

The Music Box

Volume 21 Number 4 Winter 2003
Edited by Alan Pratt

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue:

- The Pianovo
- Cross in the Workshop
- A Novice's adventure with an Organette
- Daniel Imhof
- Collecting on a Shoestring
- All the Regular Features

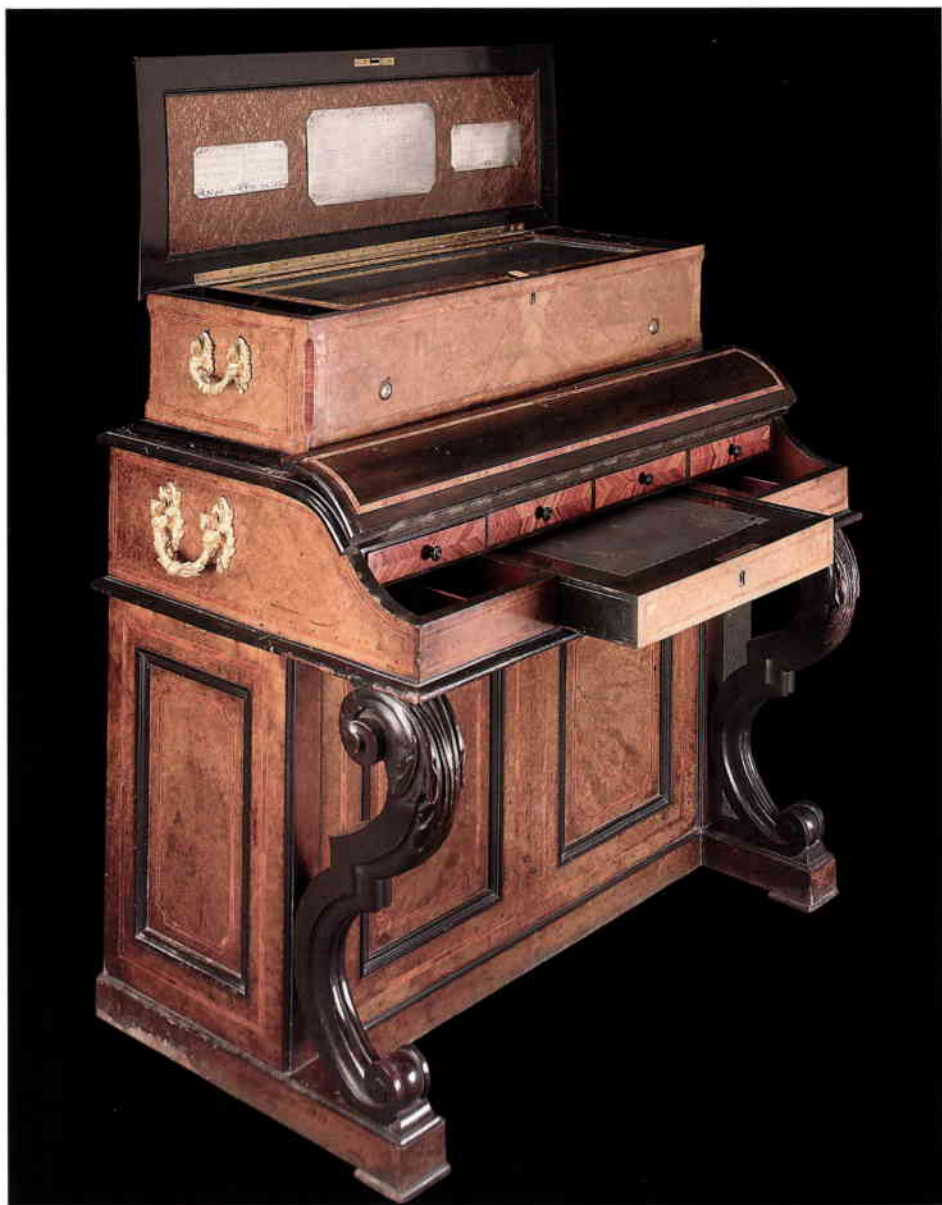


The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Membership - making a difference



Alan Pratt

The latest figures for membership of our Society show that we are still not recruiting enough new members to compensate for our losses. In this, we are in the same predicament as many other societies and clubs. So many things compete for the time and money involved in belonging to a group that most struggle to maintain membership.

In terms of value, MBSGB offers more for the modest subscription than one can get almost anywhere else. Four issues a year of a magazine full of interesting information which it would be difficult to obtain elsewhere; the opportunity to meet, on a local and national basis, with other enthusiasts to hear and see some of the best examples of mechanical music; and the help of expert members if you decide to embark on a restoration project.

All of this for 46 pence a week! From time to time in the past we have asked for ideas for recruiting new members but some of these involved expenditure which would not be justified, or trying to get sponsorship from allied organisations. In this latter case, we have little to offer in return as companies themselves struggle against ever tighter margins.

The most effective route to new members still seems to be introductions from existing ones. If anyone shows an interest in your collection, however modest, make sure they know how much enjoyment they could get for just £24 a year.

Our Membership Secretary will be happy to provide Application Forms or, for those suitably connected, you can download from our website - mbsgb.org.uk

This is something in which everyone can make a difference. ■

Editor

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Our cover picture

Musical Automaton by Phalibois circa 1880 depicting two monkey figures in period costume. The male figure plays a street organ whilst the female sings from a songbook. 60 cm high.

This item realised £2,500 at the recent Bonhams Auction.

Picture courtesy of Bonhams

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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New Members

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

2842	Eberhard Lentz, Germany	2848	Susan Robinson, CA. USA
2843	William Brown, E. Lothian	2849	Marvin Polan, NY. USA
2844	Kenneth Harrison, N.Yorks	2850	Marc Kaufman, CA. USA
2845	Andrew Cable, Bucks	2851	A. Meekins, NJ. USA
2846	James Washbourne, Staffs	2852	Luis Busto, FLA USA
2847	Peter Thornton, Herts	2853	Martin E. Persky, IL USA
		2854	Dr. J. R. Dickey, TX USA
		2855	Jerry Biasella, IL USA
		2856	Kent Williams, CA. USA
		2857	Rossana Harris, CO USA
		2858	Nickolas Petersen, FL. USA

Christmas Meetings

We have only one end-of-year meeting this year - and strictly speaking it's in next year!

Alan and Daphne Wyatt are holding an Open Day on New Years Day 2004 from 11.00 till 4.00. Everyone is welcome but if you do plan on attending please ring to confirm - 01223 860332.

Update on the International Meeting 2005

Wednesday 24th August to Bank Holiday Monday 29th

In the last issue of our Journal I told you about our very special meeting in 2005, and I thought you would be interested in having an update on how we are progressing.

First of all, thank you for all the offers of help I have had. I am now in a position to tell you that Kay Brown is our Sheriff in charge of the transport; her job is to supply a deputy for each coach to each venue. We already have a number of ladies and several men who have volunteered for that job, but we still need more volunteers; remember we will have 8 coaches a day, travelling to different locations and the more volunteers we have the more we can spread the workload.

We have several ladies who have offered to make sandwiches at the various locations at which sandwiches are needed. I have 5 offers to help with handling the registration packages and handing them out to our visitors on the Wednesday. Ted Brown and Paul Bellamy are in charge of sorting out the Play and Display 'workshops', so if you are interested in taking part please speak to Ted or Paul. Insurance cover for the weekend is important and our President Christopher Proudfoot and Paul are arranging the necessary cover for us.

There are numerous 'little jobs' outstanding for which we still require more people to help. For example: Do you have a computer? If so would you be willing to help produce Name Badges for us, or Name Place Cards for our Dinners, or cards for the trips that people have chosen to go on. If so, please phone me and let me know. There are many more jobs for which we need help and I will list these in

Musical Box Society of Great Britain

Tour of France and Switzerland 12th-19th July 2004

On this seven night tour we are ~~hoping~~ to visit the museums at Mirecourt, Seewen, and the St. Croix area. The main stay(4 nights) will be at Les Gets, a ski resort in the French mountains near the Swiss border between Geneve and Chamonix for the Street Organ Festival event. Good hotels, ~~air conditioned~~ coach, Dover/Calais crossing, departing Landbeach 7.15am. 12th July 2004
To ensure top quality hotels, reservations have been made, so deposits ~~needed~~ early on this occasion - by Nov. 10th please.

A Booking Form is enclosed. Don't delay - this one is bound to fill up quickly!

Programme:

Reims	1 night B&B
Basel	1 night B&B
Les Gets	4 nights Half board
Reims	1 night B&B

Total cost - £395 (plus travel insurance of £14.00 if you do not have your own)
Deposit of £100 per person by 10th Nov Please.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. no: _____

Type of Room (Double/Twin) _____

Number in Party _____

B&B at Landbeach Yes/No

Total cheque (£100 per person) £.....

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The Organ Grinder, No. 1

Overpeck



HAMILTON, O.

more detail in the next Journal. I will also publish the response we have had up to that date, and any areas in which we may still be seeking help.

Cost seems to be a concern for a number of our members and I will reassure you that I am doing my utmost to keep all the costs down. However, please remember that this a full 4 day event with people arriving on Wednesday evening ready for an early start 9am Thursday 24th and finishing on Bank Holiday Monday 29th after breakfast. It is not the usual Friday night to Sunday lunch time so it will obviously be more expensive. Also, the Holiday Inn is offering special rates to those who would like to stay on for a few days after the meeting has finished.

We could not restrict this meeting to only 2 days as we are expecting up to 400 people to attend. This is a good opportunity to tell everybody now, so they not only are aware of the dates to put in their diaries but to look upon it also as a holiday, not just for the collectors or restorers, but for their partners as well. You will all have the chance of meeting and chatting to people from overseas with the strong possibility of making new friends.

If you have an interest in helping with any job, and there are many more than just those listed above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Daphne Ladell

Lake District Meeting - September 2003

Our Autumn meeting was something of a departure from our usual style. Arthur Cunliffe had planned a week-long meeting culminating in the weekend format. Each evening from Monday to Thursday presentations were given by members of interesting or unusual instruments. Around 40 members took the opportunity of combining a week in the Lake District with delightful sounds every evening with a total of almost 60 at the weekend.

On the Wednesday, most members travelled to Coniston for a trip on the fully restored steam-powered boat 'Gondola'. Whilst some sat in the sumptuous salon and enjoyed the quiet power of steam,



Gondola steams away



Gondola's golden figurehead

others gathered around the engine room to discuss the finer points of the beautifully restored double-acting, vee twin engine and its

associated boiler - all gleaming with polished brass and copper.

Friday evening saw members gathered around the Sales Table amid the usual discussions on mechanical music. Saturday morning kicked off with Arthur Cunliffe playing three delightful overture boxes - a Bremond 6-air, a Lecoultré 4-air and a Nicole 3-air.

This was followed by the double-act of Ted Brown and Nicholas Simons on the subject of Organettes. Although many of the instruments have been seen before it is always a pleasure to hear them again, especially as these instruments are in such fine condition. Also the humour which these two members bring to the presentation makes for a particularly enjoyable session.

On Saturday afternoon we went to the Steamboat Museum in Windermere for a guided tour. The wonderful contrast of polished brass on mahogany hulls is a delight to the eye.



Nicholas Simons

society news and topics



It's in there somewhere - looking for the Lost Chord perhaps?



I've got my fingers stuck - Ted in trouble again!

Sunday morning brought more cylinder boxes of exceptional quality. Among these was a 6-air Paillard mandolin piccolo box with one air entitled 'Cascade of Pearls' - a truly magical sound to end the session.

All too soon the meeting was over and it was time to head for home, looking forward to our next meeting in Canterbury.

Our thanks go to Arthur Cunliffe for another successful meeting in outstanding surroundings.

Spring 2004 Meeting - May 7th to 9th, The Abbots Barton Hotel, Canterbury.

This meeting was organised by the late Brian Campsie. Our hosts for Saturday the 8th are Jack and Rosemary Henley at their beautiful home in the Weald of Kent. Jack, a long time member, has an exceptional collection, not only of mechanical music but also many other delightful things such as his 'Toy Cupboard'. Then there are the cars! Aston Martins and Bentleys,

all in fine road-going condition.

It is also Jack's 65th birthday weekend and he wants to share this with us. We are part of a full weekend of celebration and thus will be catered for at mid-day in the marquee. This will be a cold buffet at £12 per person, included in the registration fee of £22.

The Abbots Barton Hotel is situated near to the city centre in secluded gardens with ample parking space.

The cost is £56 per person per night including full breakfast and dinner for twin-bedded or double accommodation. There is a supplement for single occupancy. There will be an additional £5.00 for the Society Dinner on Saturday night. For non-residents, the Society Dinner cost is £20.

Booking arrangements:

These must be made through the Meetings Secretary, using the enclosed Registration and Booking form and not directly with the hotel. Maps and further details will be despatched after receipt of your registration form and cheque.

Programme (to be finalised)

Friday

Members can book in after 12 noon. Committee meeting - 4.30 p.m. in one of the lounge areas. Members to eat in the hotel restaurant,

say 7.30-8.00, making their arrangements with Reception.

