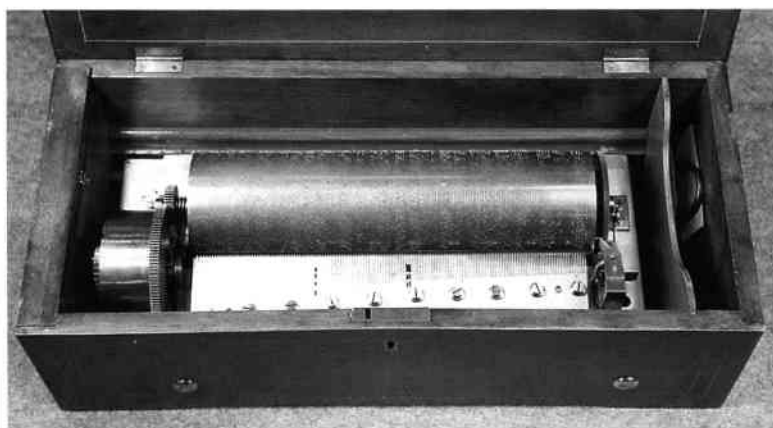


Fig. 5. Serial 11139, a comparatively cosy fit in its case with end flap. The marked teeth are a 440 and 880Hz.

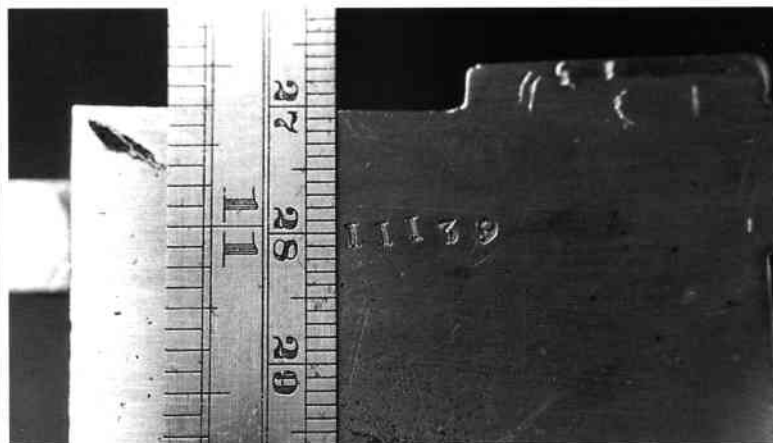


Fig. 6. The millimetre scale alongside the serial number shows the figures are nearly 2mm high, - about ⅛ of an inch.

...these boxes
marvels of
1838 precision
engineering.

