

The Music Box

Volume 21 Number 5 Spring 2004
Edited by Alan Pratt

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue:

- Restoring a Polyphon Cabinet
- Reed Organ Sections
- Grand Format Nichols
- Oddments Reaches 100
- All the Regular Features



The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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The Information Highway



Alan Pratt

In preparing this issue of *The Music Box* I realised that two separate contributions illustrated, in their different ways, the value of membership of the Society.

John Farmer, our new Archivist, reminds us of the wealth of material, held by the Society, which is available for research by members. The range of subjects which has been covered in *The Music Box* over the last 40 years is so extensive that it almost defies description. Yet reference to the full Index recently produced by John Powell can reveal the many gems of information that have appeared in these columns. If you don't have the particular issue of *The Music Box* then a call to our Archivist can bring photocopies of the relevant articles for just the out-of-pocket costs. Books, auction catalogues and museum guide books are another source of information available via the archive.

In another article, Peter Trodd talks of the trials and errors (particularly the errors!) encountered when tackling a restoration in a new field. Whether by reference to the

archive or by contact with other members, information is available on most things you are likely to need to know.

Members have always been extremely generous in helping others overcome problems or in identifying some particular instrument. But if archive research or personal contact fails, then the pages of *The Music Box* are available via letters to the Editor to appeal for help.

On the latter point, I am surprised how little use is made of the 'letters' facility. Perhaps the network of personal contacts is so extensive and effective that a letter to the Editor becomes unnecessary. However, writing does not only apply when seeking information. Perhaps you have come across some snippet which you would like to share with your fellow members; or to report on some visit or event which you found especially interesting.

The Musical Box Society offers interesting meetings and a first class magazine, but there are so many other ways in which it can improve your knowledge and enjoyment of our fascinating hobby. ■ *Editor*

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

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Our cover picture

Shows a Nicole Freres Grand Format musical box, serial number 32031. This box, playing four overtures, was sold last October at Christie's for £24,000.

Picture courtesy of Christie's

Back numbers obtainable from:

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Dutch Organ Festival

Dear friends of mechanical music,
Between 13th May and 11th June 2004 the KDV will celebrate its 50th anniversary with the "Maand van het draaiorgel" (month of the mechanical organ). The festivities will include many events: a composition contest for a mechanical organ, a photo contest, organ-grinding contest for the Dutch Parliament and government, and of course many events where organs will play.

We think the most interesting week for people attending the celebrations from abroad will be between Sunday 30th May and 6th June:

Sunday 30th May:

Great organ event in Leeuwarden;

Monday 31st May:

Unique playing of Dutch street organs on the old town walls of Haarlem;

Friday 4th June:

Concert in the museum "van Speelklok tot Pierement" in Utrecht and the results of the composition contest;

Saturday 5th June:

Dinner with concerts by several musicians playing mechanical musical instruments;

Sunday 6th June:

Great event with all kinds of organs in the Open Air Museum in Arnhem, including music in the tram!

More details will follow on the Internet pages of the KDV. Special trips for groups can be arranged. Distances in the Netherlands are very small, so there won't be any need to change hotels. We can help you choosing hotels if necessary!

Best regards from the Netherlands, and hope to see you over here!

Hans van Oost, webmaster Kring van Draaiorgelvrienden

**E-mail: secr@draaiorgel.org
www.draaiorgel.org**

New Members

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

2859 Richard Grace, Crewe

2860 T.P. Brooks, W. Sussex

2861 Morten Berner, Norway

2862 Ron Palladino, CA. USA

2863 Stephen Tanner, W. Sussex

2864 Peter Norman, Cambs

2865 H. Buckley, Lancs

AGM 2004

Our AGM this year will once again be at Roade at the Village Hall. Directions will be in the next issue but do make a note in your diary of the date – June 5th 2004.



John plays his Criterion.



Kevin plays Christmas music.

Sussex Open Day – Christmas 2003

Visitors to The Old School, Bucks Green, were greeted by a major development in business systems. Not only had the sound equipment been upgraded to permit a slick presentation of audio tapes and audio compact discs, but our General Manager followed the example of many guru-led or consultant-led modern businesses by welcoming us with a 'Mission Statement'.

'Our mission is to enjoy as much festive season music as possible without resort to the use of Silent Night'

Motivation for this statement came from the previous year's event when some twenty-seven renditions of that particular carol exhausted our tolerance levels, even though the aim had been to play as many as possible. Your reporter is unaware of the normal success rate for businesses' compliance with their mission statements. All that can be said for Bucks Green is that the good intention lasted no more than one hour and forty minutes, after which that old faithful tune became progressively more intrusive!

The forty plus visitors were clearly intent on enjoying themselves and, whilst the day was planned to have serious side in the morning, followed by fun and frolics in the afternoon, it started with the award of a modern

stuffed musical(?) parrot to the visitor who had travelled the greatest distance. The lucky winner now has the daunting task of finding a sound-proof cage at Polly's permanent home in France.

Our usual tune title identification spot featured, amongst others, a lever wound drum-and-bells box which had somehow been fitted with an incorrect tune sheet. Perhaps a previous owner considered it would sell for more money with an incorrect tune sheet rather than with no tune sheet at all!

Ted Brown and Kevin McElhone entertained us with their cob organs, the former using traditional cobs whilst Kevin played from his range of modern arrangements, including titles such as 'Frosty the Snowman', 'Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer', 'Santa Claus is coming to Town', 'Jingle Bell Rock' and 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'.

A contender for the most played tune this year was 'Come Little Children', featured on Troubadour, Polyphon and Regina. The arrangement on the Regina was particularly note-worthy, the haunting main melody backed by an attractive, busy and delicate little counter melody in the upper register. Another example of the arranger's art came from John Harrold's Criterion disc box, the zinc discs for which appeared to be more holes than metal by the

time all the intricate trills, runs and extravagances enhanced the basic melodies.

As each year goes by, the number of seasonal musical novelties increases in apparent inverse proportion to their quality. However, they seem always to entertain and excite children and adults alike. This is a modern commercial activity based on providing entertainment for the masses and making profits for the manufacturing and distribution chain. As such, it is no different from the mechanical music industry of days-gone-by. Should we therefore decry it? After all, there was plenty of laughter this Christmas at Bucks Green.

Many thanks to all who brought items to play and to Snow White and her many dwarfs who slaved in the kitchen to provide another fine mid-day meal.

The next Chanctonbury Ring meetings will be on Sunday April 18th, Sunday June 20th and Sunday August 15th. Please contact Ted Brown to make your individual arrangements.

The Spring Meeting, Canterbury

May 7-9th 2004.

The Abbots Barton Hotel, New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3DU, Tel: 01227 760341

This is your last reminder to reserve accommodation for this meeting, organised by the late

Brian Campsie. Please remember that booking arrangements must be made to Roy Ison and not to the hotel. The registration fee of £22 covers the cost of the Saturday outing, including refreshments and coach.

The Hotel is ideally situated near to the centre of Canterbury and is best approached from the direction of Dover rather than through Canterbury itself. Those approaching from the North should take the M2. The M2 terminates at junction 7, so continue on the A2 to bypass Canterbury. Then take the left exit onto the A2050, New Dover Road, to Canterbury. The hotel entrance is clearly marked on the left of New Road as you approach the city centre.

The Hotel: Part of the Best Western Group, is very well appointed. All rooms have individual décor, air conditioning and first class appointments with bath and shower.

The cost is £56/person/night for twin/double rooms, and includes full English breakfast and evening dinner. Single occupancy carries an extra charge of £15/person/night.

The Society Dinner for day visitors is £22 and carries an additional charge of £5/person for residents.

The hotel will only hold reservations until end of February and bookings are already well advanced. Book now to avoid disappointment!

The Programme:

Friday: Members can book in to the hotel from midday. Committee Members will meet at 4.30. Resident members will eat in hotel restaurant, (arrange with Reception). After dinner, (7.30 – 8.00 approx.) there will be registration and a table sale in the beautifully appointed Function Room. Please bring items for a raffle in support of Addenbrookes children's cancer ward.

Saturday: Breakfast at 8.00 and registration for day members about 8.45 – 9.15. Coach departs about 9.30 to Jack and Rosemary Henly's residence, our hosts for the day, and their wonderful

collections of musical, instruments, clocks, cars, Stanhopes, and much else. This is a 'first' for the Society. Jack's 'Toy Cupboard' has possibly the largest collection of musical pots and novelties in the world. Please do not bring food, (the midday lunch is included in the registration fee). We return to the hotel about 6.00 pm for the Society Dinner (7.30 for 8.00).

Sunday: Breakfast from 8.00. At 9.30, the duo of Roy Ison and Terry Longhurst will display and play some fine old musical boxes. Daphne Ladell and Paul Bellamy will follow with 'A Novelty Duet'.

We will finish about 11.30. An optional extra is a visit to Belmont. This is a fine house with a unique collection, including some musical clocks. We have initially arranged for a tour for 20 members starting at 1pm, lasting for about 1½ hours at £4.75 each. Please contact Paul Bellamy (email bellamypaul6@aol.co or phone 01634 252079 to reserve a place, (first come, first served and own transport). Directions will be given at the meeting but is not far from Canterbury and the M2/A2 return towards London. The house will be open to the public from 2.00pm, so nobody should miss out on this opportunity. Finally, and not least, Christopher Proudfoot will have an open house for his non-musical cylinder machines.

Bookings for this meeting have started to come in following the announcement and programme details in our last issue. In case you have mislaid the Booking Form a further copy is enclosed, giving details of the hotel etc.

Autumn Meeting 2004

As we go to press we learn that the Autumn meeting will be held from September 24th-26th on the Isle of Wight.

Details are still being finalised, and will be found on a combined Information/Booking Form as a loose insert with this issue of the Music Box.

International Meeting 2005

The clock is ticking fast and, before we know it, it will be August 2005. We are now getting excited about the great time being planned, and also the big variety in mechanical music we can display to both our overseas visitors and our own members. We are very confident everybody will go home and tell those who could not attend the meeting what a superb event they missed.

We are now sorting out jobs for all the people who have offered their help, and are allocating either the jobs they have volunteered to do, or suggesting other jobs that are still outstanding. However, there is still a lot of work to be done and we need more volunteers. New offers of help have dried up. We all want to have a memorable meeting, but we can't run an international meeting without your help.

For example, some of you must own a computer. Could you please help us with making some of the Name Badges, Name Place Cards for the Banquet Dinner, or Trip Cards telling people which trip they have chosen to go on? If we could get say 10 people, all they would have to produce is 50 cards each on each item above. So come on, don't be shy, put your name forward.

The more people that are willing to help, the more we can spread the workload. That way, we will not have to rely on just a handful of volunteers.

In the summer edition of our Journal this year we propose to include the Hotel Booking form, the Registration Form and costs, also the itinerary for the proposed meeting. This will also go out at the same time in the MBSI summer Journal. I know it seems very early, but as this event is longer than just a weekend, it will give you all time to make your own personal arrangements twelve months in advance. For the main hotel, we will have to work on a first come - first served basis; later applications will be allocated the equally comfortable nearby overflow hotel. Everybody will have an equal chance of attending, whether you are from this country or abroad. So please return the booking forms as soon as possible. **Daphne Ladell**

The Ashorne Hall Nickleodeon

Members will be aware of Graham Whitehead's death last year (a Tribute appeared in the Autumn Journal, Vol. 21 no 3). At the time of his death, Graham had already made a decision to sell most of his collection and concentrate on the cinema concerts at Ashorne Hall. Now the collection will be sold by Christie's, and the sale will include the two cinema organs (the Compton from the Regal, Hammersmith, and the Wurlitzer from the Plaza at Piccadilly Circus).

The Aeolian pipe organ (whose console was displaced by the Wurlitzer) will be included, as will a rare Concertola Duo-Art attachment. Other large pieces include a Photoplayer, a Loesche orchestrion, a Weber Unika, a Popper's Happy Jazz Band and the 'Electric Orchestra', a special orchestrion made for Graham by Paul Camps. There is a Violano Virtuoso, a modern Ramey Banjo Orchestra and a replica Wurlitzer Harp.

Smaller pieces include several automata, a singing bird which sits on top of a satinwood clock and sings Home Sweet Home and several fine musical boxes, one of which has a superb mandolin movement in a case carved with three-dimensional game.

The collection will remain at Ashorne for viewing before the sale, but the auction will take place at Christie's South Kensington on March 18th.

Christmas Meeting

The second of the Society's end-of-year meetings was held on New Year's Day and hosted by Alan and Daphne Wyatt.

Around 20 members gathered to enjoy a day of music and conversation. After a 'conducted tour' around the collection, with some interesting recollections of how and when the various instruments were acquired, we were sustained by a delightful buffet lunch.

In the afternoon we were able to hear some of the instruments again - 'by request'. Nicholas Simons gave us a couple of tunes on his Tanzbar, and makes this rather difficult instrument look

simple to play. The experts always make it look easy!

Also, Nicholas combined with Kevin McElhone to compare an early Serinette with a newly built reproduction made by an Italian living in Belgium - how international can you get!

It was especially pleasing to see some newer members at this meeting, and we hope that they took away with them memories of good musical and warm hospitality.

Thanks again to Alan and Daphne for another great day. ■



Much discussion on the Racca.



Kevin McElhone compares the Serinettes.

Restoring a Polyphon Cabinet

by Peter Trodd

While being always a keen DIY woodworker and having in more recent years developed an interest in restoring old furniture it was perhaps inevitable that the challenge of a real wreck would someday occur.

So in our regular visit to the local Auction room and hidden away underneath other items of furniture and bric-a-brac my colleague noticed this glass fronted empty cabinet and remarked 'now there is a challenge for you'. On first inspection it was a cabinet riddled in woodworm, pieces of paper and old putty stuffed into various apertures and sections of veneer missing peeling and lifting. In the catalogue it was described as a mahogany polyphon cabinet £30-40. However unbeknown to her I was smitten with the challenge.

The next morning I embarked with determination and cash and managed to buy it for £30.00. The auction room staff commented, on helping me load the cabinet into the car, that it might make a suitable bonfire and my family could not believe that I had actually bought this Polyphon cabinet and what was I going to do with it? **See fig 1.**

Let me explain that at this stage in my life I had no idea what a Polyphon was, but received hints that it was something to do with music which was later confirmed by a work colleague who, at that time, was all wise and knew all about the internet and searching for strange items.