9 p.m. - Registration/table top sale/play and display etc. in function room.

Saturday

Breakfast at 8 a.m.

Coach departs about 9.15 for all-day visit to Jack's private collection.

6 p.m. - Return to hotel for Society Dinner and entertainment (to be arranged) at 8 p.m. Raffle in aid of the Addenbrooke Children's cancer fund. Please offer a raffle gift.

Sunday

Breakfast from 8 a.m.

Talks from 9.30 - 12.30/1.00, including coffee break. (Programme to be published later).

Afternoon - depart or visit Christopher Proudfoot's collection of non-musical cylinder machines, otherwise known as lawn mowers.

2004 Tour to France and Switzerland

12th to 19th July 2004

Alan Wyatt is once again arranging a mechanical music tour/holiday for members and friends to France and Switzerland. We are hoping to visit the museums at Mirecourt, Seewen, and the St. Croix area. The main stay (4 nights) will be at Les Gets, a ski resort in the French mountains near the Swiss border between



19" Aristonette with decorated top.

Geneva and Chamonix for the Street Organ Festival event. Good hotels, air conditioned coach, Dover/Calais crossing, departing

Landbeach 7.15am.

To ensure top quality hotels, reservations have been made, so deposits needed early on this

occasion - by Nov. 10th please. A Booking Form is enclosed.

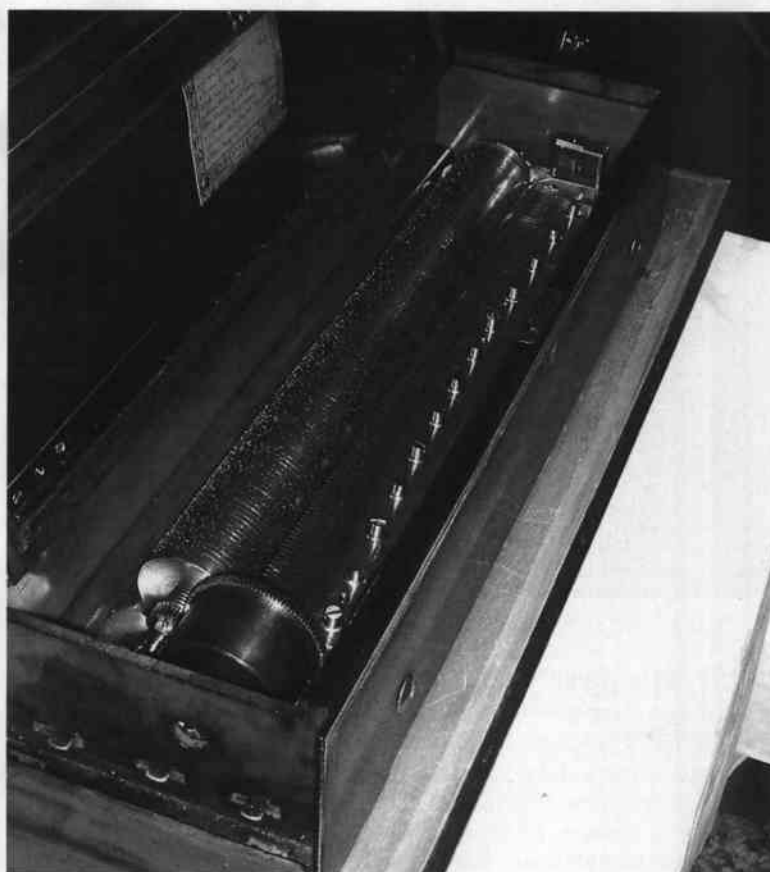
Don't delay - this one is bound to fill up quickly! ■



Arthur Cunliffe listens to a overture box...



... and shows the inlaid lid.



Lecoultrre overture box.

Chanctonbury Ring

The vision of an impressive thirty-two inch wide cylinder box whetted the mechanical music appetite of visitors arriving for the August meeting of the Chanctonbury Ring group. The attraction for Roland Fisher to buy this large six-air Helvetia was that it had been constructed at the Junod Saint Croix factory, by his grandfather. The box is believed to date from around 1890. This family history offset the fact that a previous owner had made major (but crude) modifications, converting the instrument to coin operation. At the point of purchase, the mechanism contained several Danish coins - possibly a peace offering for the otherwise generally sorry state of the box! After much restoration and reversion work, Roland decided to retain the large winding handle which protrudes

from one end, in typical disc-box style. Prior to hearing the musical content of the box, Anthony Bullied supported Roland's presentation with many details of the Junod family genealogy and the geography of the area in which they operated.

In marked contrast, Brian Chapman followed with details of a major reconstruction of an old twenty-six-note reed barrel organ. When Brian acquired this, it had been little more than the leftovers of a serious woodworm banquet. Let us hope that the greed of those insects gave them as many headaches as they created for Brian throughout his rebuilding work! The organ sounded fine, despite the unkind atmospheric conditions (very high temperatures and humidity) in which it was operating. It was interesting to see the variable

height pinning of the barrel, pins for the fast repetition notes being set lower, to limit the lift of the pallets and assist in their fast operation.

The afternoon was devoted mainly to tunes of the music halls with all the old favourites receiving an airing on a wide variety of instruments. Those who stayed the course through the ever-increasing temperatures were treated to a wonderful display of Paul Baker's sheet music scores of Music Hall melodies, many in full colour and all with such attractive designs.

Our sincere thanks go to all who made another successful meeting.

The next meeting at The Old School, Bucks Green, will be the Christmas Open Day that is to be held on Saturday 29th November. As usual, please talk to Ted Brown if you wish to take part. ■

society news and topics



Members of the 'Flying Pig' tour with organisers Bob & Diana Yates (front left) and Ted & Kay Brown their hosts (front right).

MBSI Members Visit

MBSGB members were hosts to the 6th 'Flying Pig' tour made by American members of the MBSI and MBSGB at the end of September and beginning of October. Respectively, Nicholas and Eileen Simons, Roy and Mary Ison, Don and Dorothy Robinson, Alan and Daphne Wyatt and Ted and Kay Brown opened their collections and entertained about 30

Americans at venues all over the South East of England and the Midlands.

The weather was extremely kind throughout the whole tour which finished when they returned to America on the 6th October. Fair organs, street organs, steam locomotives, organettes and musical boxes were seen in abundance.

Having been entertained, fed and watered at each location, the group's

last call was at Bucks Green in Sussex where, starting with *Alexander's Ragtime Band* on a street barrel piano and finishing with *American Fantasy* on an orchestrelle, they went home appearing tired but happy.

Our thanks go to all the above members, and to Keith and Richard, Ken and Pauline, Brian and Joan - a thank you from the Chanctonbury Ring.

Mr. Bill Walker

Sadly, we report that Mr. Bill Walker, Trustee and founding chairman of the St. Albans Musical Museum Society (SAMMS), has recently died after a long illness.

During his 25 years as chairman Bill gave a tremendous amount of his time to the Society and oversaw the installations of

the Wurlitzer and Spurdin-Rutt theatre pipe organs. Bill operated his own organ business from his St. Albans home where he built and modified electronic organs and also maintained several pipe organ installations in churches and even prisons.

Bill was also a good sound engineer and produced professional recordings of many top theatre

organists over the years as well as countless recordings of mechanical dance and fairground organs. Due to failing health, Bill relinquished his post as Chairman earlier this year to Mr. Keith Pinner but still attended the Museum whenever he felt well enough to do so.

The MBSGB held several meetings at the Museum including a recent AGM. ■

VATMAN gets everywhere!

In 1994 an unsuspecting organ grinder from Leeuwarden was set upon by the Dutch tax authorities, which tried to ensnare him and his monkey companion in a vicious fiscal web.

The authorities ruled that Mr. Tolsa and his simian friend were

supplying a taxable service to passers-by with the jolly tunes they ground out. It followed, said the Dutch government, that the pair's takings were liable for VAT, the charge on any business that supplies goods or services.

Mr. Tolsa and his monkey were having none of it. They challenged the decision. Eventually, they took

it all the way to the European Court of Justice, where they won an historic victory. The court ruled that there was no direct link between the service provided and the payment received, meaning Mr. Tolsa could continue grinding away in VAT-free bliss.

This item appeared in the Daily Telegraph May 20 2003. ■

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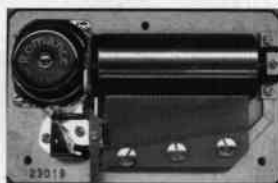


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Pianovo

- An Unusual Barrel Piano

by Kevin McElhone

The Pianovo is an unusual coin operated Barrel Piano, possibly made by Poppers. I only know of three examples of this make and all are slightly different models. One was described in a long article by Hendrick Strengers in a Dutch magazine in 1986, another has just joined my own collection and a third example is in a private collection in England.

Two examples are simply a Piano and the other has the addition of a Xylophone plus percussion.

The mechanisms are rather unusual in that there is a full normal piano action with dampers, half-blow and proper whippens and jacks like a normal piano. The Dampers and the Half-Blow are both worked from tracks on the barrel.

There is also a Mandolin Rail operated by two keys (presumably because a high force is needed to switch this on quickly) with the usual leather straps with metal pins dropped between the hammer and the strings to give the characteristic sound. In this example only the top 22 notes are 'Mandolin', the others have a felt strip. There is, however, a second rail which may be dropped into position instead which just has a layer of thick felt to quieten down the sound. I can only presume this was used later in the evening in the cafe or bar to reduce the sound or simply to vary the tone. These two 'rails' are shown (Fig 1) and are clearly labelled by the maker as 'Mandolin' and 'Gedampftes Spiel' respectively.

The barrels are unusual in several ways. They have only five tunes pinned on them, and they are designed to be changed very quickly and easily. The front casework of the piano has to be unlocked, the front panel is removed and then a long lever at the right hand end of the



Fig. 1. Mandolin & 'quiet' rail.

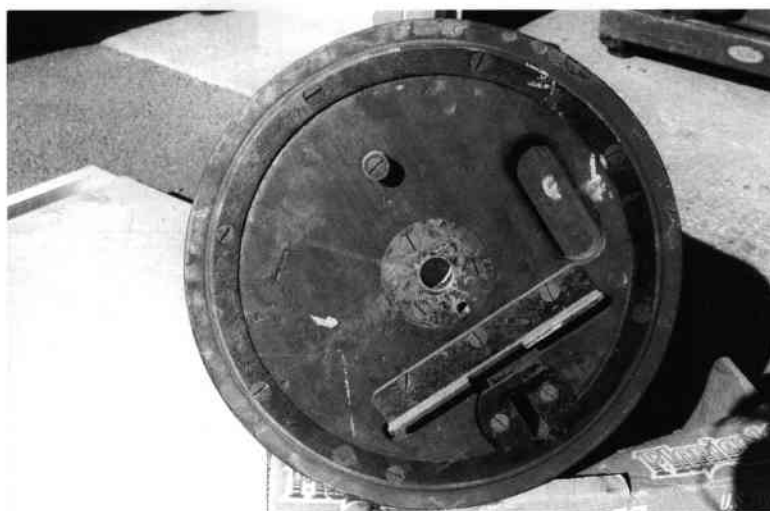


Fig. 2. Left hand end of barrel.



Fig. 3. Right hand end of barrel showing program number.

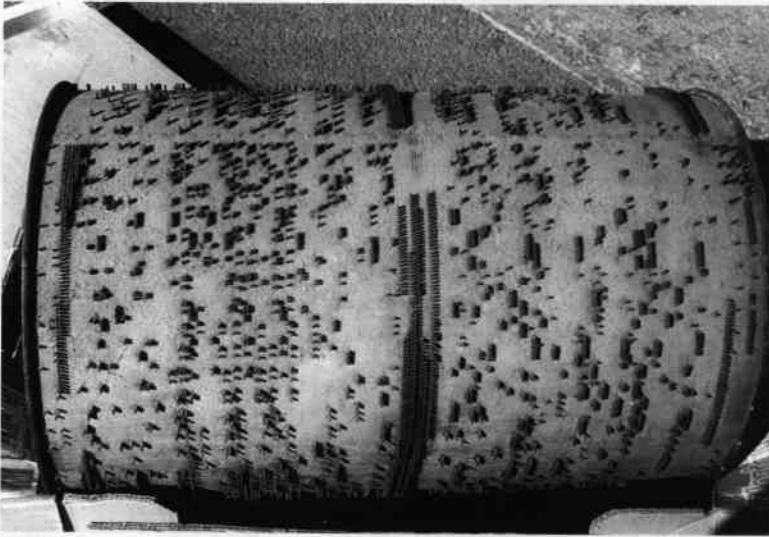


Fig. 4. Barrel with 30 years of dirt on it.