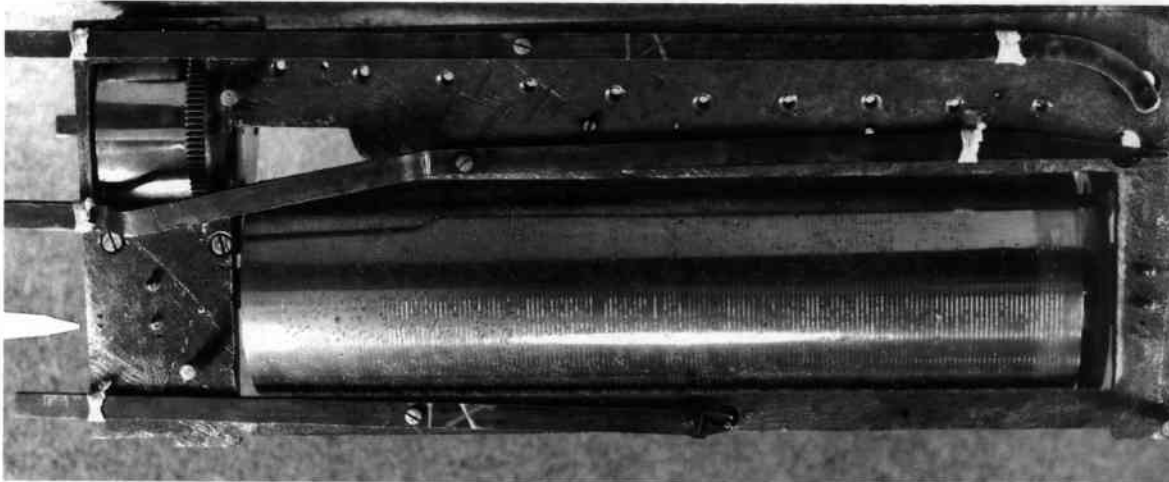


Fig. 7. Under-bedplate view of 11139 with pointer to the minute stamped 46. All three control levers have string binding where they touch the bedplate to prevent disconcerting noises during play.

Other types had the main objective of offering a cheaper alternative. Lecoultre used their standard 6-air boxes to play three overtures at two turns each, with 135 comb teeth. Several makers produced six overture versions, with 13" (33cm) "fat" cylinders and about 125 teeth, the tunes lasting about 1½ minute. Also one often finds 2-per-turn boxes playing one or two overtures on two turns each, usually heading the tune list.

Warning Note

The above notes tend to emphasize the attractive features of overture boxes. Therefore, in line with modern fair play, I have to point out that the proud new owner of an overture box even of the highest quality may have some disappointments because (1) the alterations made in condensing to two minutes will upset any listener who is specially devoted to a particular overture. (2) musicians generally get upset by the different tuning scale and intervals in use 150 years ago, and also by the liberties taken with orchestral effects. (3) casual listeners find the tunes unexpectedly long, and tend to start talking. (4) most listeners will get restless if you play through the whole programme. And an accountant will point out that equally good music is cheaper on ordinary boxes.

Ducommun Girod serial 21,543

Made in 1845 has recently surfaced and deserves notice. Its

cylinder is 14½ by 3¾ inches diameter (368 by 95mm). It has a single comb of 140 teeth and plays 18 airs at 3-per-turn. With its big fat cylinder it looks like an overture box and is probably pinned at 0.08" per second at which one turn of the cylinder takes 148 seconds. That allows 45

seconds per tune and 14 seconds for the three tune gaps. There is no surviving tune sheet of course but the case is right up to overture box standards - marquetry to the corners of the lid. The case front has a superb inlay over 20" (51cm) long and the ultimate elegance of decorated feet, see Fig. 9. ■

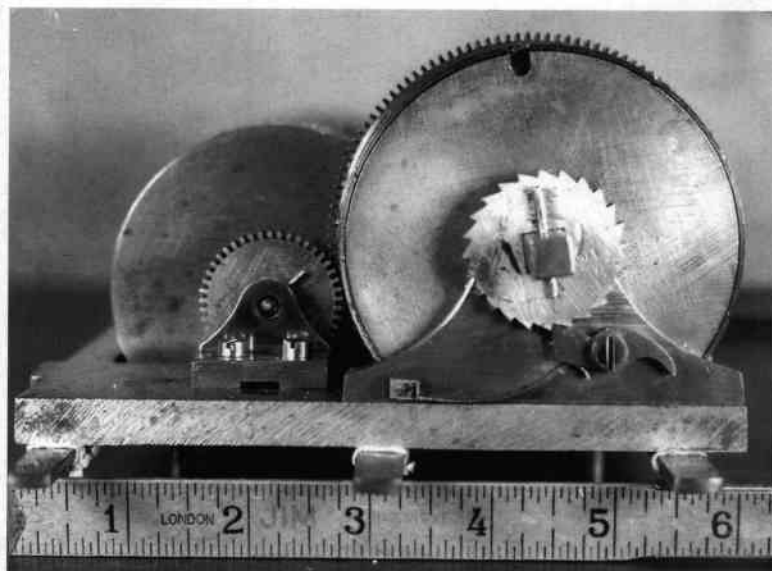


Fig. 8. Complete absence of blank numbers. Hefty spring barrel and large cylinder gear provide ample power for the 3.1/8" diameter cylinder.

...musicians
generally get
upset by the
different tuning
scale and
intervals in use
150 years ago...