Visits to local reference libraries and talking to antique traders confirmed my first impression and at a visit to the Mechanical Music Museum at Chichester they kindly allowed me to take photographs and measurements of their 19½ Polyphon.

Being quite keen to make a start, I had already purchased some mahogany veneer only to learn from

the museum staff that the casing was walnut.

Beginning the work

The very first task on purchasing the cabinet and before attempting to place it into my garage workshop was several treatments with Cuprinol woodworm killer and I think in all I would have repeated this about 4 times.

I have discovered a mixture which seems to clean up old wooden surfaces and remove collected grime without damaging the original surface. This is made by mixing 1 part turps, 1 part methylated spirits, 1 part raw

linseed oil, 1 part kerosene and 1 part vinegar; used with a soft cloth this can have a magical effect.

The original column on the door was in such a poor and unstable condition I had to drill and glue a long dowel through its centre to stop its complete disintegration but at the same time keep the outside surface. Woodworm holes were filled and rubbed down and pieces of new wood scribed in to repair the turnings where parts had broken away. Some finishing with wax crayons and water based dyes in an attempt to disguise and match the surrounding surfaces prior to French polishing. **See Fig 2.**



Fig. 1.

As can be seen by the photos, the next project was to copy the column on the left of the door. I decided to use Jelotong timber (I now use Lime) as I felt this would turn and shape easily.

The top section turned to size and then carved to copy the original then drilled and dowelled into the top of the column.

Veneering

Many sections of veneer throughout the cabinet seemed to have water

damage, bubbled or to be completely missing. I had never attempted veneering before and I admit to finding this quite difficult, although with experience, it is something I now enjoy.

When veneering, a positive plan of action, warm conditions and the constituency and temperature of the hot pearl glue are very important. However, oak veneer used to replace missing sections on the back of the door and inside the cabinet seems to have a will of its own and can be brittle, and due to the acids in the timber it stains very easily if metal tools are used.

Mouldings

Many of the mouldings were very badly damaged, some cut away at some time in the past presumably to make it fit into an alcove. Decisions had to be made as to whether to repair mouldings infested in woodworm or to leave in place and treat and fill the holes; if removed will they completely disintegrate. Ultimately I decided to replace those heavily damaged and to try to match the shapes exactly.

I am fortunate as I work in a Technical College with access to a spindle moulder and helpful technician who will cut tooling to match almost any moulding if a sample of the original is provided.

All the new mouldings were made from European walnut. Mitre joints I find best to cut slightly oversize and finish on a disc sander set to the correct angle.

Coin drawer

The complete base of the cabinet was missing although some markings indicated that it probably had the solid coin drawer. However I prefer the counter-top style. Pictures from auction catalogues were scaled up and used as a pattern. However, I later realised on examining originals that I have made mistakes in the construction of the drawer and will probably make this a third time, having already discarded the first effort.

Background research

A large hole had at some time been drilled through the top of the cabinet presumably to allow a light

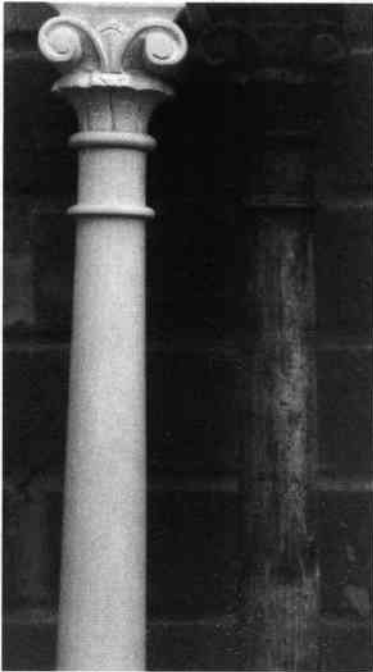


Fig. 2a/b.



Fig. 3.

...it stains very easily if metal tools are used.

to be used inside and this had at some time allowed a mouse to live within the top which had left some of its lunch behind in the form of two nuts and sections of chewed newspaper - a section of the Southampton Daily Echo published in July 1920.

In the same town as the auction room is an antique bric-a-brac shop and a regular haunt where old records might be located and some forgotten treasure discovered. I hoped, perhaps, to find a metal disc or two to suit this particular project. In talking to the shop owner he expressed an interest and, on showing him the photographs, he stated a very similar model originally lived in a pub called the 'Borough Arms' close to the auction house and had sat on the counter for many years.

The next step was to visit the pub and make enquiries. The landlord had probably changed many times and the type of patrons did not really seem the type or age to shed much light on my project.

Contact with the auction house and reference to photographs, established the cabinet as part of a job lot from a local barn sale.

At this stage I would like to say that a sudden flash of inspiration occurred, all the pieces fell into place and I could trace the history. However unless anyone can prove otherwise I remain optimistic that its history lies at this particular public house.

*...I feel the
woodwork
should at least
look something
like its
intended age.*

Finishing the cabinet

With new mouldings and veneer fitted I found it quite difficult to match these to the original colour tone and new sections added are inclined to fade after a period. Therefore I stained the entire cabinet, both the original and new wood, with Burmese teak dye and then finished with French polish. I try not to over polish as I feel the woodwork should at least look something like its intended age.

The disc bin

Whilst in the Chichester museum I had photographed a disc bin and I used this as a model. We all learn by mistakes and, as I have said, I had very little knowledge of mechanical music at the time.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

I made the disc bin to match the upright cabinet in size and did not find the mistake until I actually had discs to store - the discs would not go in! This meant that the disc storage sectional box inside had to be reconstructed with thinner timber and then the discs just about slot in. I have been advised that I will be criticized for this, but carpenters and wood machinists advised me to use MDF as a base timber for the veneer. I now would not do

this, preferring to find old furniture which is also much quicker, as you do not have to spend hours veneering. However MDF did make a perfect base for the laying of veneer and seems 100% stable.

The cabinet was basically cut to size and assembled then taken apart and veneered prior to reassembly. All mouldings, carved sections and turned feet are made from walnut. Obtaining original looking brass handles and hook

type locks has occupied countless hours scouring auctions, antique fairs, junk shops and internet sites but, finally, a supplier of the locks suitable for upright cabinets was discovered. **See fig 3.**

The pediment

Again this was copied from photographs and made entirely from European walnut. Many of the sections being turned to the basic shape then carved to match the desired original. **See fig 4.**

The movement

For nearly two years the finished cabinet sat in the lounge as a display cabinet. I did not believe I would ever manage to find a disc-playing movement. However, as is usual in life, within about 3 months I managed to get two (one is still waiting for yet another cabinet to be completed). I believe the box plays beautifully and I am, of course, very proud of the workmanship.

Later coin chutes were added, these being folded from this steel and soldered. Coin slots pressed to the dimple shape from 3mm sheet brass adding what I thought at the time to be similar patterns that might be expected with files, punches and dremel tools. This proved to be wasted effort because later I managed to obtain an original and had a batch of castings made from this and so discarded all the earlier efforts. **See Fig 5.**

The future

I have since completed two other upright boxes with storage bins and pediments: a 24½" Polyphon, a 14 inch Reopke for which I am unlikely ever to obtain a movement, and have learnt much from these early efforts. **See Fig 6.** I always try and obtain old furniture as I find this much easier as the wood already has a fine smooth finish, it is stable, has the similar patina and I don't spend hours veneering.

Like most other collectors I have a room full of mechanical music projects (wrecks) all in need of a great deal of time and effort.

So I long for the day I can retire and spend hours tinkering and restoring! ■



Fig. 6.

Reed Organ Sections in Musical Boxes

by John M. Powell

This article is the direct result of the purchase in 1977 of a small 6 air Bremond organ box serial no. 39326 playing on 15 twin reed organ keys and two 38 tooth combs, gamme no.78. It was the first organ box that I had the opportunity to acquire in my early days when enthusiasm was greater than experience regarding the effort required to restore it. It was in a dreadful condition, and several small parts were missing. Two new combs have been acquired which are still to be finished and the spring-to-governor train is now working.

The cylinder pinning was badly damaged and what was left of the pin and bridgework of the organ section was flat on the cylinder surface. The bridges for these sections are usually marked on the cylinder by an axial slash between supports and sometimes by a scribed line between bridge legs. However, on this cylinder most of the bridge legs had been tightened by four punch marks around each leg. I have a device made many years ago to record pin and bridge positions on cylinders onto a paper roll and decided that, although tedious, this would be an additional aid during replacement of pins and bridges where bridge markings may have been lost or obscured.

On removing the cylinder end caps, I discovered that both had foundry marks of Ducommun Girod cast in. After melting out the wax I found, as expected, that there was a hollow cylindrical wood section under the organ pinning. After soaking the cylinder in petrol, which I find is the quickest and cleanest method of dissolving wax residue, I found that the wood section had shrunk by about 0.10" in diameter and could be knocked out quite easily even though the bridge legs were still embedded. I wanted to reuse this and increased its diameter by quartering it

and gluing four softwood strips along its length and then turning it down to fit the internal diameter of the cylinder. The projections of the pin holes kept it securely held prior to being fixed by the bridge legs.

The next stage was more time consuming than difficult. This was to measure all the bridge lengths to be able to make them and to fit the existing holes accurately without

undue distortion of the bridge legs when pressing in. These measurements fell into 16 convenient groups and the dimensions were adjusted to allow for wire size and the slightly longer bridge length than that between their holes in the cylinder due to the difference in radius of the bridge and cylinder. It is small but it does ensure a matching curvature of the

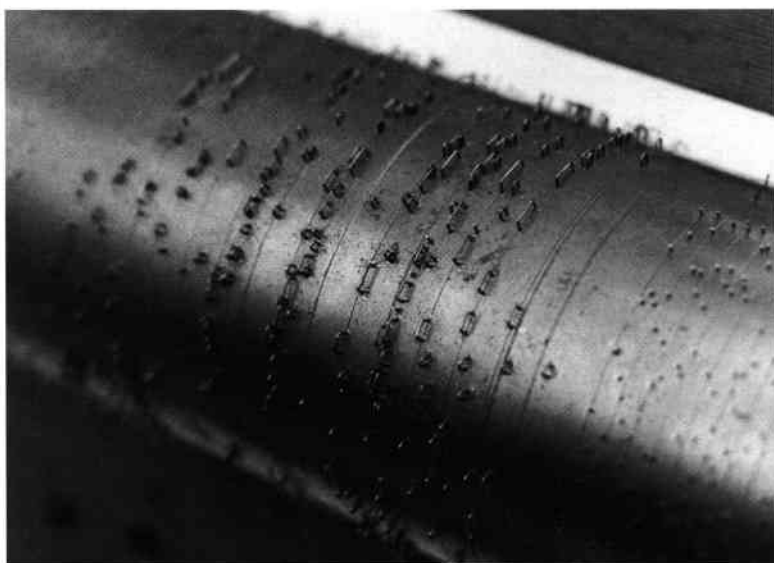


Fig. 1.

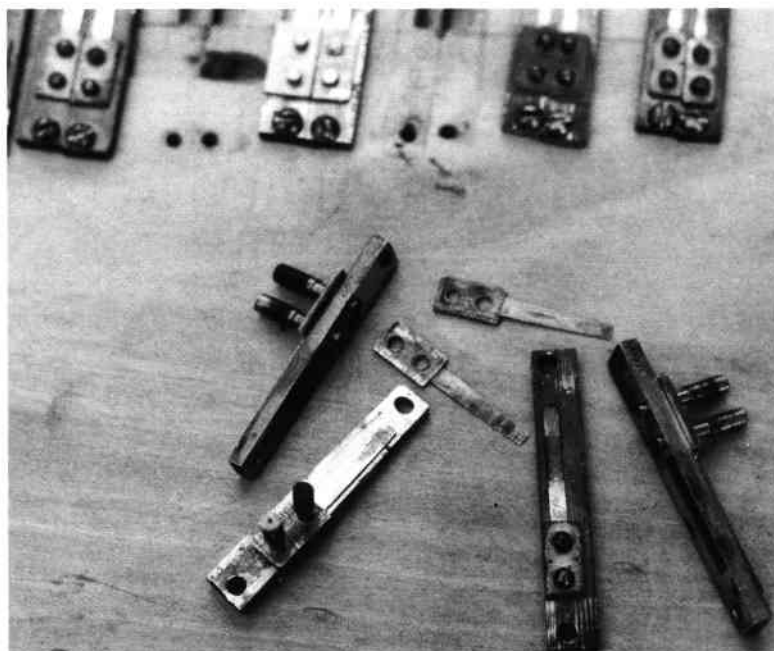


Fig. 2.

...I had the opportunity to acquire in my early days when enthusiasm was greater than experience regarding the effort required to restore it.

bridge, particularly with the longer ones. The wire used was 0.0125" diameter, the bending being done with small pliers and the appropriate thickness of packer to get the required length between bridge legs. A curved depthing tool was made to accommodate the longest bridges and to leave the bridges 0.052" above the cylinder. Fig.1 shows part of the finished bridgework and some of the markings preserved on the cylinder.

Before describing the reed/tuning part of the instrument I would like to confirm that what follows is an account of that which has been found in this and two others examined and worked on and will not necessarily apply to organettes having similar double reeded formats. I believe that these may be tuned in a different manner.

There were 6 reeds that were either broken or had been 'modified' at some stage. My first effort at making a tongue was to harden a piece of rolled brass sheet by hammering to reduce its thickness. The other consideration was riveting the tongue to its matrix which could easily be distorted if normal procedures were used. Prior to that, the tongue had to be shaped to an accurate fit into its slot which required much putting together and taking apart before the desired clearances were achieved. The use of tapered pins was suggested by others who had gone down this road before me. This does provide a positive location during fitting and in final assembly. My modification was to make the pins out of 3/32" soft iron rivets turned to suit the reamer taper as in Fig.2. After the tongue had been fitted and tuned, the

pin ends were shortened to suit and the small end drilled just deep enough so that when finally fitted, the bottom of the drilled hole would be within the thickness of the matrix. The small end of the rivet holes were slightly countersunk and the tapered rivets pressed firmly home. The end of the rivets were then spread by a pointed screw as in Fig.3 and flushed off. Only one of the six tongues moved slightly during riveting due to an eccentric rivet drilling and was corrected by the judicious application of a toffee hammer and small punch.