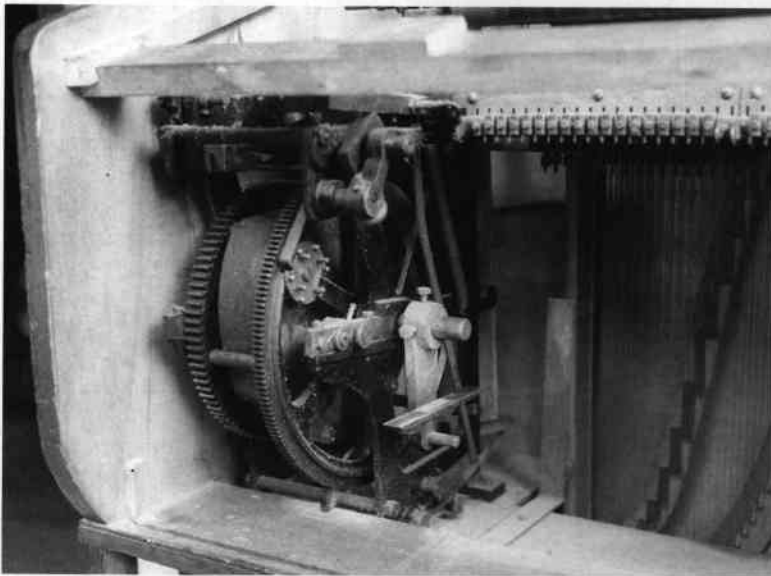


Fig. 5. Clockwork drive motor at front which is unusual.



Fig. 6. Top part of the mechanism seen as my father lends a hand, as usual, with removals.

keyframe may be raised. This releases the barrel which is slid about half an inch to the right and is then pulled horizontally forwards out of the piano, the whole movement taking a few seconds. The barrel has raised metal ends which protect the pins from being bent if the barrel is laid down on the floor (Fig 3 shows the right hand end of the barrel). Notice there are finger holes in both ends of the barrel to enable a smooth and speedy removal. The left hand end (Fig 2) is the driven end and the barrel simply pushes over a driven bar and a slot into which a pin from the motor engages. The lever is dropped and the replacement barrel is now ready for playing. The barrels have some numbers stamped on the ends of them, Fig 3 shows a large number 60 and a small number 0437. One of these numbers must identify the selection of tunes on the mass produced barrel (Fig 4). The clockwork motor is at the left-hand end but at the front of the instrument (Fig 5). You can see the drive pin and bar which the barrel slides onto at the bottom right. There is also a selector to choose the number of plays for the coin inserted. This example uses a German 10 Pfennig piece and only has a coin slot at the left-hand end. The winding handle turns in the 'continental' direction

One of these numbers must identify the selection of tunes on the mass produced barrel



Fig. 7. Complete instrument front assembled.



Fig. 8. Top part of front with new material behind fretwork.



Fig. 9. Close-up of name and coloured glass surrounding the mirror.



Fig. 10. Larger model stores spare barrels in the bottom.

which often leads to confusion and the handle being unwound in error.

Even the tune changing mechanism is a little unusual in that the five tunes start at the left with number one and the barrel moves one track to the right each time the tune is changed. When you get to tune five you have to come back in reverse 4,3,2,1. On most barrel pianos the first tune can be played after the highest numbered tune and the barrel moves right on the odd number tunes and back to the left on the even number tunes.

Notice also that the key tails are actually screwed into position and are therefore individually adjustable to compensate for high usage and also easy to replace in case of breakage. In the centre of the keyframe can be seen two round wheels which are the way that the half-blow and dampers are operated from the barrel. The wheel rides along the top of a long row of pins causing the chosen register to be engaged.

There is a full iron frame to the piano but a very strange tuning scale. For example, notice that there is one octave with only two notes in it - that really gets the piano tuner to concentrate.

The barrel is wrapped in a metal (possibly zinc) sheet and is pinned like the cob roller organ with rows of individual pins rather than long bridges. There are some very long lines of pins used for the dampers and percussion track controls which can clearly be seen in the centre of Fig. 4 amongst 30 years accumulation of dust before restoration. All barrels have the percussion tracks pinned on them, even if used on an instrument which is without the added percussion.

A general view of the top part of the mechanism is given in Fig 6 and this shows another unusual part of the mechanism, a rotating metal roller which transmits the movement of the keys to the hammer tails using a 'kicking-shoe' action like some of the early the Hupfeld and Pianotist piano playing mechanisms. The metal roller is driven by a two

...there is one octave with only two notes in it - that really gets the piano tuner to concentrate.

rather long metal chains similar to that used on the transmission of a player piano from roll motor to spool box. My father is looking particularly pleased with himself as when we unloaded the piano he had the 'lightweight' end without the heavy clockwork motor.

The last three photographs show the a general view of the front of the piano and details of the front which includes material at either side to let and the sound and a central mirror surrounded by coloured glass.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 | Triangle |
| 2 | Sustain register |
| 3 - 19 | (notes) C D F G A
G H C D E F F# G
A A# H C |
| 21 | Half-blow register |
| 22 | Xylophone register |
| 23 - 39 | (notes) C# D E F F#
G A A# H C C# D
E F F# G A |
| 40 | Celeste register |
| 41 | Bass Drum + Cymbal |
| 42 | Reiterating Side Drum |

Reading from the left, the keys functions are as follows:-

The tunes on the two barrels which I have are mostly unknown continental tunes, although one barrel, labelled as 'poor tunes' actually has "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" on it.

I would like to hear from anyone if you know of other examples, particularly if you have an original tune sheet to identify the tunes played. ■

Kevin McElhone

To contact Kevin:-
Telephone 01536 523988
or Email:
kevinmcelhone@supernet.com

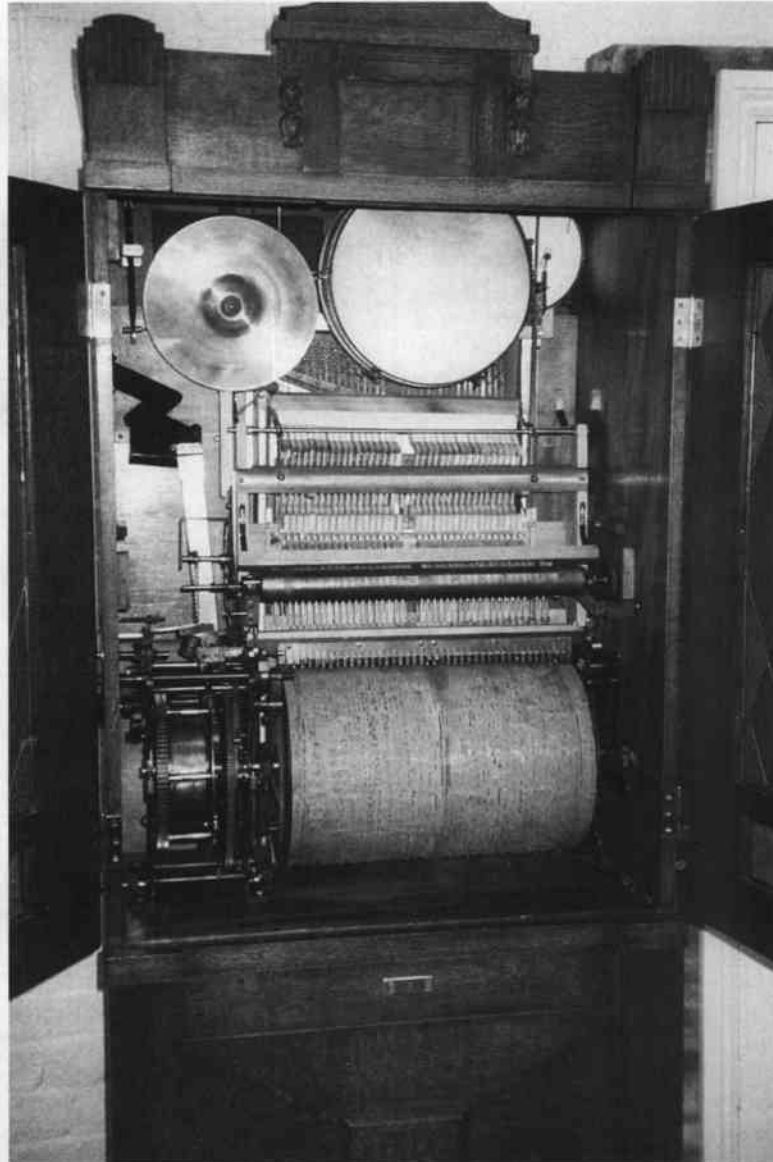


Fig. 11. Larger model with added percussion & Xylophone.

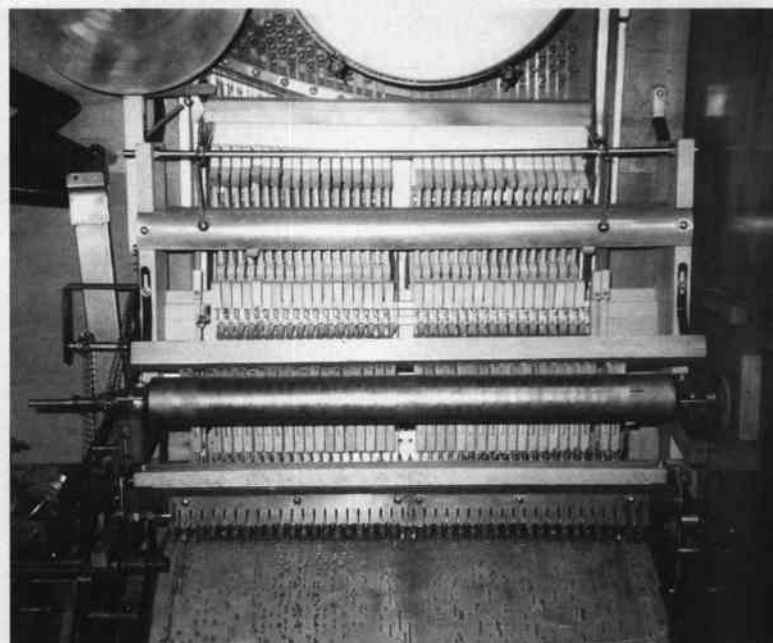


Fig. 12. Close up showing the drive chain at the left for the kicking shoe roller and the coin slot.

Cross in the Workshop

- repairs to a chamber barrel organ

by Peter Howard

Figure 1 shows the damaged limb of a cruciform decoration along the top of a chamber barrel organ side panel. The missing piece had been lost so a new part had to be grafted on. The methods and sequence form the subject of this article.

Firstly, the rough surface of the break was planed smooth and straight using a small plane, which is easily held in the palm of one hand. To my mind the normal two-handed smoothing plane is too cumbersome and I cannot keep it steady on a job of this sort. Figure 2 shows the result.

A suitable piece of mahogany was selected for the replacement. It was cut with the grain in the correct direction so as to merge unobtrusively with its neighbour on the main panel. This new piece was finished a few thousandths of an inch thicker than the damaged panel. Two cheeks of MDF were then prepared for use as bridges, aligning the two pieces of wood whilst being glued together.

A trial run, clamped to the replacement piece of wood, is illustrated by Figure 3. For later identification I shall call this dry sub-assembly 'the stirrup'. In the glued final assembly, kitchen foil was interleaved as a barrier to the MDF, stopping unwanted adhesion and the first G clamp was applied to form the dry stirrup.

After application of glue to the surfaces to be joined, the stirrup sub-assembly was rubbed back and forth, with increasing pressure, over the prepared joint face of the panel. The slight extra new-part thickness allowed this motion to take place. This action squeezes surplus glue out of the joint and increases the strength of the end result.

Keeping the pressure on, a second G clamp was tightened over the two pieces of MDF, in the area of the original panel. I now had a

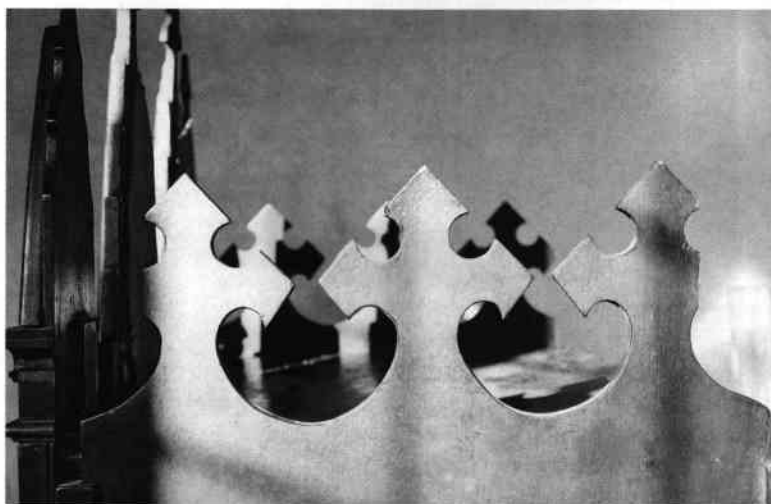


Fig. 1.