Fig. 9. Twenty inches of fine inlay on the front of Ducommun Girod serial 21,543 -actually piercing the inner line of stringing. Surely a record.

New Gem Roller Organ Tune List

Following our feature in the last issue of *The Music box* on new Gem Organ rollers, below is a list of new rollers currently available which was omitted from that issue though lack of space.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 5001 | I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover | 5025 | Palm Leaf Rag |
| 5002 | O Holy Night | 5026 | Peacherine Rag |
| 5003 | Bye Bye Blackbird | 5027 | Weeping Willow |
| 5004 | Over the Rainbow | 5028 | Wiener Blue Waltz |
| 5005 | When You Wish Upon a Star | 5029 | Angels We Have Heard on High |
| 5006 | Bridge Over Troubled Waters | 5030 | Chim Chim Cheree |
| 5007 | Scarborough Fair | 5031 | Zippity Do Dah |
| 5008 | The Entertainer | 5032 | Ding Dong the Witch is Dead |
| 5009 | Seventy-Six Trombones | 5033 | The Favorite |
| 5010 | You Can't Be True Dear | 5034 | The Chrysanthemum |
| 5011 | Fascination | 5035 | The Strenuous Life |
| 5012 | Stars and Stripes Forever | 5036 | Radetzky March (for continuous play) |
| 5013 | Beer Barrel Polka | 5037 | What Child is This? (Green Sleeves) |
| 5014 | Ragtime Jim | 5038 | We Wish You a Merry Christmas |
| 5015 | The Entertainer | | |
| 5016 | That Toddlin' Town (Chicago) | 5039 | Deck the Halls |
| 5017 | Santa Claus is Coming to Town | 5040 | Music Box Dancer |
| 5018 | Frosty the Snowman | 5041 | Bolero |
| 5019 | Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer | 5042 | The Band Played On |
| 5020 | Maple Leaf Rag | 5043 | Leichtes Blut (for continuous play, very fast) |
| 5021 | Pomp and Circumstance | | |
| 5022 | God Save the Queen | 5008,9,10,11 | adapted by Jessie Moore |
| 5023 | Syncopated Clock | 5012,13,17,18,19,30,31,32,40,41 | adapted by Wayne Holton |
| 5024 | She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain | 5014,15,20,21,22,25,26,27,28,33,34,35,36,43 | adapted by Harald Mueller |

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I write in response to Joan Rippengal's letter, on page 35 of *The Music Box* Vol.21, concerning the Erddig collection of mechanical music. I am unable to say if it still exists but I can say that it was still in situ in 1980, see my article on page 175 of Vol.10.

I also wrote that "A La Ronde", a 16 sided house at Exmouth had a weight driven barrel piano, unfortunately out of order. Since then the National Trust has taken over the property, so what now the piano? At the time I also noted that Castle Drogo at Drewsteignton in Devon had a 58-note Aeolian Grand Organ. I do not know who owns that building, but by 1997 the Aeolian had been sold.

Finally, to tidy things on other items, I noted at the time the "World of Mechanical Music" at Chessington Zoo was auctioned in 1983, see *The Music Box* Vol.11, p.227, and Lady Bannor's collection at Wookey Hole caves, Somerset, was auctioned in 1997.

Hopefully, someone else has come forward with more recent information on the Erddig collection.

Roger Booty

I last saw Brian Campsie on New Year's Eve. He had recently returned from skiing, was looking tanned and fit and enjoying himself immensely partying with a large group of his friends here in Windsor. It is how I will remember him. Brian firmly believed that life was for living and enjoying.

I first met Brian about 25 years ago when I joined his eponymous firm Campsie & Company in Windsor. I quickly realised that working for my new boss was going to be very different from the large and rather staid London firm where I had been working previously. By no stretch of the imagination could Brian ever have been described as staid.

We got on well from the word go and I also realised very soon that he was shrewd and astute in business, and was an extremely competent surveyor, but whilst he took his work very seriously

indeed, there was still no reason why we, his colleagues, friends and clients should not also have some fun along the way.