I now refer back to my first effort at making a tongue which worked satisfactorily but appeared to be less stiff than existing originals. I eventually visited our dear friends Pam and Phil Fluke of the Victorian Reed Organ and Harmonium Museum at Shipley and came away with a variety of redundant reeds from their collection. Some were small French reeds which closely matched the rivet spacing of those that I wanted. Reeds were selected that had tongues longer and wider to cover the slot in the matrix, reamed to the original matrix and located with tapered rivets as in fig.2.

The tongue was then filed to fit the slot with the minimum clearance and thinned down to achieve the required pitch. The higher pitched reeds finished at 0.003" at the free end and 0.005" thick at the fixed end. The free end needs to be curved up slightly to allow enough air to pass it and cause it to vibrate.

Tuning was done using a digital cent indicator which makes an interesting comparison to my home-made frequency meter which I have used for many years for comb work. The cent indicator gives a very positive reading for reeds although it is necessary to use the movement's own bellows to achieve the correct working pressure. The arrangement for this is shown in Fig 4 using a dummy reed, screwing the reed on to a loose piece with a suitable tapered slot to clear the length of the tongue, blanked off with card and sticky tape and holding it over the hole in the dummy reed plate whilst working the bellows. I have always worked in frequency or Hz. And will continue to do so using the cents indicator. All that is required is the multiplication of the note, say A=440 by the cents

...and was corrected by the judicious application of a toffee hammer and small punch.

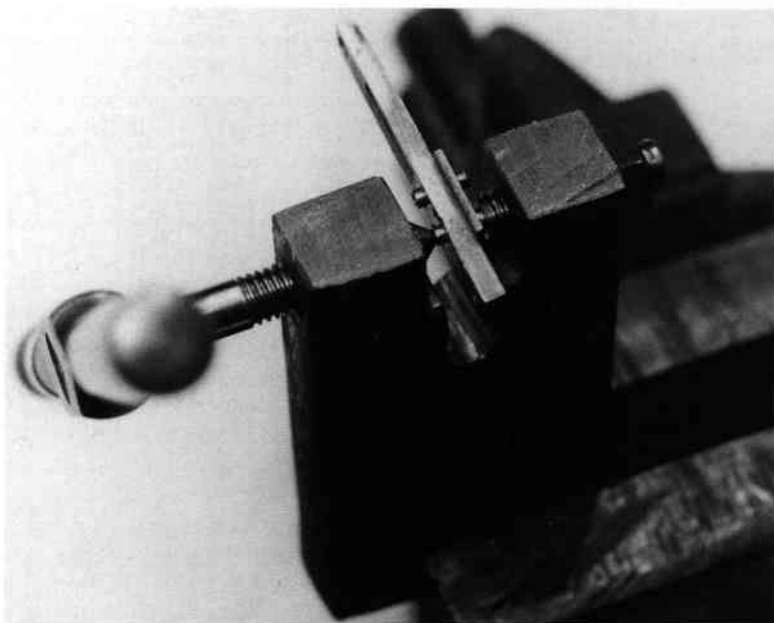


Fig. 3.

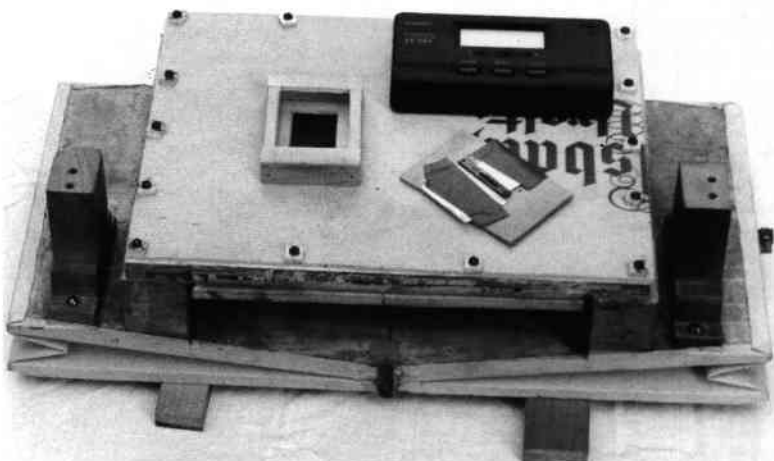


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

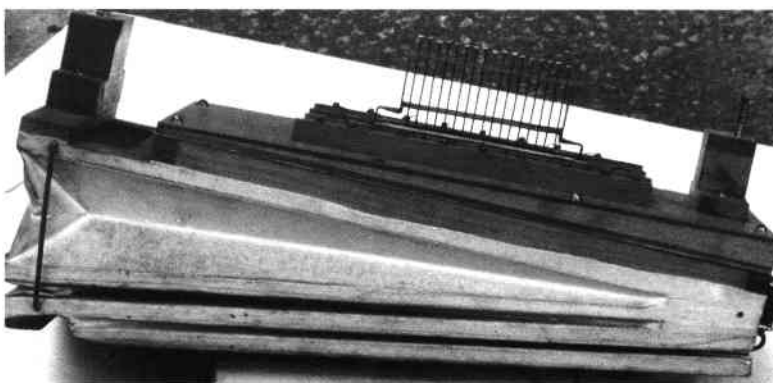


Fig. 6.

factor say for plus 23 cents which is $1.01337 = 445.8828\text{Hz.}$ and likewise minus 23 cents which is $0.98680 = 434.1920\text{Hz.}$ If our Editor can spare a page, the tables of factors with explanation or origin will be of use to those who now use these cheap and useful instruments.

(Always happy to oblige. See Page 147. Ed)

Due to the poor condition of the Bremond, no reliable tuning pattern could be established and an average was chosen to which the reeds were tuned and the new combs will follow. The only reference I found that gave an indication of the difference in frequency between each pair was David Snelling's article published in Vol.9, no.5, page 217 of our journal where he suggests the difference should be between 10 and 20Hz. which I think is a little high. I decided to aim for a difference of 6Hz. Being plus 3 and minus 3 above and below the chosen tuning curve (or, in this case, an estimated straight line).

Whilst in the mood, I decided to examine our Amy Rivenc No.42917 "Celestial Voices" instrument having an 18 key double reeded organ section with two 28 tooth combs playing 10 tunes on a 13" long cylinder. The organ section is retractable, it has had a run due to a

broken pinion in the governor early in its life but, on the whole, is in good unworn condition. It was thought the organ section might be close to its original condition. However, the measured differences varied between 5.2Hz to 15.8Hz. There appeared to be no difference between high and low end of the range and the tuning of these was adjusted to a difference of 8Hz being 4Hz above and 4Hz below the average of all the measured values. The original tuning of these appeared to lie on an equal temperament line and did not follow the curve of the comb tuning. Two of the differences between this and the Bremond are that both reeds of a pair share the same sound box where as the Bremond pairs are separated and the depth of the sound box varies along its length as can be seen by the wedge-shaped piece directly under the reed place in fig.5.

The other organ section that we have is from a full orchestral box thought to be by Samuel Troll no.5671. It has a 17 key twin reeded movement and plays 12 airs with two musical combs of 23 and 16 teeth. These reeds were all found in good working order except that the pallet springs had all been replaced at some time with stiff wire which needed changing.

The difference on frequency between each pair varied from 1.1Hz. to 10.1Hz with an overall difference of 6.1Hz. Again, the difference appeared to be constant over the full range and to follow the equal temperament line and not the comb tuning curve. The tuning was adjusted to 3Hz. plus and 3Hz. minus of the mean of the frequencies found. The depth of the sound box varied from end to end as in the Ami Rivenc example and can be seen by the wedge shaped section directly under the reed plate in fig.6. Each one of a pair of reeds was separated as in the Bremond example.

I am pleased with the resulting "celestial voices" sound and believe that the beat between each pair of reeds should be constant for the range of each instrument but not necessarily the same beat for every instrument. When returning all unused reeds to Phil Fluke I was able to compare my findings with several of their harmonium and reed organs which have similar double reeded ranks named 'Harpe Eoillienne' which appeared to have been tuned to a constant beat over their full range. I have a 6 tune P.V.F. Harpe Eoillienne musical box playing 6 tunes on an 11" cylinder with 2 combs of 71 teeth and 31 respectively. It is not yet restored and I have not yet discovered the relationship between the two combs but now have an incentive to find out.

Finally, two refinements that I have made to the Bremond's bellows operating link from the governor were suggested by original features of a large Black Forest organ clock. Its bellows rod had been bushed with *Lignum-vitae**. Apart from being self lubricating, this made it absolutely silent when pumping. Its length also was adjustable to ensure free and equal movement of the bellows either side of its mid operating position. I hope that Mr. Bremond would not have objected too much to this minor improvement.

**Lignum vitae is an extremely heavy and oily tropical hardwood. It is one of the few woods which will not float in water and in larger sections is prone to cracking unless fully sealed. ■*

Factors for Calculating Frequencies from Cents

PLUS CENTS

46 - 1.02693	47 - 1.02752	48 - 1.02811	49 - 1.02871	50 - 1.02930
41 - 1.02397	42 - 1.02456	43 - 1.02515	44 - 1.02574	45 - 1.02633
36 - 1.02101	37 - 1.02160	38 - 1.02219	39 - 1.02278	40 - 1.02337
31 - 1.01807	32 - 1.01866	33 - 1.01924	34 - 1.01983	35 - 1.02042
26 - 1.01513	27 - 1.01572	28 - 1.01630	29 - 1.01689	30 - 1.01748
21 - 1.01220	22 - 1.01279	23 - 1.01337	24 - 1.01396	25 - 1.01455
16 - 1.00928	17 - 1.00987	18 - 1.01045	19 - 1.01104	20 - 1.01162
11 - 1.00637	12 - 1.00696	13 - 1.00794	14 - 1.00812	15 - 1.00870
06 - 1.00347	07 - 1.00405	08 - 1.00463	09 - 1.00521	10 - 1.00579
01 - 1.00058	02 - 1.00116	03 - 1.00173	04 - 1.00231	05 - 1.00289

01 - 0.99942	02 - 0.99885	03 - 0.99827	04 - 0.99769	05 - 0.99712
06 - 0.99654	07 - 0.99596	08 - 0.99539	09 - 0.99481	10 - 0.99424
11 - 0.99367	12 - 0.99309	13 - 0.99252	14 - 0.99195	15 - 0.99137
16 - 0.99080	17 - 0.99023	18 - 0.98966	19 - 0.98909	20 - 0.98851
21 - 0.98794	22 - 0.98737	23 - 0.98680	24 - 0.98623	25 - 0.98566
26 - 0.98509	27 - 0.98453	28 - 0.98396	29 - 0.98339	30 - 0.98282
31 - 0.98225	32 - 0.98169	33 - 0.98112	34 - 0.98055	35 - 0.97999
36 - 0.97942	37 - 0.97885	38 - 0.97829	39 - 0.97772	40 - 0.97716
41 - 0.97660	42 - 0.97603	43 - 0.97547	44 - 0.97490	45 - 0.97434
46 - 0.97378	47 - 0.97322	48 - 0.97265	49 - 0.97209	50 - 0.97153

MINUS CENTS

Equal Temperament Frequencies for Use in Conversion of Cents to Frequency.

	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
A	3520.00	1760.00	880.00	440.00	220.00	110.00	55.00
G"	3322.44	1661.22	830.61	415.30	207.65	103.83	51.91
G	3135.96	1567.98	783.99	392.00	196.00	98.00	49.00
F"	2959.96	1479.98	739.99	369.99	185.00	92.50	46.25
F	2793.83	1396.91	698.46	349.23	174.61	87.31	43.65
E	2637.02	1318.51	659.26	329.63	164.81	82.41	41.20
D"	2489.02	1244.51	622.25	311.13	155.56	77.78	38.89
D	2349.32	1174.66	587.33	293.66	146.83	73.42	36.71
C"	2217.46	1108.73	554.37	277.18	138.59	69.30	34.65
C	2093.00	1046.50	523.25	261.63	130.81	65.41	32.70
B	1975.53	987.78	493.88	246.94	123.47	61.74	30.87
A"	1864.66	932.33	466.16	233.08	116.54	58.27	29.14

Notes

These values are all based on the equal temperament system which, it is assumed, digital tuners also use although accuracy cannot be verified. However, checking against a set of "John Walker" tuning forks made to "British Standard"?, the Seiko instrument that I have does agree although Hz values marked on the forks are only given to one decimal place. One feature that the digital tuner does not show is the octave that is being recorded.

The frequency table is the result of multiplying each successive stage of an octave by the twelfth root of 2 (two because each octave is doubled and there are twelve stages in each octave). Each of the twelve stages in the octave is then divided into 100 parts being plus 50 and minus 50 by dividing or multiplying as appropriate by the one hundredth root of factor (1) which gives factor (2).

The value, by calculator, is Factor (1)=1.059463094 & Factor (2)=1.00057779

For confirmation of continuity, G# at 415.30 plus 50 cents=427.47Hz =A at 440 minus 50 cents.

J.M.Powell Sept. 2003.

Grand Format Nichols

- a bit like buses really!

by Alan Pratt

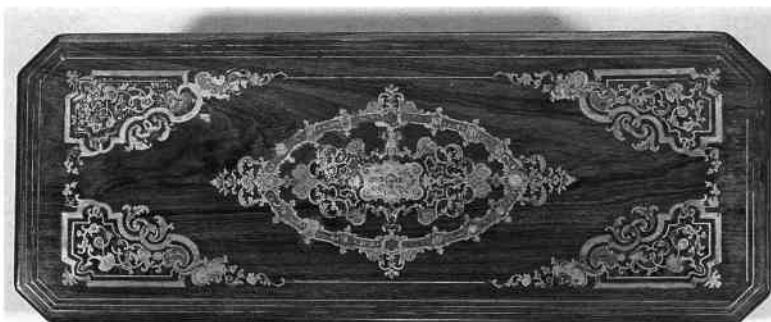
You don't see one for ages, and then three come along together. This is usually said about buses, but this time we are talking about Grand Format boxes by Nicole Frères. Until last October the last one to be offered by Christie's was in 1998, and prior to that in 1991.