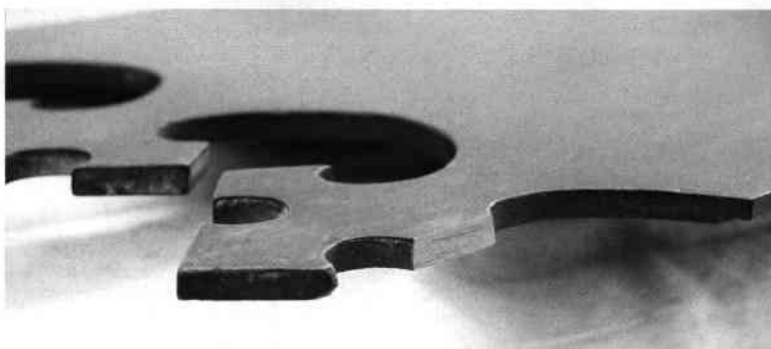


Fig. 2.

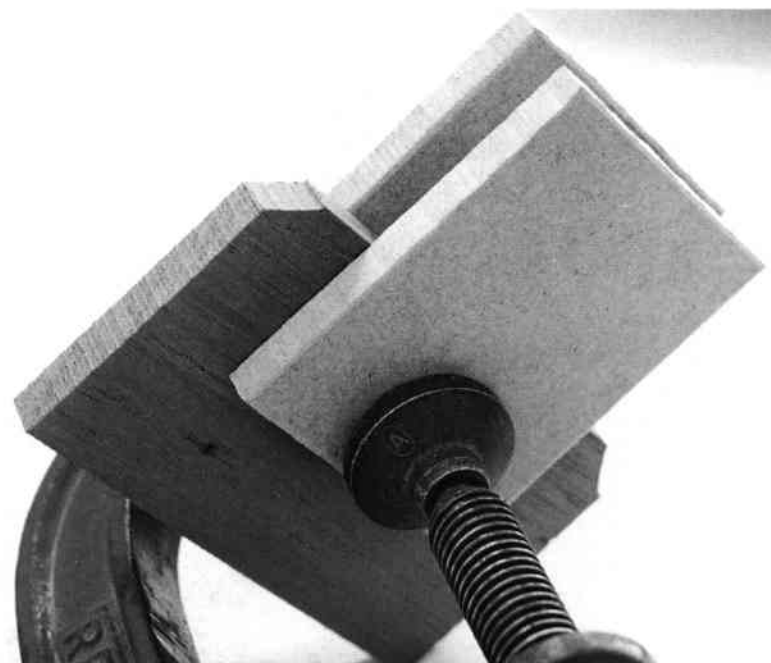


Fig. 3.

In the glued final assembly, kitchen foil was interleaved as a barrier

rigid and secure arrangement whilst the glue dried. See Figure 4.

When dry, the clamps were removed, the redundant MDF was discarded, and the cruciform shape was fashioned. The slight extra thickness of the new part was gently sanded down to merge in.

Figure 5 is my last photograph so I leave you to imagine the end result, after staining and polishing.

On the subject of glue, I would normally advocate using the same sort as had been used during original manufacture. In this case I bent my normally strict rule because, to my mind, this is not original manufacture. This had not been a joint in the first place. It had been an accident! All I am doing is to recreate a solid piece of timber. I have therefore used

Cascamite-One-Shot glue.

In closing I relate a comment from an old craftsman to my father when he was learning the cabinet making trade. "It's not the glue you put in the joint what makes it stick lad, it's that what you rubs out before it sets." Hence the rubbing action described above. Get that wood as close together as possible! ■

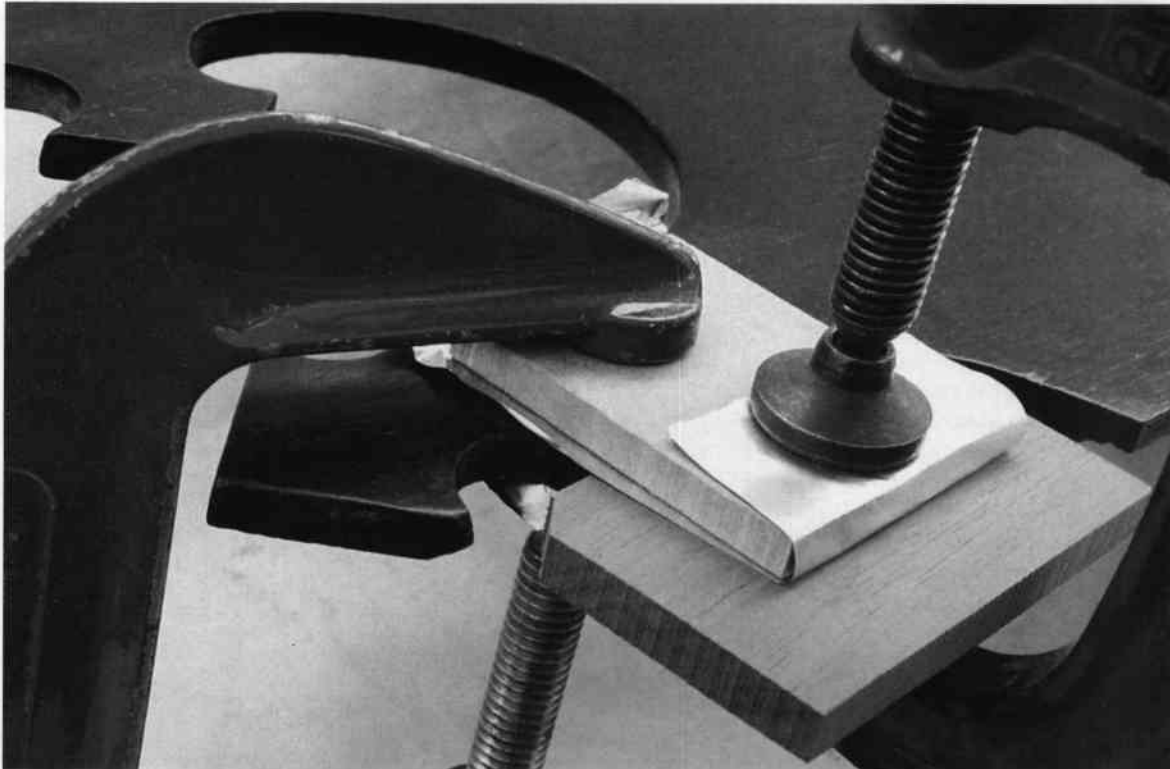


Fig. 4.

"It's not the glue you put in the joint what makes it stick lad, it's that what you rubs out before it sets."

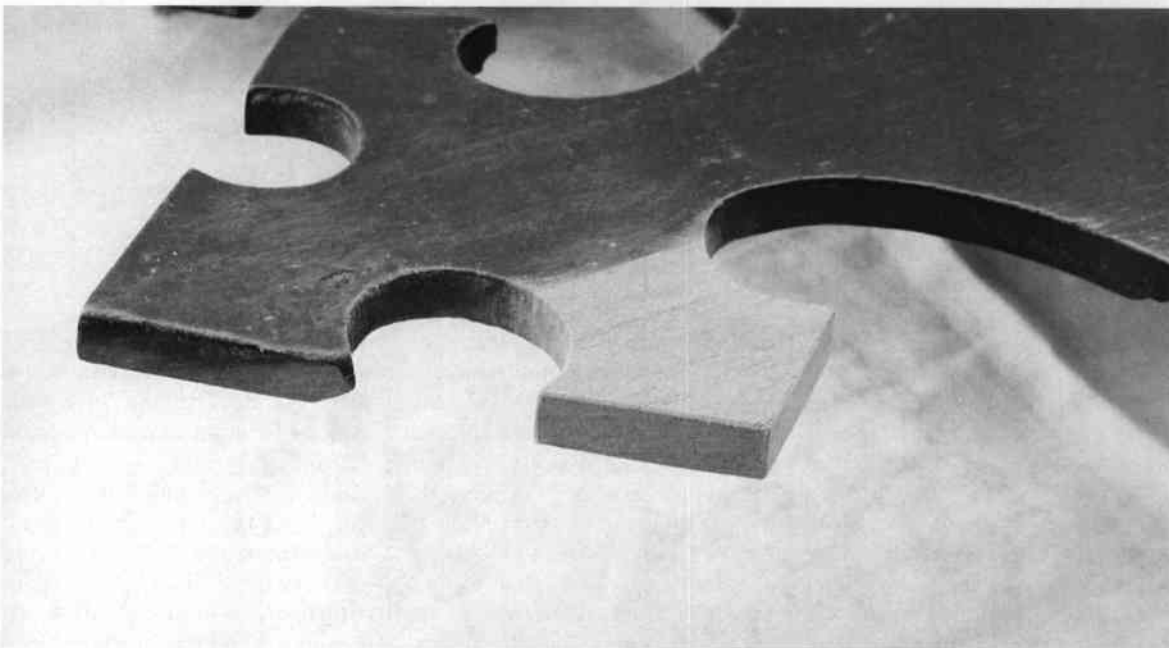


Fig. 5.

A Novice's Adventures with an Organette

by Gordon Bartlet

My affair with the world of organettes was quite unplanned and started at the 2002 Society AGM at St Albans. At the auction my eye rested on a sad-looking organette, reportedly complete, but hardly able to utter a faint groan and clearly in urgent need of some TLC. My bid was successful. Had I bought a lemon? It was, after all, bought on impulse. I also bought the excellent Organette book by Kevin McElhone and learnt that my Atlas was an Amorette made under licence in France and was the 24 note model in the middle of the range. Not too complex for amateur restoration, but with 24 notes capable of a satisfying performance. Fig. 1.

At the auction my eye rested on a sad-looking organette, reportedly complete, but hardly able to utter a faint groan

It plays 12" diameter metal discs with projections underneath which depress metal keys connected to pads. These open to allow air to pass through a bank of reeds. Pressure is generated by a pair of bellows pumping into a pressure reservoir. This 12" size turned out to be ideal for later developments in my new-found interest, as you will see.

The leather valves, bellows and pressure reservoir needed a complete rebuild, Fig. 2. I am fortunate in living near Yeovil which was the centre of a glove making industry until helicopters proved more profitable. The remnants of glove making still remain, however, and have proved a useful and cheap source of fine leather offcuts, ideal for the valves and corners of the bellows. Ted Brown's renovation chapter in Kevin's book came in most useful here. One small problem with the bellows was that the hinged wooden pieces were badly warped. Rather than replace them I decided to pull them into shape with light steel channels, thus keeping the original material. This has proved totally successful and the channels

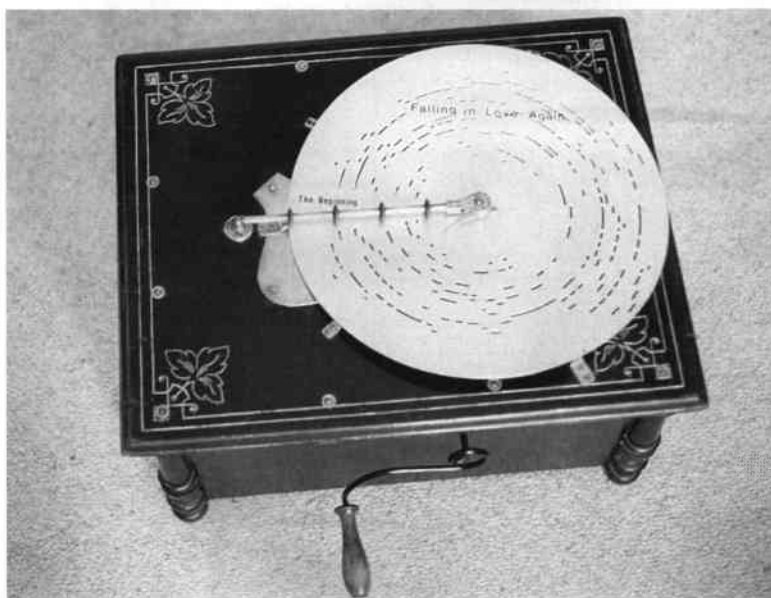


Fig. 1. The Atlas organette.

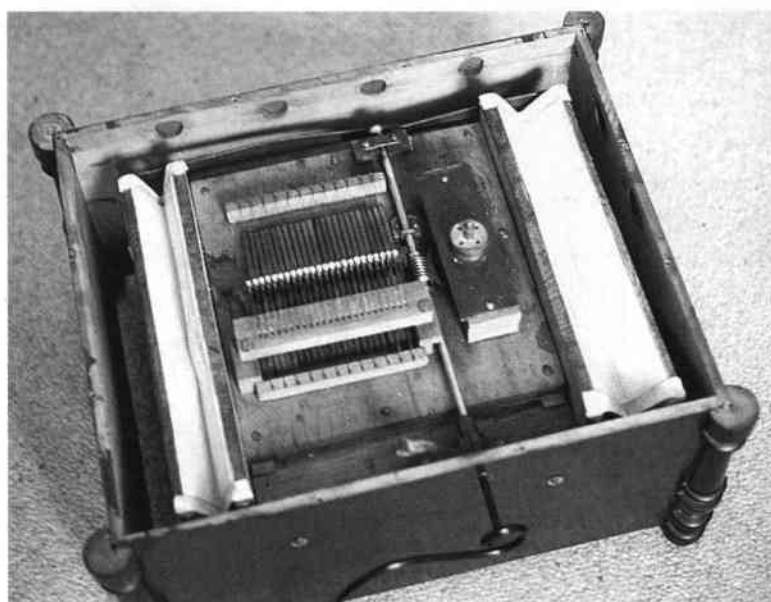


Fig. 2. An underside view.

cannot be seen in normal operation.