He never talked to me much about his earlier years. Brian was always much too forward looking to dwell on the past – he found what he was going to make happen in the future much more interesting than what had already taken place. However, I did ascertain that he had originally hailed from Kent where he was born in September 1939. He as one of the last people ever to do National Service and whilst as an army reservist, in his early twenties, he had an accident which broke his back when a parachute failed to open properly, an injury which troubled him on a off thereafter throughout his life.

In his personal life Brian got married in 1964 to Brenda and they had two lovely daughters, Susie and Jane, of whom he as very proud and more recently Susie and her husband Stewart had presented them with two grandchildren, Lottie and Lila of whom he was also extremely fond. He built his family a large and imposing house on White Lilies Island just behind where we are now, where the family liver for 15 years or so.

Working with Brian was never dull. He was a very spontaneous individual and would always look for an innovative and original solution to a problem. I have many fond and often amusing memories but one of my earliest recollection was of being requested to accompany Brian on a survey or a house, which was an unusual request because it was not really my job. It turned out he was surveying a house on an island and had arranged to hire a boat from what was then Crevills Boat Yard in Old Windsor to get to it. I anticipated a nippy little motor boat but no so, we were led to a small dilapidated looking rowing board any my job, so it turned out, was to row him over to the island so he could carry out the survey!

A hugely energetic man, Brian always put 100% into everything he did and sadly toward the end

of the 1980s his health deteriorated. Although to most of us who knew him, and no doubt also to himself, he seemed indestructible, 15 years ago he found himself having to have a triple heart bypass operation.

Brian being Brian, although initially it slightly knocked his confidence, he was soon back on his feet and within a year or so had taken part in a London to Brighton cycle race, raising sponsorship for the British Heart Foundation, and also undertaken as trekking and climbing holiday in the Himalayas which was a repeat of something he had done before his operation – a measure of the determination that was typical of the man.

Fortunately, it is not up to us to decide when or how we meet our Maker. However, insofar as one could choose, Brian loved skiing. He died high on the ski slopes on a fine sunny morning, in excellent snow and in the company of one of his best friends, Roy Spence

I cannot imagine Brian ever being a frail elderly man. He was far too full of life and vitality. I am sure that if he could have planned it, the manner of his passing would have met with his full approval.

Ed Mercer



In our next issue

- A piano Melodico is brought back to life
- Full AGM and Auction Report
- Part II of Sixshooter
- Plus all the regular features

The Large Blackmoor Fluteplayer

By Kenneth M. Goldman

For many years I have been a collector of automata-The French Musical & Articulated dolls that were made from 1850 through 1920. All of them play music via a small cylinder movement which is similar to the music from the snuffboxes of earlier years.

The earlier pieces, from the 17th and 18th centuries, used actual organ or trumpet pipes. These larger automata were quite different as one could actually hear the music playing - as if it were a live performance. Very few of these exist today, but this did not stop me from always wanting one for the collection.

The large fluteplayer, made around 1880 by Jean Roullet, seemed to be the most common of these objects - if any of them can be called common at all! He is around 59 inches tall and played four different tunes by means of a pinned barrel. A well known example is the piece in the Guinness collection in New York. I have seen this several times and was always quite interested in getting one such as this.

Around a year ago my chance finally came up. A good friend of mine in Paris called me one morning and told me that one of these was coming up for sale. The auction was at the end of the week and I made plans to attend. The results can be seen in the photo here.

I was fortunate to be able to identify the four tunes with much help from Mr. Helmut Kowar of Vienna. *La Femme a Papa* is an operetta by Herve, performed in Paris in 1879.