The cover picture of this issue is of one such box, serial number 32031, which was sold in Christie's sale in October 2003 for £24,000 (Lot 536). Shortly after the sale, Keith Harding rang to say that he has a similar box with the preceding serial number - 32030. Both boxes share the same Gamme number 1362, with four overtures:

Barber of Seville- Rossini
Don Giovanni- Mozart
Somnambula- Rossini
Pre aux Clercs- Hérold

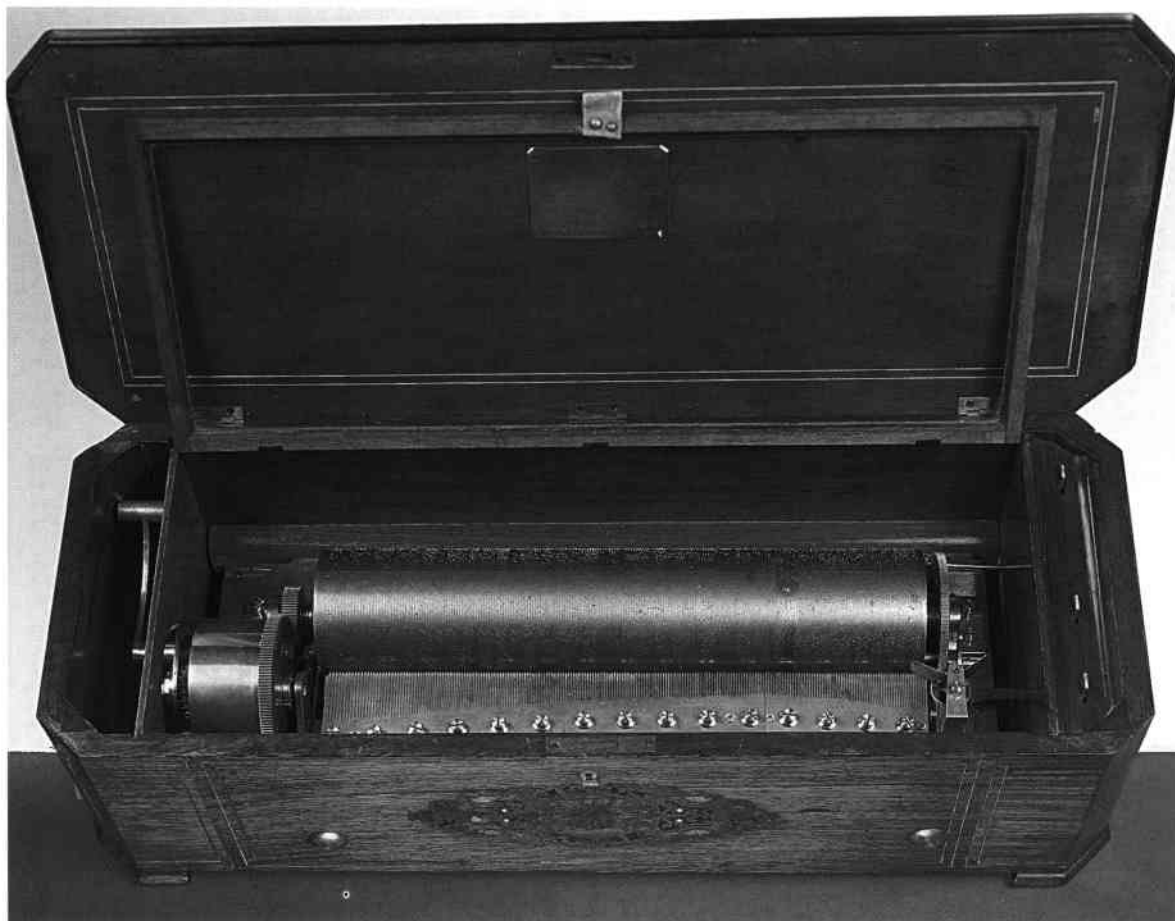
Both boxes have lever wound movements and heavily pinned cylinders (42.6cms x 10cms) playing a total of 237 teeth in two combs.

Seeing one box of this quality is unusual; to see two with consecutive serial numbers is unheard of. Now, to cap it all, Christie's tell us that another Nicole Frères Grand Format is to be offered in their next sale. What are the odds of that happening again? ■



Detailing on the top of the Grand Format box.

Seeing one box of this quality is unusual; to see two with consecutive serial numbers is unheard of.



Nicole Frères' Grand Format box.

Identifying Tune Sheets

The Music Box

from Luuk Goldhoorn

Anthony Bulleid gave all of us in mechanical music a very important work when his book about tune sheets was published by the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Since then, he has published quite a number of additions in the Journal of the MBSI, Mechanical Music. Now there are about 300 tune sheets illustrated and registered. It is possible and probable that many more will come to light over the years.

Once you have a specific tune sheet it is problematic to find the maker, as the search system in Anthony's book doesn't cover the additions. Besides, the search mechanism is not precise and refined enough to easily distinguish the right reference. Therefore, it would be useful to have a kind of a

search mechanism for all the collected tune sheets. I asked Anthony if he would agree that such a mechanism should be created.

He has other things on his list to do, but he fully agrees with the idea and will strongly support it. Making an effective search mechanism can't be done by one person on his own. Assistance is needed! Are there interested members who will study, use and critique my attempt?

I am thinking of a "seeking tree" system, with the following steps:

1. If the tune sheet has a name, initials or trademarks, see the appropriate lists.
2. What kind of shape has the tune sheet? If it is not rectangular see the appropriate listing.
3. If rectangular, look at the left and right border for specific designs.

4. If the sides have no specific characteristics, look at the upper part of the tune sheet, next the lower part.

5. If nothing appropriate is found look at the caption: others.

I am aware that such a mechanism has to be flexible as new tune sheets come to light that do not fit within the system. It is not absolutely necessary that the mechanism leads to a unique answer. If the search results in two or three possible matching sheets, I think the system is effective. ■

Please contact me:

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...the search mechanism is not precise and refined enough to easily distinguish the right reference.

Round the Bend

- in the workshop

by Peter Howard

A task during renovation of an English chamber barrel organ was to replace a missing curved moulding, at the head of each front corner column. The original construction was identifiable from the exposed ends of the remaining pieces. The moulding had been formed from two single beads glued side-by-side. It seemed reasonable to adopt the same technique, not least because this would allow greater flexibility whilst bending to final shape. The curve is not of consistent radius throughout - it tightens as the apex is approached. Figure 1 shows the starting point.

Having determined the width of the bead, a piece of mahogany was cut to that dimension but left significantly oversize in the other direction, giving ample surplus to hold in the vice for the next operation. The half-round front to the bead was then formed, by planing and sanding. The timber was passed through the circular saw to release the bead section at the correct overall height. This process was repeated until sufficient lengths of straight section were available for my purposes, including some extra in case of mistakes or accidents as the job progressed. This saves time compared with setting machinery for a second time and, with care, you only waste a small amount of timber.

Now comes the part needing precision timing. Provided your other half has had the foresight to buy a large enough pressure cooker, you can wait for her to go shopping and then set to steaming the timber, ready for bending! If this is too risky a venture then you just have to soak the pieces in hot water.

As the witches' brew bubbled, a start was made on a shaped clamp to hold the two beads

together whilst the glue sets. The curve of the moulding was traced onto paper from remaining good parts. This, transferred by pencil to a piece of scrap hard wood was added to by a second and parallel line, spaced the double bead width away. The unwanted centre section between these lines was soon removed by band saw. Next, the resultant convex piece was glued and screwed to a substantial piece of sheet plywood, positioned so that the concave piece could be

laid alongside it, resting loosely on the plywood. This concave piece was to act as the moving jaw when the jig was clamped in the bench vice. (The plywood must not be so wide as to hit the vice jaws and stop closure before full pressure is applied to the beads.)

If at all possible, I work with my wood too long, too thick or oversize in some direction so that, only after gluing in place, do I remove the excess to give an exact fit with other parts. Here was a



Fig. 1. The rather sick original part.

...including some extra in case of mistakes or accidents as the job progressed.

typical example. Because I did not want to cut the mitres on the ends of the mouldings until the two beads had been firmly stuck side-by-side, I needed to start off with the double bead moulding too long. It was therefore important to make the convex and concave parts of the jig itself over length. The shape of the extra length was 'blended in' by eye.

Steamy hot sections of bead were then clamped in the jig, without glue and allowed to dry. On removal they had taken up most of the required curve so the stress, when later assembled into the moulding, would be reduced.

I say to those of you who have already looked at figure 2 - 'You shouldn't have done it.' It does not show what I have been on about because I didn't tell you that a pair of original beads on one side column had sprung apart. What you do see in Fig 2 is these sprung beads being re-glued. Hence the mitre cut ends are already there compressed in the jig whilst the glue sets. The experience of this process does add strength to my policy of leaving parts oversize - it was the very devil to get those two beads forced together by the jig and pushed down onto the plywood base, without them sliding sideways on the glue joint. If you cut to length later it will not matter if there is a bit of a slide on the way (assuming you allow sufficient surplus!). What you can also see in Fig. 2 is the new steamed beads sitting on the bench, waiting their turn in the jig, for conversion to a single moulding.

After a number of routine carpentry operations, which hardly merit description, the finished beads were glued in place, stained and polished. The end result is shown in figure 3.

If others are tempted to use this technique for a comparable task, I offer them the following warning. The one simple and tatty jig can be happily used for both left-hand and right-hand curvatures. However, if the radius of curvature changes through the length of the part you are making (as this one did), and, if the part is not the same cross section at the front as it is at the back (this one wasn't), you must be very careful. Insert things the correct way

up or you will get a left handed | handed one (or vice versa). You all
whatsit when you wanted a right | know that little man's law! ■



Fig. 2. Original parts clamped in the jig as the glue dries whilst new beads sit on the bench awaiting their trim.



Fig. 3. The end result.

Number 33

- a bit of a mystery

by Phil Procter

This cylinder box is a type which I feel sure I have seen mentioned in a book or journal somewhere, but I cannot find it at the moment. It has quite a few different design features from the normal Swiss and French movements we are used to seeing, most of these look as though they were cost saving measures and indicate that the movement will be a late one. It does not have any marks or numbers apart from "33" stamped on the lever wind handle.

This box, in "as found" condition after rescue, and seen in fig.1, looks different from many late boxes with integrally cast bearings. They seem to be fatter than usual, and the winding lever looks odd. A closer look at the treble end cylinder bearing, fig.2, shows that it consists of a female centre bearing screwed into the cast iron. This accepts the cylinder arbor and locates it relative to the cylinder.

A close look at the bass end bearing is in fig.3. It screws into the threaded hole in the casting extension, accurately in line with the treble end. It can be unscrewed for inserting or removing the cylinder, as seen in detail in fig.4.

The winder arrangement is shown in fig.5. The lever is widened to house the spring-loaded pawl in line with the ratchet wheel. There is another sprung pawl fitted to the bedplate to keep the spring in tension. A closer look at the spring arbor bearing is in fig.6. There are certainly advantages in replacing the usual leaf springs with coils, and the final replacement is in fig.7, on the governor stop lever.

Whether these unusual features are due to a maker, or merely to a blank maker keen to offer a cheaper and more robust blank, we simply do not know. The high blank number, 85, is typical of later boxes. The number 33 on the face of the winding handle is likely to be

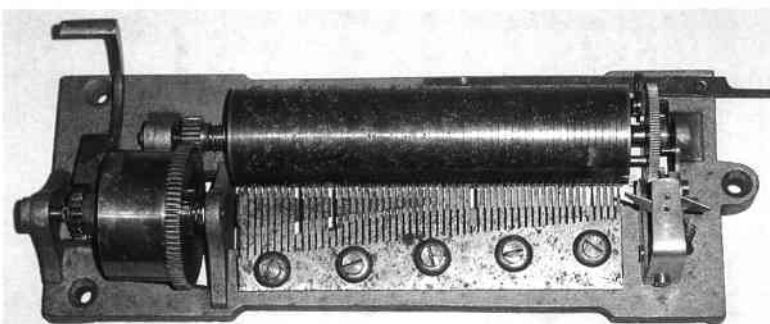


Fig. 1. A late 6" cylinder 6 air movement in doubtful condition.

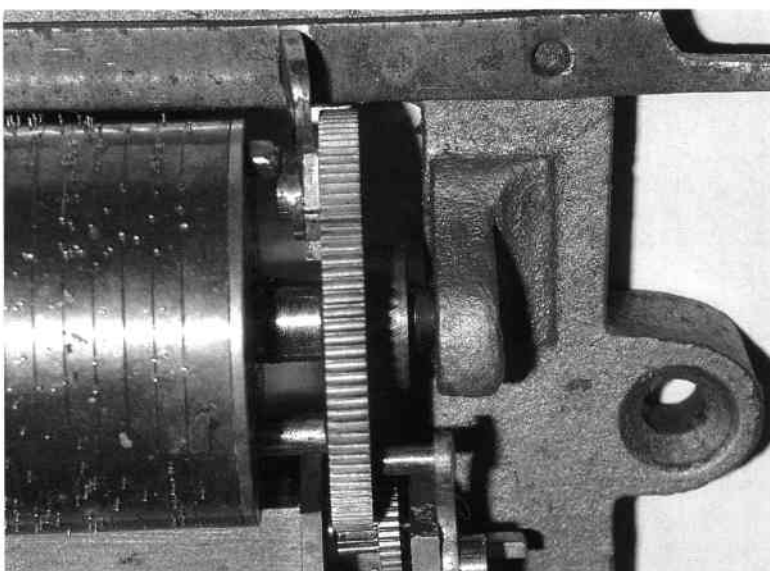


Fig. 2. Steel female bearing screwed into treble end bedplate bracket.