A more serious problem was a bent drive shaft, probably caused by the instrument being dropped onto its handle many years ago. The moral here is to remove the handle for transport (but not to forget it if you intend to give a demonstration!). This shaft extends from the front of the box to the back where it operates the bellows via a crank. At mid point it carries a

worm wheel driving a large gear wheel mounted on the vertical disc shaft, Fig. 3. The bent drive shaft caused the worm to come into and out of engagement with each turn of the handle, resulting in the disc rotating in fits and starts. Straightening the shaft was no cure as the worm, after many years rotating off centre, had worn unevenly. Even with a straightened shaft the disc rotated unevenly.

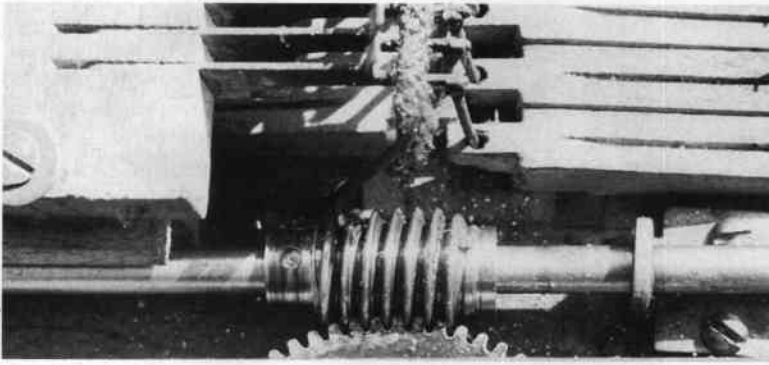


Fig. 3. The worm gear.



Fig. 4. Drunken transfer.



Fig. 5. Turning the discs.

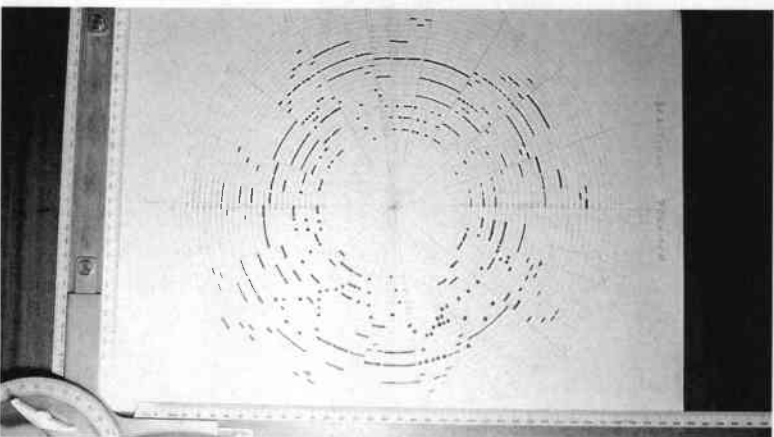


Fig. 6. Marking out the tune.

The only solution was a new worm. I am lucky in having a small workshop with a Myford lathe, in fact my interest in mechanical music nicely combines my love of music plus a passion for anything mechanical. I calculated the tooth pitch at 10 per inch and got to work on a piece of brass rod. Things did not look right however. Closer inspection revealed that the worm should have a left hand thread! Not wanting to have my discs rotating anti-clockwise I started again and with the tool reset and the leadscrew reversed a new worm was produced and fitted. The reed block proved to be alright, so I now had a fully functioning Atlas with a selection of discs.

Cosmetically there was not a lot to do apart from woodworm treatment and retouching the gold lining and the "ATLAS ORGANETTE" transfer, Fig. 4. The lining was brought back to life by going over with a gold Pentel K108 Hybrid roller pen. This could easily be run along a straight edge or could follow the depressions made by the original lining in the fancy bits. Heeding Ted Brown's advice to resist any temptation to improve anything, I restored this transfer in the drunken manner in which it had been originally applied, again using the roller pen. On the subject of woodworm treatment I have learnt the hard way that spray applied Cuprinol plays havoc with leather valves, leaving them sadly limp. The lesson seems to be woodworm treatment as the very first operation.

At this point I wondered how easy it would be to extend the repertoire by making some original discs with tunes of my choice. 0.5mm aluminium sheet proved easier to obtain than the original zinc, so I cut out, with tin snips, some oversize blanks with a central pivot hole plus two drive holes. About a dozen were mounted on a central shaft in the milling machine chuck, sandwiched between a pair of 12" diameter wooden discs to ensure that the thin aluminium remained flat whilst being machined to size, Fig. 5. I used my milling machine as a sort of vertical lathe, my Myford being incapable of the required 6" throw.

*..I have learnt
the hard way
that spray
applied
Cuprinol plays
havoc with
leather valves...*

The cutting tool was mounted on a vertical slide fixed to the table, giving vertical and horizontal controlled movement. This is where the 12" diameter became critical, as it just fitted within the milling machine's throat: another reason to consider my 24 note Atlas a very lucky buy. Although this procedure looks a shade hazardous I would emphasise that the chuck was firmly secured by a draw bar through the spindle and the disc was rotated at the minimum speed available.

The method of turning discs in a milling machine is potentially hazardous and should not be attempted by anyone without considerable machining experience.

Editor

Next came the selection of suitable tunes and arranging them to achieve a playing time of around 40 seconds. Tunes with a quick repetition of notes were avoided. However nice these sound on a music box, this type of organette, to my mind, performs best with lilting melodies. Steven Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer" seemed a good start. It may, as far as I know, have been available as an original Atlas or Amorette disc. If so I would be most interested to compare this with my version. Other tunes included an attempt to raise the ghost of Marlene Dietrich (or maybe cause her to turn in her grave) with a version of "Falling in Love Again". Also Lennon and McCartney's "Yesterday" and that old protest number "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

Would-be arrangers may find John Smith's book "Making Mechanical Music" useful. This publication was reviewed in MB Vol20 No5. Editor

Now for punching discs from the blanks. Reading the article in the Spring 2003 Music Box, concerning computer generated and volume produced cobs for the Gem organette makes me feel extremely humble. My methods are strictly steam age. 24 concentric circles are drawn on paper, spaced as per the Atlas keys, Fig. 6. This is divided dartboard fashion with radial lines into the number of bars to be played, plus a blank section at the start. Then the melody plus

whatever harmony is available from the limited range of notes is marked in felt tip pen, transcribed into whatever key appears suitable. The tuning scale seems to favour C or G although a total absence of C# or G# makes life difficult and excludes more ambitious harmonies. An attempt at Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo" failed on this account, although Duke's

"Solitude" proved more successful.

The paper disc is stuck onto an aluminium blank which is mounted once again in the milling machine, but this time singly and on the table, providing controlled sideways movement. The hole in the centre of the disc is located on a vertical pin which remains fixed to the table for the whole operation but allows the disc to be rotated manually. Strange

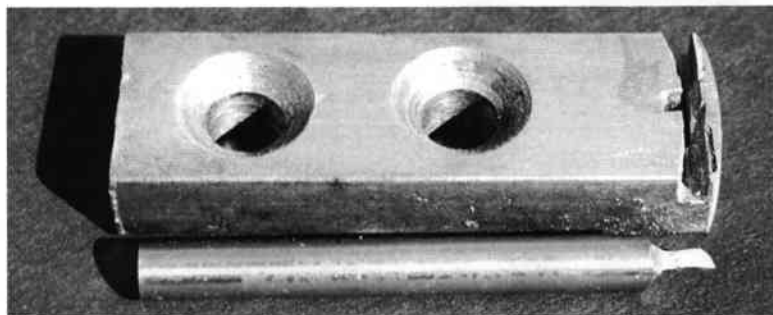


Fig. 7. The die and punch.

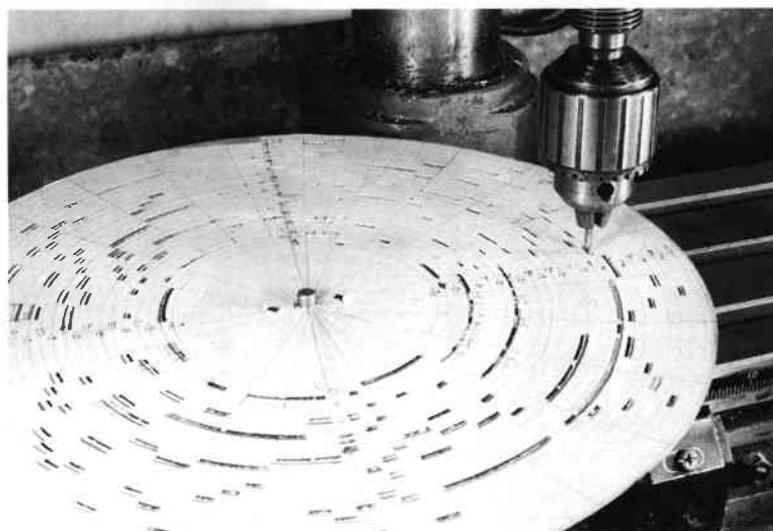


Fig. 8. Punching the slots.

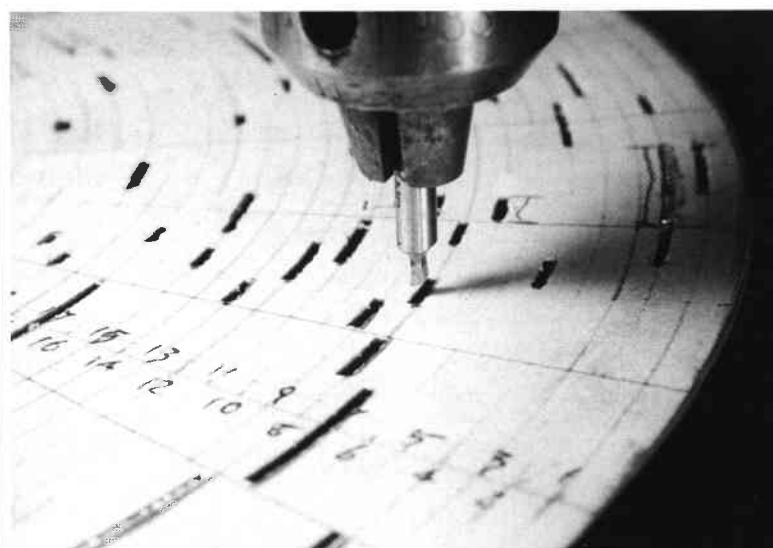


Fig. 9. Close up of punch.

*My methods
are strictly
steam age.*

how the milling machine has twice come into use, but neither time for its intended purpose, Fig. 7. A chisel shaped punch, 0.060" x 0.080" ground from tool steel, is mounted in the chuck (which does not, of course, rotate) and centred over a steel die block. This has a square hole 0.080" x 0.080" and is bolted to the table, in the same T slot as the pin. The circle representing the outermost note is located under the punch. Then the downward feed of the punch into the die block creates a tab in the aluminium within the 0.020" clearance. There is also a slot in the die block in line with these tabs to allow the disc to be rotated where extended tabs are needed for sustained notes. To complete the outer note a 360 degree rotation of the disc is made by hand, punching wherever necessary. Then the table plus the disc on its pivot pin is indexed sideways for the next note, i.e. moved a controlled amount by the index wheel equal to the spacing of the keys. The die block must be relocated as it will no longer be under the punch, Fig. 8. The process is repeated a total of 24 times until all the required notes have been stamped out.

This is where I made a most useful discovery. I expected to require a series of 24 individual readings on my index wheel to move the disc into position for each note. All would be subject to error. Now, my machine reads in Imperial and, would you believe it, my German designed, French made organette has keys pitched at exactly 6 to the inch! The disc diameter of exactly 12" should have provided a clue that the machine had been built to Imperial dimensions. Was this common practice? How things change! Due to this fortunate fact it was necessary merely to start at zero, index forward 0.167" for the next note, then another 0.167", and forward to zero again. Hence every third note is correctly spaced with the index wheel on zero and the others will be no more than a thou or so out. The most critical thing is to start at the right point for the first note.

On completion the paper is removed. Then the tabs are given a light fettling with a small abrasive cylinder on a miniature electric drill to remove any rough edges and

corners. These largely result from the aluminium stretching as it is deformed. Then dry transfers are applied for the tune title and start point. Atlas and Amorette discs carry the clumsy "The Beginning, instead of just "Start". It seems more authentic to follow this practice despite quickly running out of n's. Luckily h's and m's can be adapted to suit. Finally both surfaces of the disc are given a coat of spray-applied clear lacquer, Fig. 11.