La Macotte is from 1880

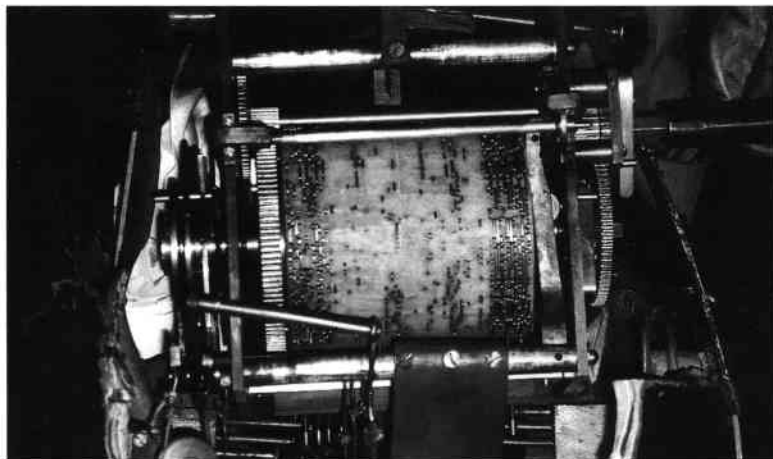
Les Fauvettes is probably from the *Divertissement-ballet "Les Fauves"* composed by Metra and performed in Paris for the first time in 1876.

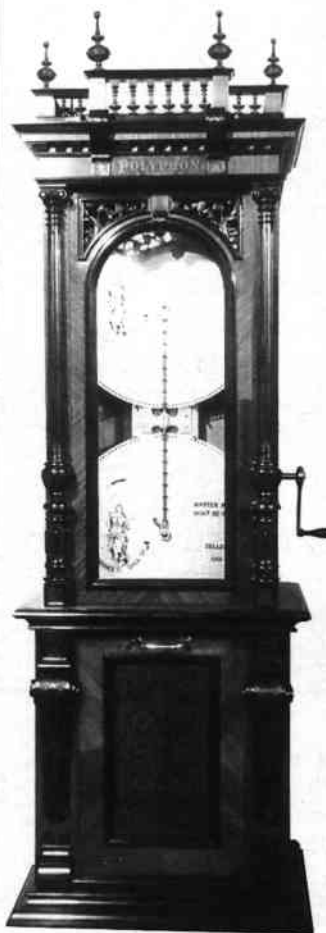
Le cloche de Corneville was composed by Robert Planquette and appeared in Paris in 1877.

At the time of manufacture, these pieces always attracted a great deal of attention from anyone who would see them. Today, the situation is exactly the same.

Kenneth Goldman has been a collector of automata for over 20 years. He is always interested in hearing from other collectors and

interested parties. He can be reached at P.O. Box 920404, Needham, MA 02492 USA, or by e-mail at KenGoldman@aol.com ■





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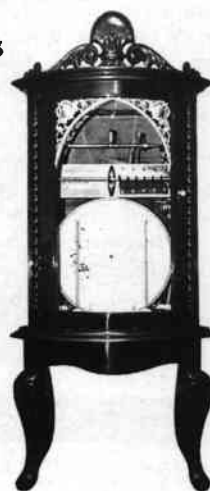
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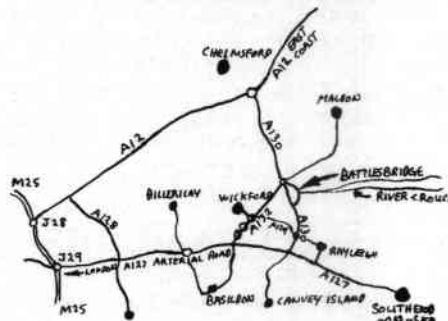
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Cylinder Musical Box wanted. Must be of good quality and in good condition. Contact S. Greatrex on 01822 855 694; e-mail: steve@polvellan.freemove.co.uk

As a comparatively new member of The Music Box Society, I would like to own an upright, coin operated disc musical box which plays nicely. I think I would prefer a 19 1/2" model. If you are considering selling such an instrument, I would be very pleased to hear from you. Roger Lucke, Cambridge. Tel: 01223 834463; e-mail: roger@lucke.freemove.co.uk

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Kevin McElhone on 01536 523 988; e-mail: Kevin_McElhone@Hotmail.com

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 catalogue and musical box ephemera. Ted Brown - 01403 823533.

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