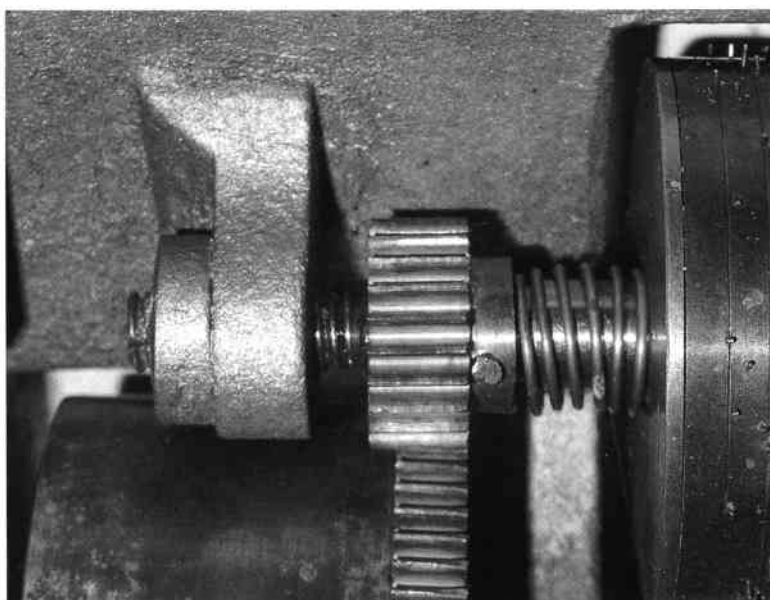


Fig. 3. Bass end steel female bearing screwed through locking nut and bedplate bracket. The cylinder gear is pinned to the arbor which runs in these conical bearings.

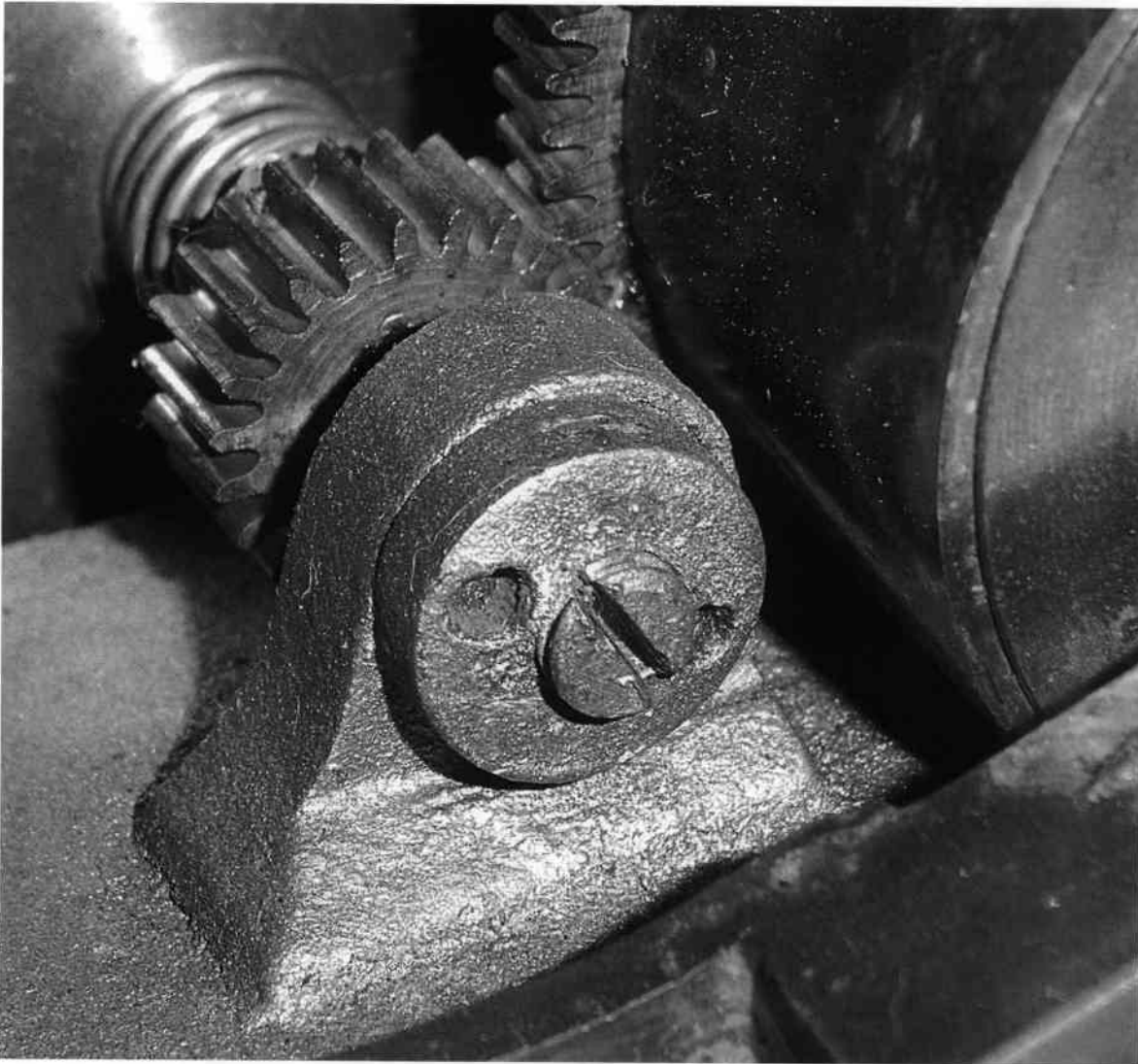


Fig. 4. Adjusting slot of the screwed bearing, and its locking collar with two holes for tightening.

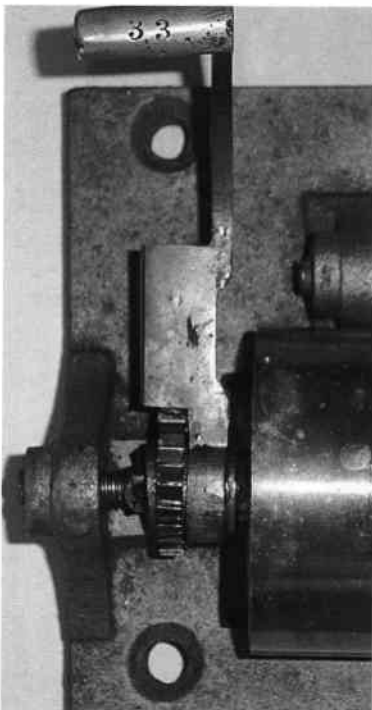


Fig. 5. Winder stamped 33 with housing for spring-loaded pawl.

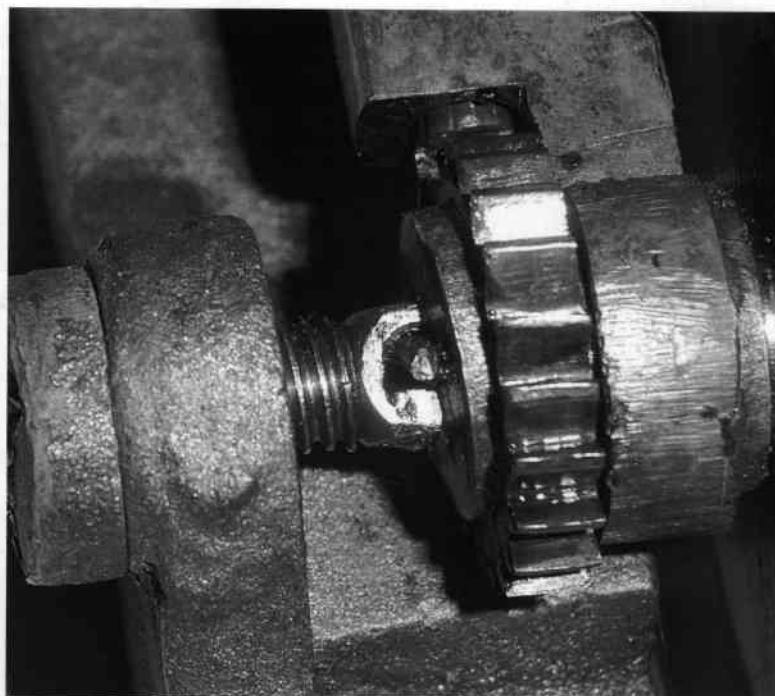


Fig. 6. Spring bearing details; from left to right: slot in screwed bearing; locking collar; bedplate bracket; end of screwed bearing mating with end of arbor; square of arbor with pin, collar and ratchet wheel; end of winding lever.



Fig. 7. Coil spring pushing the stop arm to STOP position. Blank 85 on governor and great wheel and, as usual, upside down on bedplate edge. No adjusting screw on governor.

the serial number and merely suggests a new maker or a new series of numbers..... not very helpful.

The only other item supplied to the maker is the comb. Here is another clue, unfortunately indirect, – the brass base has a repeated foundry marking - J.S-D. – see fig.8.

I hope that one of the readers of The Music Box can shed some light on the origins of this box. Many thanks to Anthony Bulleid for his help in preparing the information to date. ■

Phil Proctor - email address: phil.proctor@ntlworld.com

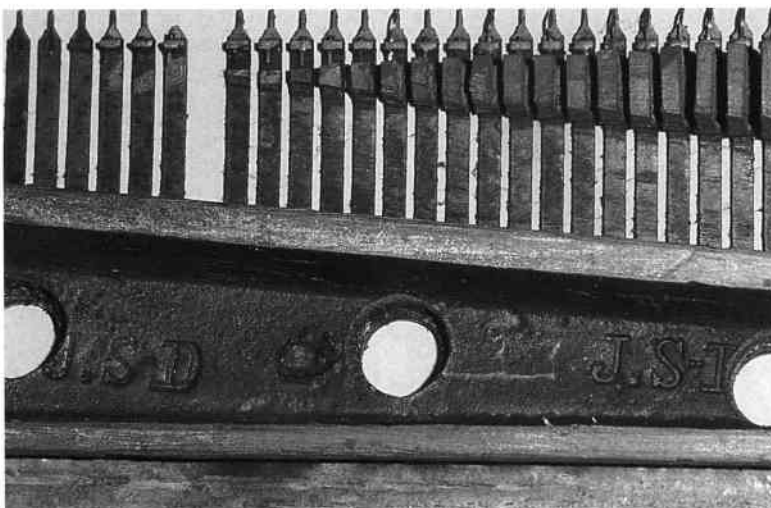


Fig. 8. Serial 33 brass comb base with foundry mark J.S-D.



Keith Harding

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Oddments Reaches 100

- a Music Box landmark

The Music Box

In this issue of The Music Box we see something which must be rare in the publishing field – the 100th edition of a regular feature contributed by one author. Newspapers, of course, often have regular features which run for years, but these are produced by a group of writers or they are published under a pseudonym, with the actual author changing regularly.

In the case of 'Musical Box Oddments', this has been written continuously since Vol.8, No.7 by H.A.V. (Anthony) Bulleid who is now considered one of the foremost authorities in the world on cylinder musical boxes and their tune sheets.

Anthony's career started in 1931 when he was an apprentice at the LMS Railway, influenced by his father O.V.S. Bulleid CBE, who became Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Southern Railway. In later years he wrote several books on the steam locomotive including 'Master Builders of Steam' in 1963, 'The Aspinall Era' 1967 and, on the work of his father, 'Bulleid of the Southern' (1977). During the latter part of the Second World War Anthony was with Vickers-Armstrong, later joining British Nylon Spinners, then ICI Fibres where he became Director of Production and Engineering in 1965.

From the 1930s he was active in amateur film making. Some of his productions won awards and he wrote extensively for the amateur ciné press as well as publishing two books on allied subjects: 'Special Effects in Cinematography' in 1954 and the '8mm Ciné Manual' in 1957.

His interest in musical boxes started after his retirement and, in addition to his regular 'Oddments' feature in The Music Box he has produced three books which are required reading for anyone with an interest in the subject. 'Cylinder Musical Box Design' was published in 1987, followed in 1994 by



Anthony Bulleid

'Cylinder Musical Box Technology.'

More recently, of course, his book on Tune Sheets published by MBSGB has become the standard work, and is frequently referred to in auction catalogue descriptions: "..... with tune sheet (Bulleid No.100)". Since then a supplement has been produced taking in the total number of tune sheets described to 250, with a further supplement already in course of preparation – No 300 has just appeared in the MBSI's "Mechanical Music"

Undeterred by his ninety-plus years, Anthony has embraced the electronic age, and now submits his column in digital format with

illustrations detailed in his usual meticulous manner – an editor's dream!

For many members, Musical Box Oddments is the first thing they turn to as each issue of The Music Box is taken from the envelope. We have all gained immeasurably from his detailed observations, presented in a witty, colloquial style. To mark this 100th edition, we are reprinting Oddments No.1 – it makes an interesting comparison.

I am sure I speak for all members of the Society when I say thank you to Anthony for all he has done to advance our knowledge of cylinder musical boxes. We look forward to many more 'Oddments'. *Editor*

MUSICAL BOX ODDMENTS

by H A V Bulleid

SEVERAL musical box makers used tune sheets decorated with two garlanded columns around which were entwined scrolls carrying the names of famous composers. Spaces were left for the number of airs, and for headings such as *Jeu de Timbres*, and for a serial number, and sometimes a maker's name such as J H HELLER of Berne, and occasionally a technical claim such as *Volant Compensé* (balanced governor); and often the common though long obsolete announcement *Etouffoirs en Acier—Soit à Spiraux* (spiral steel dampers) . . . by 1865 this was analogous to writing "four wheel brakes" on a modern car.

An interesting anomaly with these composer-embellished tune sheets is that many of the tunes played were not by the named composers. And a tantalizing feature of all tune sheets (in addition to their sometimes fugitive nature) is their casual approach to tune listing. They seemed to set out with the best intention of listing the three relevant items, namely

the source work, the individual tune, and the composer; but it is rare to find that they persevered to the end. A famous air from a Bellini opera may be listed as *Norma* or as *Casta Diva* or, correctly, as *NORMA—Casta Diva*. The composer may only be named for some of the airs—and this with a nonchalant disregard for his degree of eminence. There are also some frightful spelling mistakes, though admittedly these are very few when you consider that the source material was a mixture of Italian, French, English and German, and that the writer was usually a French-speaking Swiss.

Different tune sheets listed different composers: one typical 1865 list comprised, in this order and spelling: Bellini, Mozart, Rossini, Weber, Meyerbeer, Flotow, Verdi, Donizetti, Strauss, Labitzky, Gung'l, Schuloff. A clean dozen.