I hope that the illustrations show the various operations better than I can describe in words. It is really

most satisfying to bring an ingenious piece of musical Victoriana into life. Giving it, in addition, contemporary tunes to play is a bit like an aged relative unexpectedly bursting into song with some Beatles hit. Maybe organettes do not have the strict precision of a music box, but I can heartily recommend them as a relatively cheap entry into mechanical music. I now have three more lining up for rebuilds, and with Kevin's superb book as a guide it has become relatively easy for a novice to identify and restore these fascinating instruments. ■

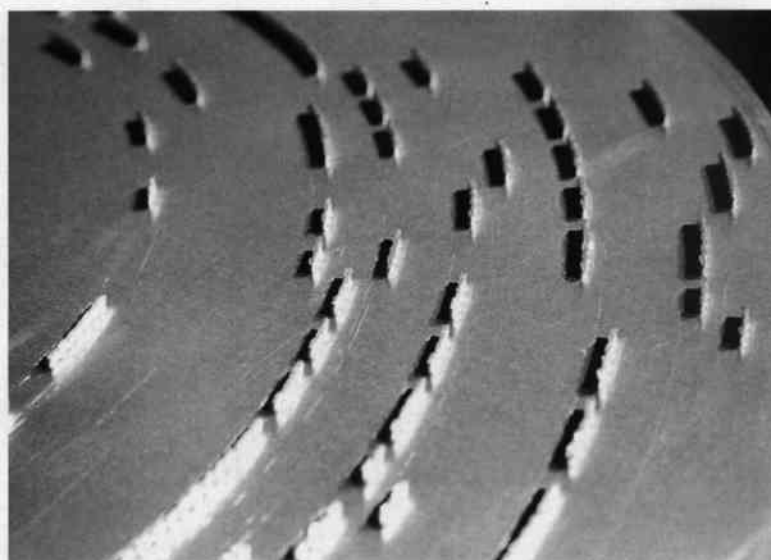


Fig. 10. Close up of underside of disc.

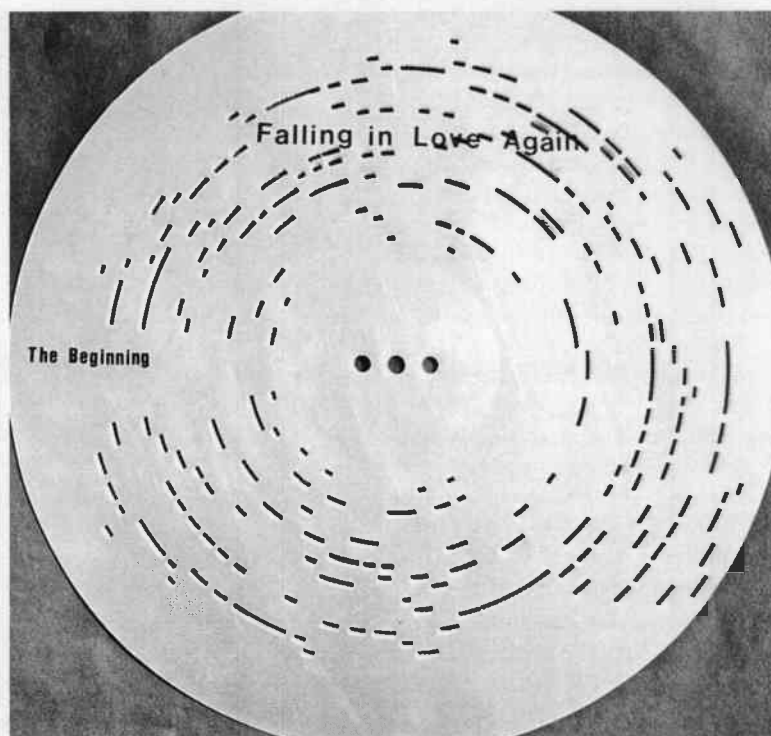


Fig. 11. The finished disc.

Daniel Imhof

- not forgotten

by Peter Murray

Whilst working in Holland I met a fellow member of the Musical Box Society, Hendrik Strengers, and his wife Tonnie, and spent some pleasant times on mechanical music. Hendrik asked if, on returning to England, I could find and photograph the grave of Daniel Imhof, known to have died in Croydon. Imhof was, of course, one half of the famous Imhof and Muckle partnership.

My wife contacted the cemeteries office in Croydon who were most helpful and confirmed Daniel Imhof was buried with his wife in a family grave at the Queen's Road Cemetery, grave no. 30884. We said we would like to visit the grave and we were sent two maps giving the section locations, and plot no. locations, and told a marker highlighting the grave would be placed for our visit. On arrival, the reason for this became apparent. The grave site is in the centre of five unmarked graves, just grass. The marker was a wooden stake in the open area, which we found rather sad not to have any identification. We later confirmed that no headstone had ever been placed on the grave.

Our thoughts were then perhaps we could start a trust fund to have a plaque or headstone placed on the grave. We have received our first donation from Holland and a Bank Trust Fund account will be opened.

The registered owner of the grave is Anna Elisabeth Imhof who is now buried in the grave. Before any additions to the grave can be made a living relative must register as owner in order to give permission. This is a paper exercise with no cost involved and we have been able to contact one of two of his great-grandsons living in the UK who, in principle, is prepared to take over the ownership of the grave. The necessary documents have been sent to him for completion. A suggested text would be:

In memory of Daniel Imhof
Orchestrion Builder, 25. 03.1825
Unterspitzzenbach - 26.05.1900
Croydon.

Anna Elisabeth Imhof (Fackler)
16.10.1824 - 12.10.1908 Croydon.

Additional information gathered:-
Daniel Imhof height 6ft.7ins.
Long coffin. Home rented until death, 121 Edridge Road, Croydon. This still exists in a short road of large semi-detached houses.

His wife moved to Fell Road which is now an elevated motorway. The funeral directors were Ebbuts of Croydon, 89 High Street, which still exist. They were very helpful in giving me access to a large leather bound ledger which they had found rather dusty in their "dark spooky basement" with details as follows (all handwritten):-

Buried 29th May 1900.

Ledger 1899-1902, page 180

Grave No. 30884, 9ft deep.

121 Edridge Road

Wife Anna

Oak coffin with chamfered lid	
4 pair brass handles	
Brass inscription plate	
Lined with flannel tufted mattress	
Satin trimmed side sheets	
Ruffle pillow	
Funeral car	
2 Broughms pair	
7 attendants including	
coucher with black gloves	£14.0.0d.
Cemetery fees	
(including grave digger)	£10.3.6d.
Registrars fee	1.0d.
I burial certificate add I&M	3.7d.
Total	£24.8. 1d.

Hendrik has contacted some people in Germany and, with the Netherlands Mechanical Organ Society (Kring Van Draaiorgel-vrienden) they are willing to donate money towards a memorial stone.

We can make other contacts as soon as ownership for the grave has been arranged.

Any further thoughts or information would be appreciated. ■



Daniel Imhof - picture circa 1896.

Dip into Archive

There are several fine mystery musical boxes concealed in the MBSGB archives. One of special interest is on page 272 of Vol.7, Autumn 1976. Its serial number is 4826 and I now introduce it again, under the heading of its maker.

Henri Joseph Lecoultre-Duperrut, Geneva, 1841 - 1851.

Records of boxes made by Henri Joseph Lecoultre are very scarce, as noted for "Line Y" on the Lecoultre dating chart. However, in 1841, during his partnership with Granger, he married Aline Duperrut. As was customary, he then included his wife's family name and operated as Joseph Lecoultre-Duperrut, Geneva. This has recently led to several of his boxes being identified.

These boxes look like other typical 1840s key-winds, with their polished brass bedplates and snug fit in their cases, but they differ by having blued comb screws without washers, and hooked comb teeth. Those playing forte piano do so by means of long and short cylinder pins, with weights on their governor wings. Those with multi cylinders are fitted with their own type of *rechange* mechanism. In about 1847 Henri Lecoultre introduced an additional comb refinement by raking the tips upwards - presumably to allow even more dwell of cylinder pins on dampers than already provided by hooked teeth.



Fig. 1. Top part of serial 4490 tune sheet which lists the fifteen tunes in one column. The forte piano effect was often called Expressifs or Expression. Photo thanks to Christie's South Kensington. Figs. 2 to 14 thanks to Patrick McCrossan.

Here are four, in serial number order as stamped on their brass bedplates....

Serial 4490, bedplate stamped Jph. Lecoultre-Duperrut à Genève. Forte piano, mandoline, *rechange*, with five 3-air 13" cylinders, 225 comb teeth. See Fig. 1.

Serial 4590, forte piano, 13" 4-air cylinder, 188 teeth, raked tips.

Serial 4614, bedplate badly stamped with only DUPERRUT legible. Mandoline forte piano, 13" 4-air cylinder, 188 teeth, raked tips.

Serial 4826, *rechange*, twelve 11" 4-air cylinders, 151 teeth, raked tips.

There is no name stamped on serial 4826 bedplate, but it is certainly by the same maker. All four have the first tune on dots and track lines, and three have the raked tooth tips, which is extremely rare and reported only

from this maker. Their typical snug layout is shown for serial 4826 in Fig. 2. The case size is 19 by 6 1/4" (48 by 17cm). The cylinder changing apparatus requires very little additional case length, but it leaves no room for the instant stop control.

The procedure for changing a cylinder is indicated on the movement, as partly shown in Fig. 3. The mechanism, dating from about 1839, is fairly complex. It was based on retaining the standard cylinder box layout which was not easy. The blank numbers were conventionally applied, here 1 for the cylinder and 2 for the spring as seen in Fig. 4.

Serial 4826 came with twelve cylinders, housed when not in use in two boxes of six, see Fig. 5. The serial number is stamped on the great wheel which came with each cylinder, alongside its cylinder number, Fig. 6.

Those playing forte piano do so by means of long and short cylinder pins...

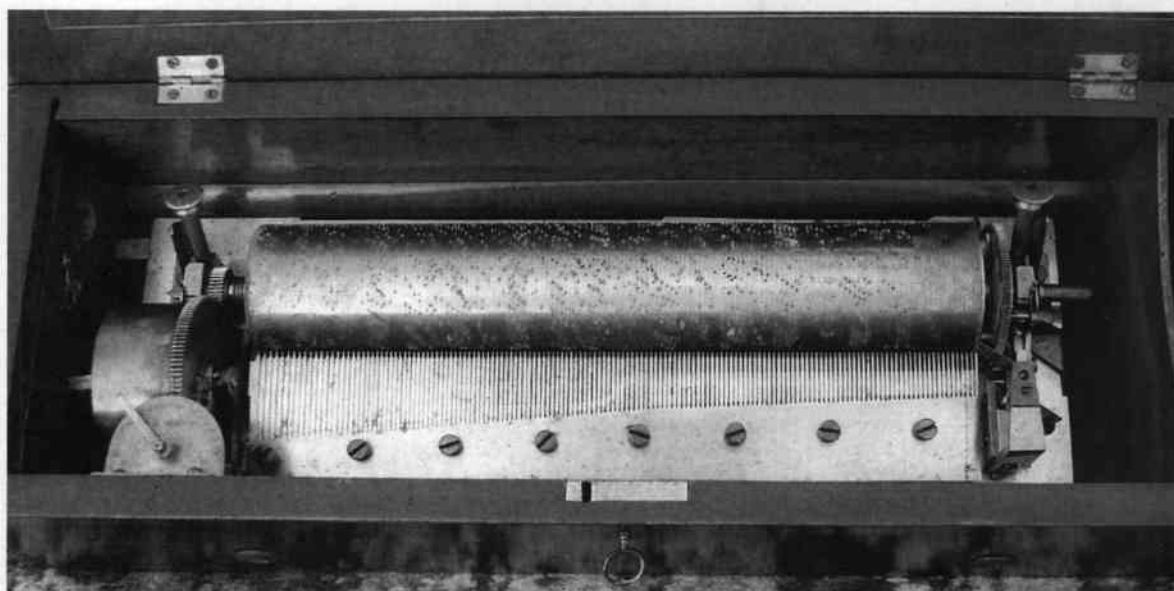


Fig. 2. Lecoultre-Duperrut serial 4826, *Rechange*, with 11" cylinder, 151 teeth. The knurled knobs B are behind the two cylinder bearings.



Fig. 3. The dial plate, screwed to the case front, showing lever A near point Y for "stop for change of cylinder." That locks the spring barrel. When turned to point Z it frees the spring and applies a locking bar to the bearing covers, see Fig. 12.

The gamme number 892 is scribed on the bass end of every cylinder, Fig. 7.

There are no craft marks, and the only foundry mark is Jean Billon's JB on the comb base.

The 11" (28cm) cylinders are, as usual, 24 lignes diameter = 2.13 inches. They are pinned at 0.1 inch per second so tunes last a good minute. The pins are raked. Each cylinder has its four tune titles, sometimes abbreviated, stamped on it. They start at $2\frac{3}{4}$ " from the treble end and are positioned for reading when the cylinder is at tune end, see Fig. 8.

The comb has a third dowel at back centre and is fixed by eight blued screws without washers. There are 151 teeth, three of which have been added together with their extra piece of comb base. All pitch changes are marked and the Sol Fa notation is stamped on, with semi tones left blank, see Fig. 9. Unusually for the late-1840s, the comb has hooked teeth and also a device which is probably unique to Henri Lecoultré: the tips of the teeth in the bass half of the comb are raked upwards. Then to put the tips in line with the rest of the comb their teeth are bent downwards from behind the leads see Fig. 10. This rather elaborate double bending was skilfully done, leaving all tooth tips straight in line. The most likely reason for this complication is that it permits even longer contact between pin and damper than already provided by hooked teeth.