Composers

The dozen above were presumably chosen for their prestige,

notoriety and drawing-power in 1865. Now, well over 100 years later, it is interesting that the first nine remain well-known with the possible exception of F von Flotow whose 1847 opera *Martha* had the hit tune *The Last Rose of Summer*. But how about the last three? Are they perhaps now forgotten? Well, here they are. . . .

Labitzky

Josef Labitzky was born in Germany in 1802 and died in 1881. After a period as first violin in bands at Marienbad and Carlsbad he formed his own orchestra and with it toured Southern Germany. Then he took a course in composing at Munich; and he published his first waltzes in 1827. In 1835 he settled in Carlsbad as director of the town's band, taking it on tour as far afield as London and St Petersburg and growing in fame both as composer and performer of light music.

Labitzky's dances were acclaimed for their rhythm and spirit. His best waltzes included *Sirenen*,

Aurora and *Carlsbader*, and his galops were said to rival those of Strauss.

Gungl

Joseph Gungl was born in Hungary in 1810 and died in Germany in 1889. The apostrophe often inserted in his name is a long-standing and much-copied error. He started work as a schoolmaster, then enlisted in the Hungarian army and became a military bandmaster. He toured the Regimental band and later his own band around Europe, and in 1849 over to America, playing mainly his own compositions including his Hungarian March, opus 1. He was appointed *Musikdirektor* to the King of Prussia in 1849 and Bandmaster to the Emperor of Austria in 1858. By 1873 he had composed about three hundred dances and marches, mostly "distinguished by charming melody and marked rhythm." They included the *Eisenbahn-Dampf* (railway-steam) galop and sets of polkas, mazurkas and quadrilles entitled *Katharinen* and *Die Elfen* or, plural, *Die Elfen*, which scarcely need translating.

Note, however, that the title does not fix the composer. Different composers in the same country, and even more so in other countries, seemed to have no inhibitions about using identical titles—though probably most often in simple ignorance. So for example both *Katharinen* and *Die Elfen* are commonly found titles. Another of the *Katharinen* is a waltz by Labitzky.

Schulhoff

Julius Schulhoff was born in Prague in 1825 and died in Berlin, 1898. He made his local debut as a pianist at the age of fourteen and his first public performance in Paris, helped by Chopin, in 1845. Paris was then the artistic Mecca for pianists. Schulhoff started composing his light but brilliant piano pieces in 1849, and between that year and 1853 made extensive playing tours throughout Europe, including London. His serious compositions included a sonata in F minor, but his tunes most commonly found on musical boxes include the *Grande Valse Brillante*, opus 6; his arrangement of *Le Carnaval de Venise*, opus 22; *Souvenir de Venise*, opus 28; and *Ballade*, opus 41.

'IDEAL' TUNES

THERE are some tunes which almost everyone would vote ideal

for musical boxes, and prominent among them is the *Carnival of Venice*. Nobody knows who originally composed it, but it was first set down by the famous violinist Paganini (1782-1840). He heard it as a popular local air in Venice in the 1790s and he further popularised it and spread it by including it in his repertoire. Both Herz and Schulhoff made popular piano arrangements of it, and it was used as a song in an 1856 opera by Massé, *La Reine Topaze*. Then in 1857 it was used in the overture of an opera by A Thomas entitled, yes, *Le Carnaval de Venise*. So you see it was well like, and those excellent arrangers of tunes for musical boxes had plenty of ideas to draw on. Perhaps its most ambitious airing (appropriate term) was by Nicole on Gamme 1818 which was first pinned around 1865 and on which the tune ran for over three minutes.

COMB TEETH

A GENERALLY reliable measure of musical box quality is the number of comb teeth. Yet this number is seldom quoted, perhaps because counting is a chore and the considerable danger of losing count is a further deterrent. Not that it matters to one or two teeth, particularly as the numbers are seldom "neat". The common run-of-the-mill 13-inch Nicole has 97 teeth, notable solely because it is a prime number.

If the comb length is *C* inches and the number of tunes is *T*, then the number of comb teeth is approximately 60 times *C/T*. So for example with the Nicole's 13-inch comb playing eight airs, the number of teeth is $60 \times 13/8 = 97$.

A six-inch comb playing eight airs with three bells will have $60 \times 6/8 - 3 = 42$ music teeth.

A 12-inch comb playing ten airs with eight-striker drum and six bells will have $60 \times 12/10 - 14 = 58$ music teeth.

A nine-inch comb playing eight airs two-per turn is of course like a four-air box and will have $60 \times 9/4 = 135$ teeth.

I hope I haven't annoyed anyone with all these inches. If little *c* is the comb length in centimetres, the formula becomes: Number of teeth = $24 \times c/T$.

CASE CARE

CYLINDER musical box lids were normally designed to remain open at a sufficient angle to support the glass lid without danger of its slamming shut. This was easily

achieved by so placing the hinges that the back overhang of the lid rested appropriately against the back of the case. A problem posed by this design feature was how to guard against the ham-fisted operator who would pick up the box by the open lid, and roughly at that. The answer was to use small screws so that they would loosen or pull out rather than split the wood. Accordingly, well-fitted countersunk steel wood-screws three-eighths of an inch long and size number 3 or 4 are normally ideal. Yet I have seen inch long screws into the case, and screw points actually penetrating the lid veneer. We have all seen resulting splintered lids and case backs. One also sees hinge screws at a drunken angle, forced in anyhow over the broken-off stub of an earlier screw.

If oversize screws have been used, or if the holes are otherwise damaged, they should be plugged with wood carefully whittled to a nice fit and then pressed firmly in after coating thinly with a wood adhesive.

To remove the remnant of a broken screw,

- (1) drill a ring of holes all round it, about half an inch deep, with a $3/16$ inch (no 56) drill.
- (2) pick out the remnant.
- (3) drill $1/4$ inch diameter by $1/4$ inch deep to clean out.
- (4) procure or whittle a piece of $1/4$ inch dowel, make sure it is a good fit in the hole, and press gently in after cutting to length and coating with wood adhesive.
- (5) leave to dry for a couple of hours before drilling to take new screw.

With the passage of time, even the best seasoned wood shrinks slightly across but not along the grain. This is why the front beading is often pushed awry at the corners of early type lids. It is also the reason why lids often fail to shut properly, the striker plate having become perhaps a sixteenth of an inch short of the hole in the lock plate. I have known misguided people seek to remedy this by altering the hinge position on the lid, thereby causing the lid to open too far and greatly increasing the stress on the hinges. Others ruthlessly remove the striker plate peg, often in a manner frightfully reminiscent of those Wild West dentists. The correct cure is to move the striker plate forward and fill in the resulting narrow gap in the lid behind it with a matching strip of veneer.

Hammond's Electric Player Organ



In 1934, Laurens Hammond invented the electric organ in Chicago. Its popularity grew until, in 1938, Hammond decided to produce a self-playing model. The outcome was the Aeolian-Hammond Home Model B-A. The pneumatic player action was made by Aeolian-Skinner Co of Boston and used special 120-note music rolls spaced at 12 holes to the inch. Fifty-eight holes were devoted to the swell organ, 48 for the great, the arrangement being all in one line rather than in two rows as with the Aeolian pipe organ rolls. Twelve holes were ascribed to the pedal organ, one for re-roll and one spare. Full playing instructions are printed on the rolls with the organ stops numbered to show precise registration.



With a selling price of \$2,000, the Aeolian-Hammond was introduced during the depression years and Q David Bowers has found that only 211 were produced. This instrument is now a rare mutation of the very end of the mechanical music era. The instrument pictured here is in the music salon of Vestal Press owner Harvey Roehl.

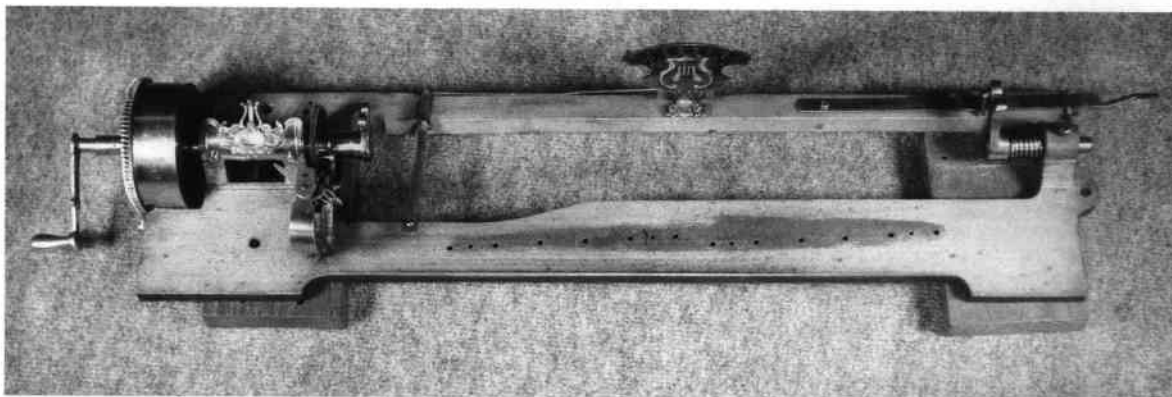


Fig. 1. Blank for Junod 8377. All details nickel-plated, the bedplate painted silver.

Arthur Junod's Helvetia Interchangeable

This, the simplest of all interchangeable mechanisms, was obviously liked by its inventor, who patented it in England, France, twice in Germany and in the USA. One of his tune sheets displays these five patents as the top border... nos. 12 and 153 in the book.

It was common practice to supply a tune sheet with every cylinder. I have occasionally seen two or three such tune sheets, not all of the same design, lying loose in the case. But I strongly suspect that many of these boxes were sold with only one cylinder, and its tune sheet attached to the lid, and with the promise of extra cylinders always being available. Why buy more cylinders immediately, with all the problems of what tunes were wanted, when they could be easily got later?

However, some boxes were certainly sold with extra cylinders; one with four cylinders was Junod 1195, tune sheet no. 201 in the book. (Sorry about the caption which wrongly describes these interchangeable cylinders as Rechange.)

The Helvetia interchangeables differ from the great majority by having track widths of 0.020" compared with the generally adopted 0.022". The robust location of the cylinder assembly in the Junod design probably made him feel safe with this reduced tolerance. It allows a cylinder to be nearly 10% shorter for the same number of comb teeth.

The blank

The simple blank needed for making one of the larger Helvetia interchangeables, serial 8377, is shown in Fig 1. The cast iron bedplate includes three bearings bored accurately in line. At the bass end a pair carry the spring, the replica great wheel driving the governor, and the slot to receive the cylinder arbor - Fig. 2. At the treble

end a single bearing holds a short spindle on which the slot for the cylinder arbor can be clicked into the change or the play position - Figs. 3 and 4.

Only five items have to be added to complete the blank: a click for the spring; Junod's own safety check geared to the replica great wheel; linkage and dial for the tune indicator; a small plate at the treble

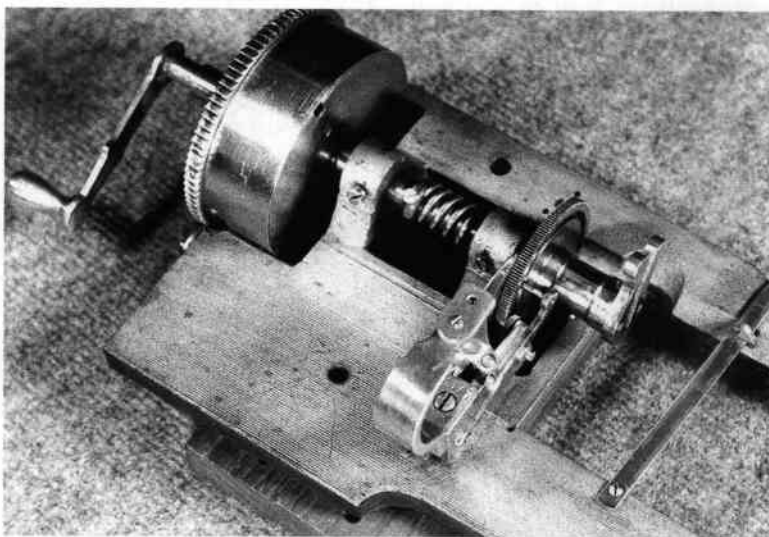


Fig. 2. Bass end with bearing cover-plate removed to show the coil spring which maintains the correct position of the cylinder arbor. The pivoted tune indicator bar across the bedplate carries the finger which rides on the cylinder end cap. It is angled, to slide into its correct position when a cylinder is inserted. The three holes just visible beyond the replica great wheel are for fixing Junod's safety check, now lost.



Fig. 3. Shows the control rod passing behind the tune indicator. A tension spring holds it towards the treble end. The cylinder slot is in the upright position, for changing cylinders. It slopes backwards to get the cylinder clear from the comb as soon as possible.

Why buy more cylinders immediately, with all the problems of what tunes were wanted, when they could be easily got later?



Fig. 4. Cylinder slot in playing position. It is held firmly in either position by the coil spring. The locating plate for the tune change lever is at back, right.

edge to locate the change and repeat positions of the tune change lever; and linkage from the stop/start control lever to the governor. I cannot show this linkage because it was discarded by a previous owner and coin release fitted with a coin slot in the glass lid. (Naturally he also fitted a coin receiving drawer, but unexpectedly it contained only Danish coins).

The Case

Three hefty round head wood screws fix the bedplate to blocks in the case which has a bushed bearing hole for the winding handle. Beside it is the slot for stop/start lever. A slot for the change/repeat lever is at the treble end. So all winding and control can be done with the glass lid and the case lid closed. The latter is quite an attraction (though it quietens the top treble teeth) because the large case, 32 by 15" (81 by 38cm), has a large and fine lid inlay, as seen in Fig. 5. A transfer on the case front proclaims the patent and the maker, Fig. 6.

The cylinder

The cylinder assembly is conventional except that the drive gear is replaced by a disc with a handle, which is at the top when the cylinder is at tune end. The great wheel with snail cam still has its gear teeth, - no longer needed, and knurling would be more comfortable when holding it for cylinder changing, see Fig. 7.

The end caps are knurled, and 2½" diameter, which is an important safeguard on interchangeables because if the cylinder is plonked down on a hard surface during a change they protect the pins from damage.

The cylinder is 15.2" by 2.3" diameter (39 by 6cm) and has been repinned. The dots and track lines are on tune 1.

Changing a cylinder

This is very much easier and quicker than reading the dodgy English translation of the fussy procedure printed in the Junod catalogue. You simply wait until tune end, then push the treble end slot to its upright position, grasp the cylinder assembly by the handle and the great wheel, and lift it up and out.

To install a cylinder, check that the box is at tune end and both slots upright. Then hold the cylinder assembly by the handle and the great wheel and lower into the slots. When in position, rotate the treble end slot towards the combs, to its playing position. That locates the cylinder arbor and the snail cam accurately to their correct positions relative to the comb teeth.

The combs

The combs, both having 62 teeth, are in typical Sublime Harmonie layout, with the greater number of bass teeth in the bass end comb. The 440Hz *a* teeth are nos. 29 and 30 on the bass comb and nos. 14 and 15 on the treble. Their relative stiffness is about 400. The bass lead of the bass comb is scribed 10

and an enigmatic marking. The brass bases of both combs are scribed 8377 and all pitch changes are marked - Fig. 8. There are several groups of three and four teeth of the same pitch on both combs.

Performance

This box, with its impressive case and sound board periphery of 83 inches, can give good sound radiation down to *e*, two octaves below middle *c*. So the bass is very good and, with 124 comb teeth available, the music is very pleasing and all the tunes come over well - a popular selection, see Fig. 9. However, the arrangements are a bit pedestrian, and insufficient use is made of the volume contrasts which can be so effective with sublime harmonie combs. But those groups of up to eight teeth from the two combs provide pleasing passages with the "sustained note" effect. To appreciate this the box should be playing in a large or adjacent room, at least 15 feet away from the listener - as with most Mandoline Basse boxes.

The tune sheet is headed Sublime Baryton, a very rare

(Naturally he also fitted a coin receiving drawer, but unexpectedly it contained only Danish coins).



Fig. 5. Case for Junod 8377, with podium and lavish marquetrie.



Fig. 6. Helvetia, the Mother of Switzerland, holding a staff and shield with white cross, as adopted by the Swiss Patent Office.

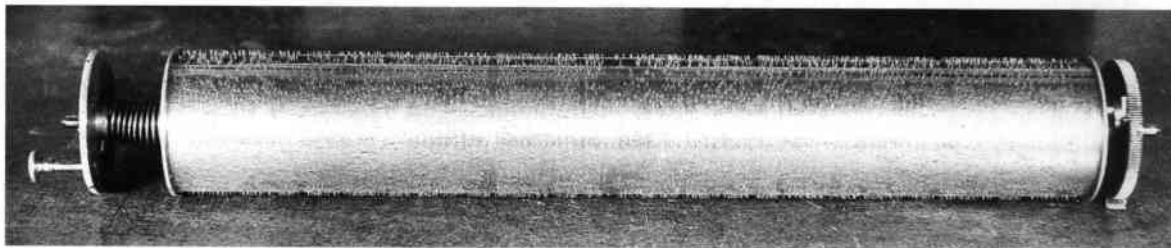


Fig. 7. The interchangeable 15.2" cylinder of serial 8377. Arbor length 18.3" (466mm).

heading. The equivalent English word is barytone, "between tenor and bass," and the music perhaps follows this description. In the Ste. Croix "Book of Tunes" the description Baryton only occurs, briefly and by itself, for a few tune arrangements in the Polyphone section XXXII on page 53.

Trade Mark

It was rare for the Ste. Croix makers to display their mark on the movements, - and rarer still on the cases. Arthur Junod did both with his JAC trade mark for his Junod, Aubert et Cie. outfit, see Figs. 1, 6 and 10.

Junod dating

Arthur Junod was born into a complex and powerful family of musical box makers - parents, uncles, cousins, all involved. So, as Piguet explains, he was bathed in that atmosphere from infancy.

His father Felix had married Jules Cuendet's sister and continued making musical boxes at La Sagne (which is only a mile south of Ste Croix) as F. Junod-Cuendet. He had started there in the late 1860s. In 1882 Felix and his brother-in-law Jules made a special large box for the 1883 Zurich Exhibition, but he was invited to join the jury and so could not gain an award. He was handing over more and more of his work to his son Arthur who was virtually in charge by 1884, aged 20.

In 1886 Arthur tabled his interchangeable cylinder patents, and soon after set up in business as Junod, Aubert & Cie with its JAC trade mark. The business flourished despite various vexing vicissitudes which included two name changes and a defrauding agent. In 1895 it had another name change to Arthur Junod-Turin. Then things grew worse for cylinder boxes, with discs taking

over; and with plenty of consulting and inventive work Arthur closed it down in January 1899.

So far there is no information whatever about Felix Junod's output, or his tune sheets, or his



Fig. 8. Serial number and all pitch changes scribed on comb base.



Fig. 9. This version of the "Two Composers" design, with its panorama of Geneva lakeside in the lower border, was used by several Ste. Croix makers. Here it is seen on Arthur Junod's serial 8377, about 1890. Photo thanks to Christies, South Kensington.

The business flourished despite various vexing vicissitudes which included two name changes and a defrauding agent.



Fig. 10. Junod's embossed, nickel-plated plaque with J.A.C. registered.

musical box oddments no. 100

serial numbers, during the thirty years he was making musical boxes in the Ste. Croix region at La Sagne. Nor is it known whether any of that output was sold with Arthur's name. The only clues about what Arthur made are from his JAC catalogue of 1889 which features his interchangeable and the 1886 patents and all the usual range of boxes. Boxes illustrated in his catalogue have the "line of patents" or the "waving shepherd" tune sheets - nos. 12 and 11 in the Tune Sheet Book.

There are on record at present about six boxes with the "patents" tune sheet and about twenty four with the "waving shepherd." Their combined serial numbers range from 1104 to 23,439. If they started in 1886 and stopped in 1899, their output was over 1800 per annum, - over 35 a week.

That seems impossible for a small Company in a terrace house opposite the huge Paillard works - see Vol. 20 page 57 Fig.11. So perhaps there was some link of output and serial numbers between the two Junod works. There is also the possibility that uncle Jules Cuendet helped with production - his serial numbers have also defied dating!

Difficulties in dating are increased further by Junod boxes appearing with other tune sheets. Nos. 57, 152, 215 and 273 in the Tune Sheet Book are examples. There was a rather casual treatment of tune sheets in the area, probably precipitated by delivery delays in winter, and doubtless the "waving shepherd" got onto some non-Junod boxes.

Finally, there is a "mad" feature about the dating of the thirty boxes on record with Junod tune sheets. The latest tunes on all these boxes, starting with serial 1104, are 1887 or earlier. The only exception is serial 14220 which has 1896 tunes. It does not make sense, and that is why there is no Junod dating chart.

The massive data will soon get into our archive, hoping for a brighter dating future.

Abraham Cuendet

A lesser known figure, often credited (says Piguet) as the first

maker of musical boxes in Ste. Croix, was Abraham-Louis Cuendet. He got there about 1811, armed with valuable information about making musical boxes which he had gleaned from the Lecoultré brothers in the Vallée de Joux.

At that time Neuchâtel was so badly affected by the war years that skilled workers were moving to Ste. Croix. Financial help was obtained from the Canton to get these people settled in quickly, so that they could bring in trade from their products. That helped Abraham Cuendet who obtained good premises at a low rental and started to produce a good range of *petites musiques*.

In 1831 he was one of the six makers in a Ste. Croix census, and in 1833 he produced a large cartell box with a single-piece comb. Thanks to Eberhard Lentz we can now show one of his boxes, serial 16953, with teeth in groups of five - Fig. 11. Better still, we can show how he scribed his name on the comb base - Fig. 12.

Envoi

This being Oddments 100, causing the Editor some sense of achievement, I felt these notes on an important pioneer might make up for my frightful failure to date the Junods. Not too boring, I hope. ■

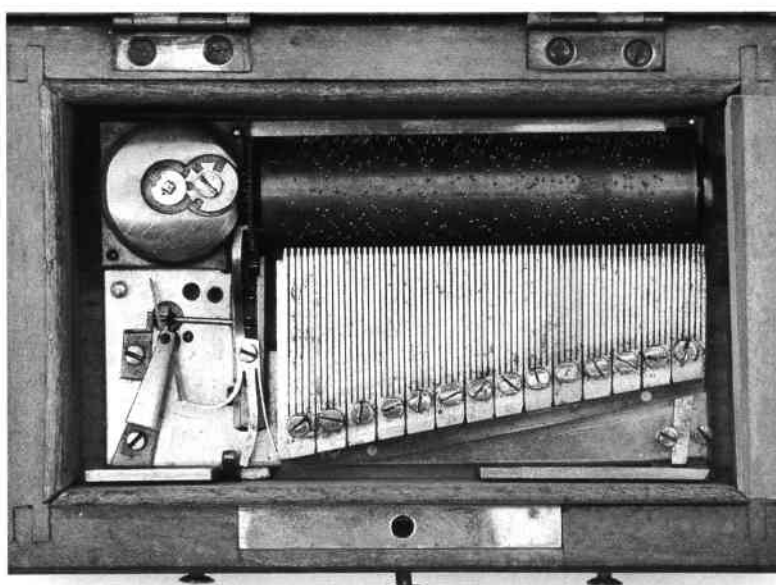


Fig. 11. Abraham Cuendet's serial 16953, made about 1835, with 62mm (2.4") cylinder and 71 comb teeth - the fourteenth group, at the treble end, has 6 teeth. It plays tunes 55 and 56, as scribed on the comb base, but they are not yet identified.



Fig. 12. Abraham Cuendet's scribed signature - overall length a mere 14mm - on the comb base of serial 16953. Here reproduced about five times full size. Remember, he worked on wrist watches, not organs.

New Archivist

Having recently taken over as Archivist from Kevin McElhone, I thought it would be useful to remind members what is in the archives – I certainly had no idea until I took on the job.

The bulk of the archives is made up of journals, books and auction catalogues, but there are also a number of other sections, namely 'miscellaneous publications'; makers and traders literature and catalogues both original and modern; museum leaflets and catalogues; a number of copies of patents; and several audio and video tapes and CDs.

There are over 60 books including such classics as *Clockwork Music* by A.Ord-Hume, the *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments* by Q. David Bowers, and *La Tonotechnie ou L'art de noter les Cylindres* by Engramelle. The latter is, of course, in French, and my failed 'O' level standard struggles somewhat !! There are, in fact, several books in French, German, Dutch or Italian, even Japanese. If you fancy yourself as a translator, let me know, it would be most useful to have English

translations for some of these.

Most of the major Journals covering mechanical music are represented, The Music Box, of course, from its inception. Journals of the MBSI go back to 1954 and include a number of special publications and directories. Other societies represented are BOGA, MOOS, FOPS, AMMI (Italian), Player Piano Group, l'Association des Amis des Instruments et de la Musique Mechanique (longest name ??), AMICA, Gesellschaft fur Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente, etc. etc. Again, several are non-English, so translation would be useful, but a major undertaking.

The archive also includes a substantial number of auction catalogues, mostly from the major UK houses (Christie's, Phillips, Sotheby's, Bonham's) going back to the late 1960's/early 70's. Prices results are included in many. The pricing history hidden away in these would no doubt be quite interesting, but a major task to extract !!

Whilst there is already a very useful selection of items in the Archive, it will never be 'complete',

and there are no doubt significant gaps if the list were to be examined closely. If you have surplus books or documents which you think should be shared with the membership, why not donate them to the Archive. (You might even consider making a bequest of suitable items, in your will). Smaller documents, particularly those which are rare, and possibly of historic importance, could be photocopied to provide copies for the Archive. Let me know if you wish to add an item, so I can check first and avoid duplication.

There is thus a wealth of information here available to members. I have a list of items available, and I am working on expanding it to improve its usefulness, so if you think the archive might provide answers to your questions, let me know. I can provide extracts from, or copies of, most of the items, although you will have to pay postage, photocopying costs, etc. Where substantial research is being done, it might be possible to arrange for loan of specific items. My e-mail address is shown in the list of Officers in The Music Box. ■ **John Farmer**

Call for Speakers

As you are possibly aware we are hosting a joint Annual meeting in August 2005 here in England. We have chosen a venue in the South of England, in Guildford, Surrey. Guildford is a very interesting Town with its own Cathedral, plus one of the biggest University's in the South of England.

The hotel we have picked is a well known hotel chain, "The Holiday Inn" which is not only known to the English but to the Americans and Europeans as well. All rooms are Air Conditioned and are equipped with Television, Telephone and Data points, Tea and Coffee making facilities. The Hotel also offers an extensive Leisure Centre, Swimming Pool, and Beauty Salon.

We have a very full and wide ranging itinerary planned for you, this will offer you an opportunity to visit some of our best Museums and private musical collections, and also some of the main attractions in London, you can enjoy views of our English Countryside whilst travelling to the many venues. The package we

have put together includes all Breakfasts and Dinners, including our Banquet Dinner; and most Lunches, Entertainment, as well as Transport to the various collections. So please be sure to look out for the Booking form, Registration Form and Itinerary which will come out both in your Summer Journal and in the Musical Box Society International News Bulletin. Book early to avoid disappointment.

To our American readers. You might be interested to know that Nick Lerescu who is a tour operator who specializes in Horology and Mechanical Music, is arranging a 10 day tour of the UK after our meeting; so please get in touch with Nick if you are interested in joining him.

MBSGB members who are also Members of MBSI and who have attended MBSI meetings will appreciate the popularity of the Workshop Day. The Workshops comprise a wide range of lectures, discussions and demonstrations by leading speakers on a whole variety of topics related to mechanical music.

As hosts, MBSGB invite our own members plus MBSI,

Continental and International members to offer their services to participate in these workshops.

Each workshop should be about 3/4hr - 1 hr long. They will take place on Sunday 28th August 2005 from 10.30 am to about 4.30 pm and conclude with an open forum from about 4.30 - 5.30. The forum will provide an opportunity for guests to meet with speakers for further questions and answers.

The term workshop can imply a different meaning to people unfamiliar with this term. Thus, our Workshop day will be called 'Play and Display'.