The 440Hz a teeth are nos. 28, 29 and 30 from the bass end. There are several groups of up to five teeth tuned to the same pitch allowing some good mandoline effects, but it is not a mandoline box. That word on an 1840s tune sheet denoted "proper" mandoline, needing groups up to eight teeth, which is now often referred to as super- mandoline.

There is nothing outstanding about the tune arrangements or the musical quality, but they are extremely satisfactory on the six surviving cylinders. A cool 24 enjoyable tunes! The treble parts are excellent, but play is a bit dull at the bass end which some would say is typically Lecoultré. The whole family were noted for quality combs, and always made their own.

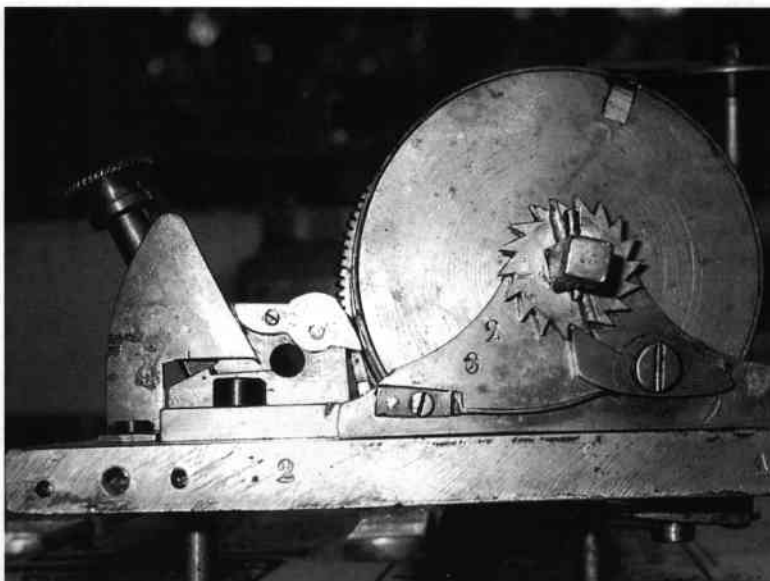


Fig. 4. Blank no. 2 on spring bearing, and on bedplate edge with no.1 for the cylinder.

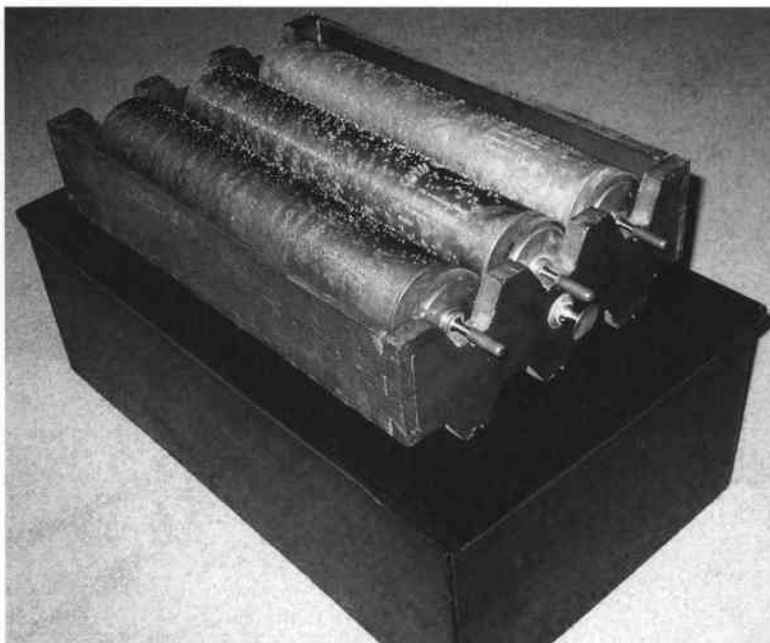


Fig. 5. Cylinders from the upper berth, posed on top of their grained case. These six are numbered 7 to 12. "Oh where, oh where can the other six be?"



Fig. 6. Great wheel of cylinder no. 12 with its number stamped beside the serial number. The outer edge of the stop arm pin track is removed to allow free passage of the pin away from the wheel during cylinder change.

Unusually for the late-1840s, the comb has hooked teeth...

Regarding the cylinder changing mechanism, it has to be remembered that menial tasks were just not done by the classes who could afford these luxury boxes. They would ring for a servant to wind a cartel box, and the winding of their clocks was usually done weekly by a local clock maker. I doubt if they would even think of changing a cylinder themselves. Langdorff serial 6157 made in 1851, *Rechange* with 4 cylinders, carried a record of cylinder changes, obviously outsourced.

Cylinder changing

Instructions (hand written, as usual at that period) were included with

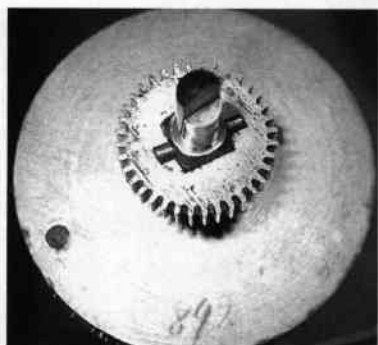


Fig. 7. Gamme number 892 scribed on every cylinder. The flat on the end of the arbor ensures the correct orientation of the cylinder.

each box. The mechanism was described in our 1976 issue mentioned above, and here is a brief outline of the changing procedure...

- (1) Lock the main spring by turning lever A to point Y, as in Fig. 3.
- (2) Turn both knurled knobs B a quarter turn anticlockwise and swing up the two cylinder bearing covers C. See Figs. 2, 11 and 12.
- (3) Hold the two ends of the cylinder arbor and carefully lift out with the arbor ends touching their guides.

Back in 1976, serial 4826 had somehow acquired an excessively strong spring, and to make winding possible a geared lever arrangement was added. Later, a correct spring was fitted and the contraption was mercifully removed (as not shown on Fig. 2, but can be seen on the front cover of our Vol. 7 no. 7, Autumn 1976).

Earlier Years

Similar boxes, with long and short cylinder pins for the forte piano effect and with smoothing weights on the governor blades, were being made by Henri Lecoultre while he was in partnership with Granger. Serial 3803 is an example in the Seewen Museum. It has a 34cum (13.4") by 6.7cum

(2.6") diameter cylinder playing four overtures on 6 turns with 132 comb teeth. The tune plaque is headed *Musique Expressive* and the makers are Lecoultre & Granger à Genève.

Another similar box from the Lecoultre and Granger partnership is their serial number 3493, made in 1841. It plays six airs with 12 1/4" (31 cum) cylinder. Its governor weights are at the ends of a short shaft mounted freely across the endless spindle and resting on the fan blades bracket. Its tune sheet is no. 61 which wrongly dates it at 1836. Sorry, that should be 1841.

David Lecoultre

The very first maker of these single-comb forte piano boxes may well have been David

Lecoultre. He was a watch maker at Le Brassus in the Vallée de Joux where comb music was being added to watches and ornaments in the early 1800s. He was an early maker of larger boxes, probably encouraged by his Lecoultre relatives at near-by Le Sentier who made blanks and combs for Geneva. By 1830 David Lecoultre was turning out about 300 cartels a year. They included single-comb forte piano boxes like serial 9506, Fig. 13. The governor has three blades mounted on a flywheel, which provides compensation or balance when different pin lengths cause abrupt changes to the load on the cylinder, - described as *Rouage à Balancier* on the tune sheet, see Fig. 14. ■

I doubt if they would even think of changing a cylinder themselves.



Fig. 8. Treble area of cylinder 12 stamped with its four tunes. The *W. Tell* overture is on two turns. The top and bottom serifs of the tune titles are so uniform that they were surely stamped while the brass sheet was flat.



Fig. 9. Pitch notation stamped, with scribed lines at each pitch change, on serial 4826 comb.



Fig. 10. Comb teeth detail. On the bass half of the comb, the hooked tips are bent up and the front half of each tooth is bent down, leaving all tips in their original straight line.

musical box oddments no. 99

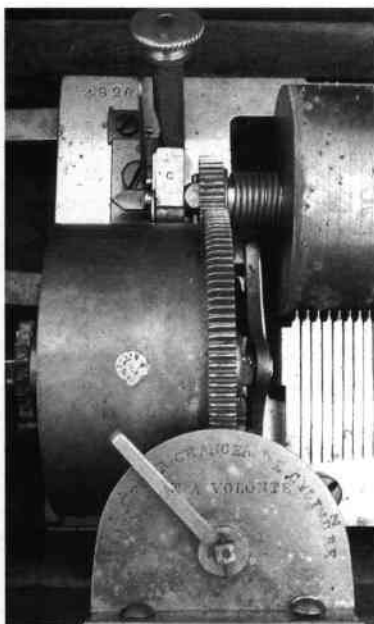


Fig. 11. Bass end, showing dial plate, bearing cover C, knurled knob B, and serial 4826.

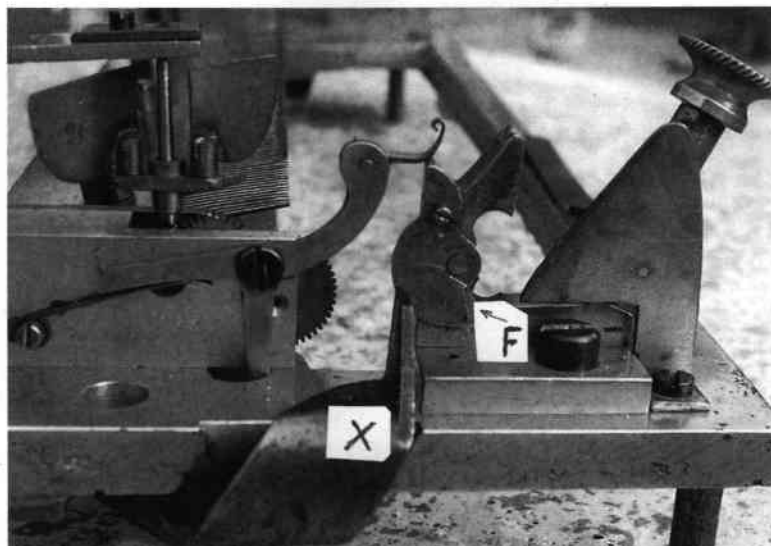


Fig. 12. Treble end, with cylinder bearing cover C lifted. Its attached cam plate engages the curved extension to the stop arm and lifts it to free the governor. When in the playing position the top edge of the locking bar X passes under the flat F of the cam plate to prevent the bearing cover being lifted. The triangular arbor guide for cylinder changing is screwed to the bedplate behind the cylinder bearing. Similar arrangements apply at the bass end.

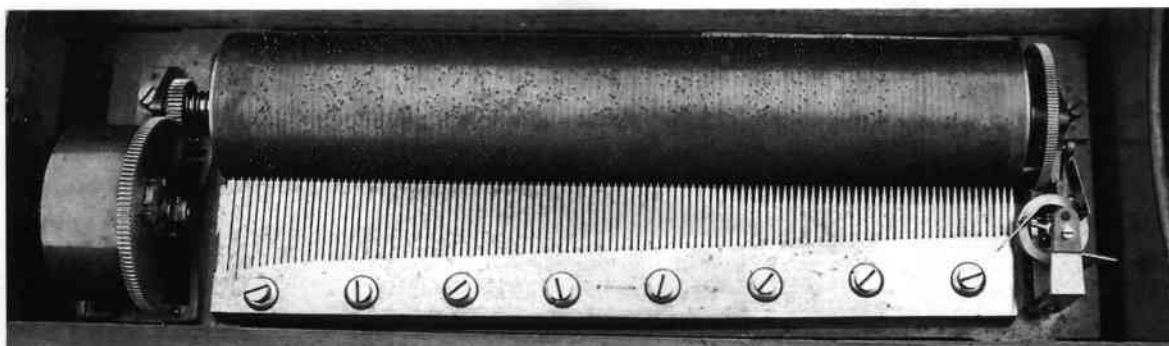


Fig. 13. Serial 9506, comb stamped D LECOULTRE, with 11 1/4" (286mm) cylinder and 112 comb teeth. Typical 1840s key-wind mechanism and case except for the 3-blade flywheel governor. This one made in 1846.



Fig. 14. Expression tune sheet of serial 9506, David Lecoultré's usual design for his single-comb forte piano boxes. Tune 3 must be Wiener Früchteln (little fruits) opus 167 by Strauss I, 1844. Tune 6 is from Anna Bolena by Donizetti, 1830. The Lecoultrés are not noted for their tune sheet calligraphy or composer credits.

The Perfect Portable Gramophone - Dave Cooper

New Cavendish Books

123pp., 9½" x 8¼" Landscape £15.95

Available from Waterstones and some branches of Past Times.

The HMV Model 101 portable gramophone was one of a range designed in double-quick time in 1925 to play the new electrical recordings. All these models fitted existing cabinets. All were outstanding compared to their predecessors, particularly the 101, which set a new standard for portables and became a best-seller before it was replaced by the 102, in 1931.

Dave Cooper is a 101 fanatic, and has studied all the variations in design, colour and minor fittings that can be found. This is not really a 'train-spotter's' book. Though, if you want to know exactly the difference between two kinds of lid catch, you could find it, but not always easily, for the publishers have seen to it that the coffee-table reader can skim through and find colour pictures of just about every variation, each one in several different views.

Persuaded that the 101 is not the whole story, Dave Cooper has added sections about the Gramophone Company's other portables. His relative lack of

enthusiasm for these is reflected in the less detailed (and not always accurate) information, but there are some useful pictures, including some obscure export versions.

With all its shortcomings, it is a book that no gramophone collector should be without, and even the owner of a solitary HMV portable, especially a 101, will find much in it of interest. A CD of period recordings is included, but my example (and others, so I have heard), had a technical fault, so buy the book for the pictures, not the CD. After all, if you've a gramophone, you can play the original records.

Christopher Proudfoot

John Leech's pictures of life and character. From the collection of 'Mr Punch' 1842-1864.



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The Register was put to good use at the autumn meeting of the Society. One member who had given details of three unknown boxes in his collection was pleasantly surprised when the makers of two boxes were identified. Another member who had brought an early keywind box to the meeting discovered that the Register could be used to date many of the tunes played on the box. The box had exposed controls and as the latest tune was written in 1831, it is reasonable to suppose that the box was made in the early 1830's. As a matter of interest, this box had been sold in our society auction a year or two ago, so good early boxes can still be found.

Yet another box became the subject of much discussion in the meeting because of the nature of its tune card and the tunes it played. The tunes are as follows:

1. Oh Rest the Babe the Celebrated
 2. They may rail all this life
 3. The Brave Roland
 4. Soldaten Canke (?)
- Salker. T. Lanner.

The general presentation of the box and the black border round the tune card suggested that the box could have been a mourning box made to celebrate the life of a baby. We know that the Victorians had a different attitude to death largely brought about by the high infant mortality rate, but did they mark such occasions by buying a musical box? I have never before seen an obvious mourning box and on reflection feel that this box could be a religious air box. Tunes 1 and 2 could be from an oratorio. My knowledge of such music is not sufficiently extensive to be of much help. Once again may I appeal for assistance and make a request for your opinions on the topic. I have heard of Brave Roland before, but who was he, and what was he being brave about?

The lid of two more boxes shown at the meeting were of interest to members. The first, (shown in fig 1) depicts a cat dressed in a Tyrolean costume walking away from a house. He is playing a pipe and carries a drum slung over his right arm. This inlay features on a high quality overture box and must have been produced for the "top end" of the market. Do any of you

know of a nursery rhyme or of a Swiss folk tale that could possibly relate to this scene?

The second inlay, (shown in fig 2) depicts leaves, flowers and a flute type of instrument surrounding a haggis. It also shows the amount of work required to restore this inlay into something acceptable. "Haggis" boxes have been noted before but they are rare and probably made for export to Scotland. Often they feature a strongly Scottish programme, but in this particular case there is not one Scottish air to be found. Maybe in some future edition of our journal, a page or two could be set aside to illustrating unusual and particularly fine inlays found on lids of boxes.

There was a time many years ago when antique dealers almost universally used a dealers' code to mark up their wares. It was not uncommon for dealers to include their buying price and stock number in these codes. Items like musical boxes had a handy place in the form of a tune card on which to put these codes. I suspect that the selling price

was arrived at by simply looking at the customer and making a snap decision as to what he or she may be willing to pay! So today, these boxes still have faded pencilled codes on their tune cards. The majority of these marks have nothing to do whatsoever with their manufacture, but having been put on so many years ago, they have become part of their history. Please leave the marks. One day they might be recognised and prove to be of use to a researcher.

The Register is ongoing but at a very slow pace indeed. Computers are fine, but they do crash and generally make life difficult. The program used in the original Register will not work with modern systems and getting an up to date database program to recognise the data in an old DOS program is difficult. I feel sure that within the Society we must have computer experts who would be willing to assist in the transferring of ASCII files to a Windows based program. Please offer to help if the call is made. ■ Registrar



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

Penfriend sought

Hello,

I am 22 years old and I am looking for an English pen friend, same age, in order to get an exchange of information. My field of interest is specialized on cinema-organs and mechanical music instruments.

Since my seventh year of age I have been interested in organs and specialized on cinema organs later on. I also was very interested in mechanical music. Now I am working myself with mechanical music instruments in the expert firm of Gotthard Arnold, specialized on historic music-automatics, which is looking also after the instrument collection "Museum Speyer/Sinsheim" for 22 years, most likely the biggest collection of Europe.

If you are interested in any way, I should like to hear from you.

Sina Hindebrand,

Pestalozzistraße 5, 76669 Bad
Schönborn, Germany. (private)

Fachstätte historischer
Musikautomaten, Gotthard Arnold,
Bahnhofstraße 2, 76669 Bad
Schönborn, Germany. (company)

Antiques Fair

On Sunday, 3rd August 2003, I was lucky enough to be able to go to the 'Antiques for Everyone' Exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre at the invitation of Keith Harding. At this exhibition Keith was putting on a display of mechanical music which was the centre-piece of the whole show, for here – unlike elsewhere in the exhibition – the primary objective was informative rather than commercial. Thousands visited the exhibition and for many it must have been the first time that they had come into contact with a musical box, organette or organ. Drifting away from the stand could be heard the sounds of all aspects of mechanical music, whilst they were accompanied by the visual delight of automata. Instruments such as a Thibouville Lamy Street Organ, a Nicole Grand Format, an Ariston, a rococo Symphonion and various upright Symphonions and Polyphons (including an impressive auto-changer) were on display.

Through this interactive (to use modern museum 'speak') exhibition the profile of mechanical music has been raised and, hopefully, interest aroused. I met one young enthusiastic boy who, throughout the four days of the show, kept coming across to play the Pell organ; I think that such a public act of mechanical music promotion should not go unrecorded.

I would like to thank Keith for allowing me to go along and, hopefully, the Society will bear the fruits of this in years to come. You never know, one day someone may replace me as the youngest member.

John Ward

Mourning Box

After many years of doing nothing I eventually picked up a form to register three cylinder boxes at our last AGM. They seemed to me to be fairly run of the mill and only mildly interesting items of which I knew very little, not even the makers' names. Not being a very good member, however, I let time pass and did not return the form until shortly before the Kendal meeting. It was there that Arthur Cunliffe was not only to name two of them, but, more importantly, considered the third one to be a 'mourning box'.

In the mid nineteenth century when infant mortality was very high it was apparently not uncommon for parents to have a dead child photographed to provide them with a lasting memory. At

least one set of parents, however, chose to mourn their baby by listening to my newly registered musical box. The tune sheet has a black border and the first of the four airs is "O Rest Babe the Celebrated".

This was of considerable interest to members at the meeting and I'm sure many of us would like to hear more from anyone concerning this, unknown to me, aspect of Victorian life. The box does not look or play any better than before it was registered but the knowledge gained will give me added interest and pleasure whenever I play it and I will be bringing it to our next meeting. I urge anyone who has not yet registered a box to ask for a form and return it without delay; who know what may turn up from a seemingly uninteresting item?

David Pilgrim

The Campsie Bequest

Brian Campsie, who died in February, has left £5,000 to the Society "for such purposes as the Society acting through the Committee shall determine."

At the time of his death, Brian was organising the Canterbury meeting for Spring 2004, and was an active member of the Society. This generous bequest will greatly assist in some of the projects which the Society is currently pursuing. ■

The City of London

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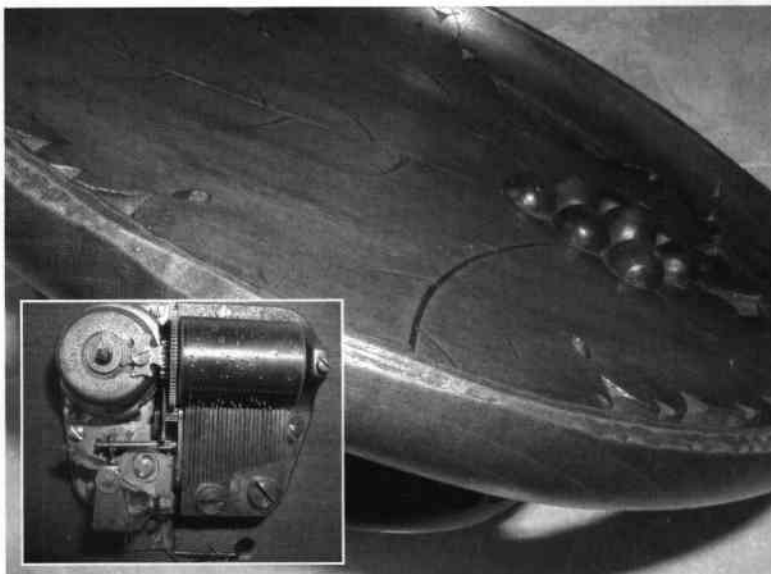
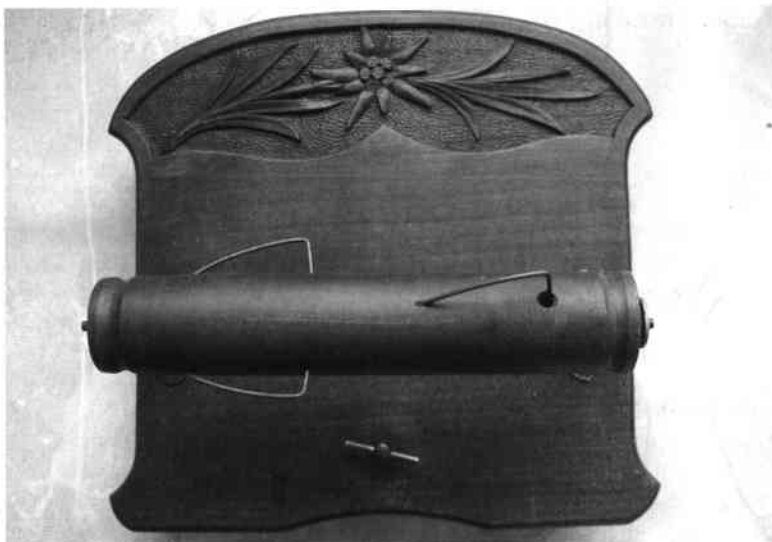
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On our recent travels we came across some novelty, but practical musical boxes. The first box is a solid wood toilet roll holder. The movement plays two airs and is by an unknown manufacturer. Swiss is stamped on the bed plate and someone may recognise the tune sheet. When a piece of toilet paper is despatched the first tune is played and stops automatically at the end, on despatching the second piece of paper the second tune plays. The music quality is quite deep and pleasant; the drum is approximately 1-inch diameter.

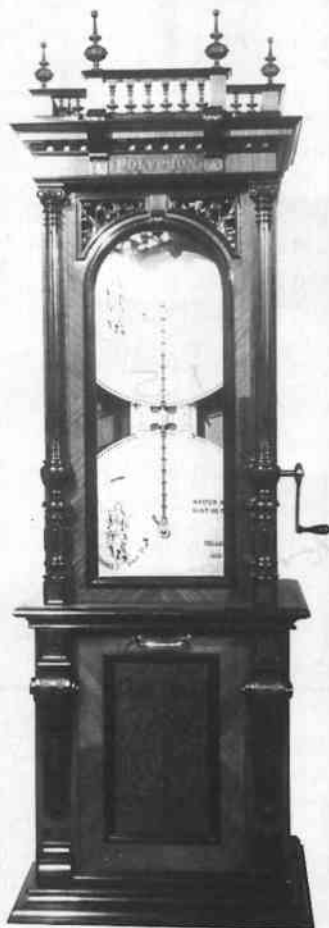
Incidentally we do not have it on our bathroom wall.



Fruit Bowls

Our next travels located two practical fruit bowls both in solid carved wood. The one in the form of a vine leaf has a two-tune movement by "Cuedent" with approximately a 1-inch drum and automatic stop. The movement plays when the bowl is lifted from the table. The name on the base, which someone may recognise, looks like "Nachf. O. Nievergell Burofachgesellschaft Luzern."

The second bowl is of equally good quality carving. The movement is again a two-tune movement by Reuge but does not have automatic stop. On the outer edge of the base is the number 24 that corresponds to the 24 next to the key on the circular plate that carries the movement, suggesting that the circular bases were turned to match the bowls. ■



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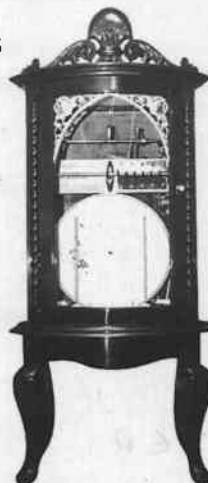
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