Please offer to display your knowledge and experience to others and, if possible, demonstrate a musical rendition (by tape or instrument) to the audience.

MBSGB members who wish to offer their services should contact Paul Bellamy (Tel: 01634 252079 or E-mail: bellamypaul6@aol.com) by July 2004.

MBSI members who wish to offer their services should contact Coulson Conn (Tel: 610-459 0367, Fax: 610-358-9424, E-mail: cac527@msn.com) by July 2004. ■ **Daphne Ladell**

Every now and then a snippet of information comes in that upsets or at least challenges established theories. It is both infuriating and demanding when someone says, "That can't be true", or "they never did that." Hard evidence must make us all think again. The type of evidence that comes in is usually connected with serial numbers. Often they seem not to fit in neatly with the pattern established for a particular maker. The first query is always to make contact with the owner of the box and ask politely if he would mind checking all the numbers again. If this does not resolve the problem, then the box is registered and becomes the subject of an in depth investigation. Regrettably, on many occasions the problem is not solved to everyone's satisfaction, so a note is made so that in the future it can be looked at again when more information is to hand. The box is attributed to a maker but left open for further investigation.

An unusual box was reported recently in that the tunes were designed either for the Spanish market or for someone who placed a special order for Spanish melodies. The box is a Nicole in the 39,000 series and one of their standard 6 air forte-piano boxes. The two items which set it apart for similar Nicole's are the Spanish melodies and the fact it has a detachable

ratchet winder. These winders are uncommon. As far as I can recollect, this is the first box with this type of programme to be registered. I presume musical boxes were sent to Spain and Portugal, but they are conspicuous by their absence. There again, do we have any collectors in those countries or are they mechanical music "no go" areas? I do feel sorry for any Spanish collector having no boxes to collect!

Looking back at the early journals of the society, it is interesting to see how little was known in those days. Fortunately, there were those who noted things down and eventually put forward a theory. Gradually over the years our store of knowledge increased so now we can look back with nostalgia at the early days and wryly smile at people talking about Dawkins boxes and how all boxes with double cross jointed cases must all have been made by Langdorff. Now we know a great deal more and realise that many names on tune sheets are those of agents who never made a musical box in their life. The strange thing is that the more we find out the more there seems to be found out. The making of a musical box seems to have been a process involving many different people, each contributing their particular expertise or skill. Blank manufacturers, musical

arrangers and the home workers busily pinning all contributed. Case makers were involved as were the printers of tune sheets. That is to mention only a few of those concerned. Strange as it may seem, it is rather like some manufacturing processes of today. Computers are a mixture of "bought in" parts. A keyboard from one, a mother board from another and a monitor from a third and so on. Stick a badge on it and another make is born. Not quite the same as 100 odd years ago, but there are similarities. No wonder the researcher has such a difficult job.

I am sure about the necessity of maintaining written records about our hobby. My experience with modern day technology is that it seems to be unnecessarily complicated and goes out of date very quickly. No sooner has an upgrade been made that it is out of date. Files that were at the cutting edge of technology ten years ago can no longer be understood by modern machines. In fifty years time I have little doubt that computers as we understand them today will be old hat and found only in museums. I hope that the Register file boxes will still be in existence and have their 8" x 5" record cards intact. Maybe someone will have eyes to read, fingers to search and an intelligence to understand. Surely, that will never go out of date! ■

Special Opening for Brentford Musical Museum

The Musical Museum, which houses a world class collection of automatic musical instruments, will open for a special season in 2004. The season will be held in the old church it has occupied, on what was originally a temporary basis, since 1963. When the Museum closed at the end of 2002 it was to undertake some very essential work in order to prepare the collections for the move to the new premises currently being specially constructed for it. Because the extensive work was successfully completed on time and as a result of an unexpected delay in the

construction of the new building, we have decided to open the Museum on a limited basis during this year. One of the prime objectives of the opening is to seek the views of the public on matters related to the new Museum."

A special large-scale model of the building has been created which will allow the public to see the three-floor layout of the new building. The ideas from the design study will also be on display.

The Museum will be open every Saturday and Sunday afternoon from April to October 2.00 – 5.00pm when live

demonstrations of the instruments will be heard. Unlike previous years, it will not be open on Wednesday afternoons in July and August. Privately booked party visits are welcome at other times by arrangement and there will also be a special concert season during the summer.

The Museum will close at the end of October and does not expect to be open to the public until late 2005 or early 2006 in the new building.

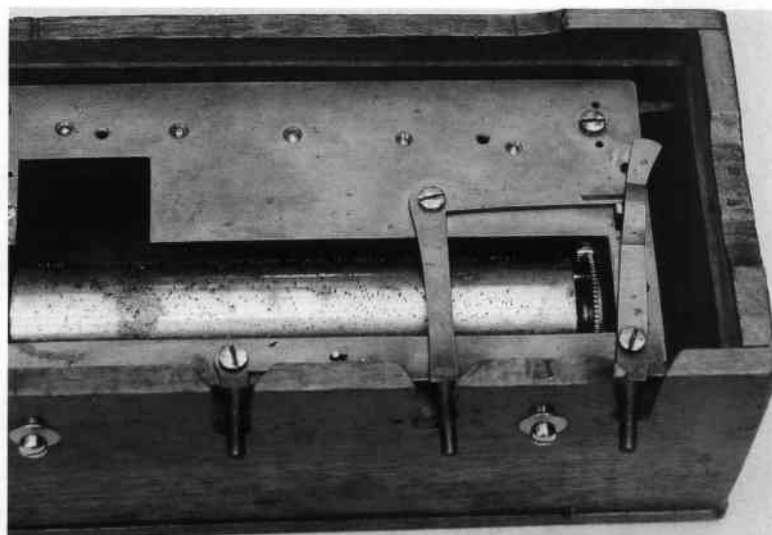
Full details of the Museum can be found on the web site www.musicalmuseum.co.uk ■

Some years ago I made one of those "odd" purchases I am inclined to make from time to time – a box without a comb. This was an unusual piece, being a very early Freres Nichol serial number 5592 with controls exposed to the rear of the case (see photograph). The cylinder is 4½" long with a diameter of 1½", and although there are three tune changes on the snail cam it is only stamped with two gamme numbers: 2004 and 2006.

In Volume 20 number 6, the Registrar suggested that gamme numbers above 950 or so did not appear on these early boxes, but this seems to confirm otherwise. Why only two tunes should appear is still a mystery but it is possible that one tune takes two turns. Volume 1 number 8, page 12, describes serial number 5595 as playing one overture in three turns.

Although bought as a 'novelty' it would be helpful to hear it play one day and if anyone out there has a comb, or the remains of a comb, some 4½" long with around 100 teeth I shall be pleased to hear from them! **Terry Longhurst**

Editors note. In a separate note, Terry Longhurst reminds me that a



similar box is in the museum at Seewen, which we shall be visiting in July on the Society tour.

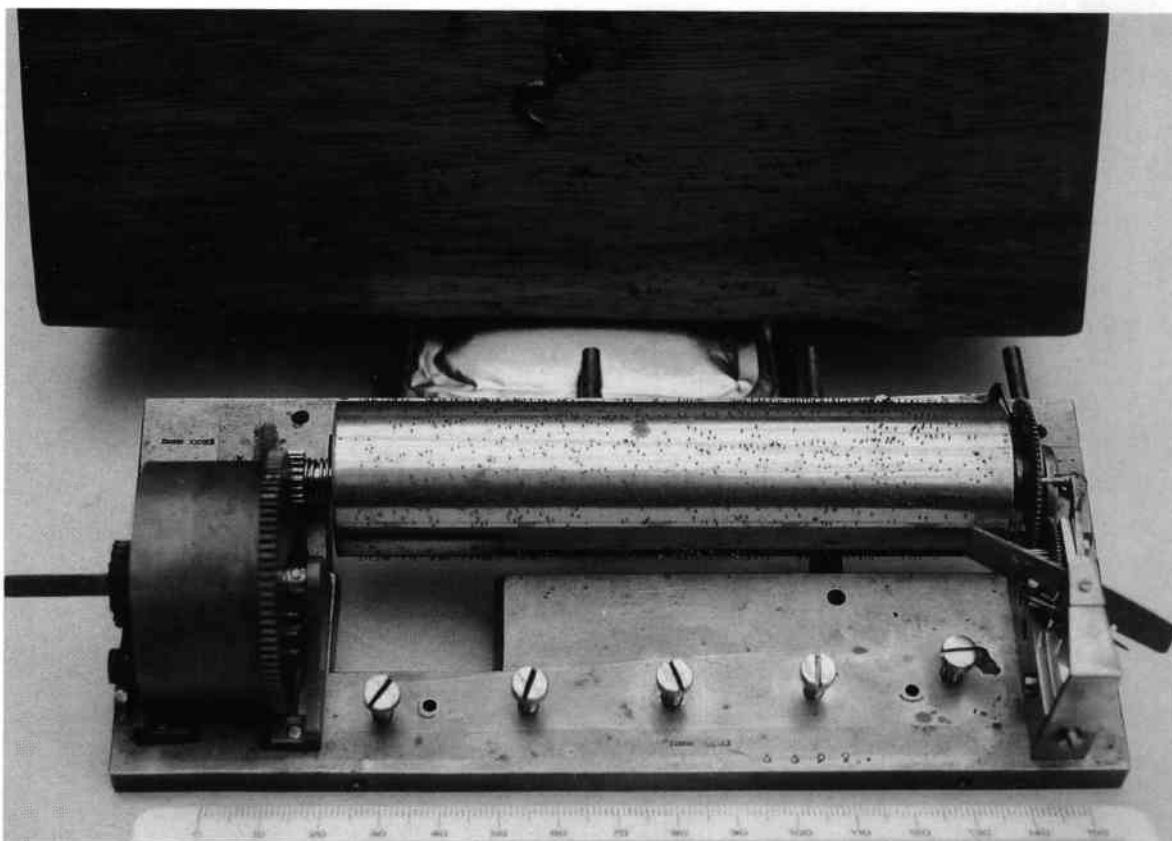
Following the article on Daniel Imhof in The Music Box Vol.21, Winter 2003, an 'Application to register new owner of exclusive right of burial' form was sent to the Croydon Council by Daniel's great grandson, signed and stating his brother was in agreement. Unfortunately, it was returned stating that form needs to be signed by his brother and all near relatives

to the late owner. So, hopefully, this can be resubmitted with the required signatures.

In the meantime a Trust Fund has been opened for donations to provide a memorial stone and the Fund currently stands at £625.

Further donations would be appreciated from interested societies, groups or individuals forwarded to: Natwest Bank, Esher Branch, 60 High Street, Esher, Surrey KT10 9TX, UK. Account No. 56507011. Sort Code 60-08-04.

Peter Murray ■



It's all Greek to me!

Dear Music Box,
After reading about Mr. Tolsa's (M.B. Journal vol.21 no.4, page 112) amusing adventure with the tax authorities I inform you that an even more remarkable incident took place in Chios island, where an poor old barrel piano grinder was attacked by police as he did not issue receipt and not having cash register. This story circulated in most Greek TV channels and a lot of people had a great laugh by listening at the old man's comments!

(I am the barrel piano builder from Thessaloniki-Greece, I am looking forward to send you an article about the history, music, construction and public interest of the Greek barrel piano. I have restored some very interesting pieces, recorded music from 19th century barrels and dispatch

orders on new instruments and music). ■

Yours, **Panos Ioannidis B.Sc,RPT**

I did wonder whether or not to print this - it might give the authorities over here some unwelcome ideas! Editor

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Orphan Cylinders - an update

By John Powell

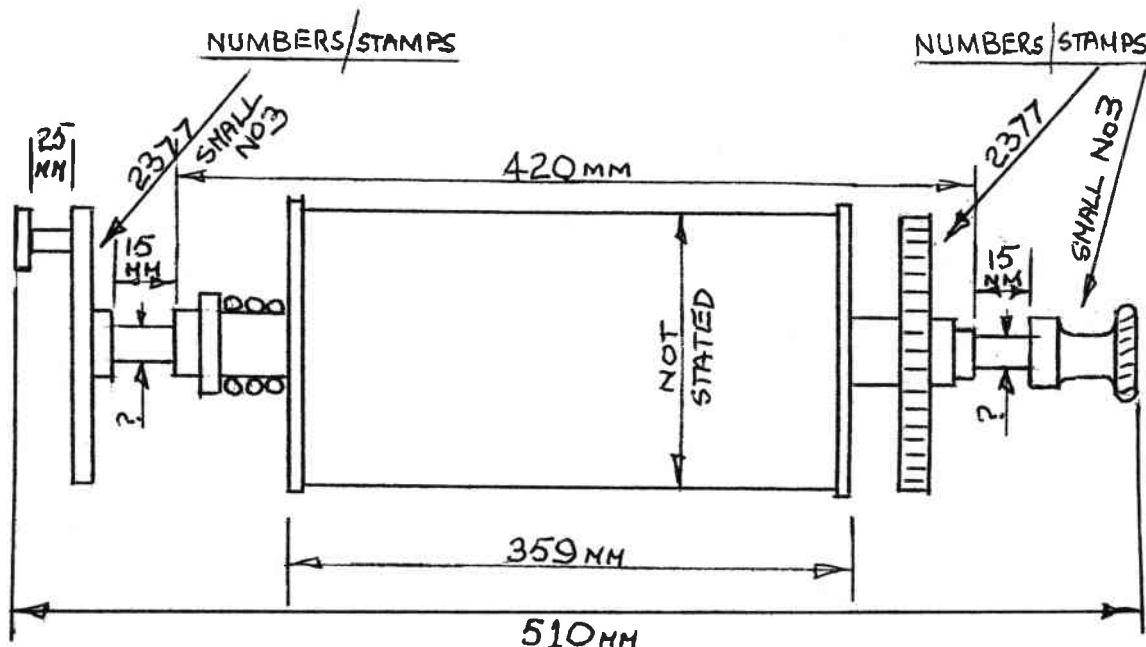
I received a letter in November from one of our more recently joined members to which I have replied. He has acquired an interchangeable cylinder, apparently in good condition, which he cannot use and asks if we can find a home for it. I had rather given up on the "Orphan Cylinder" project having

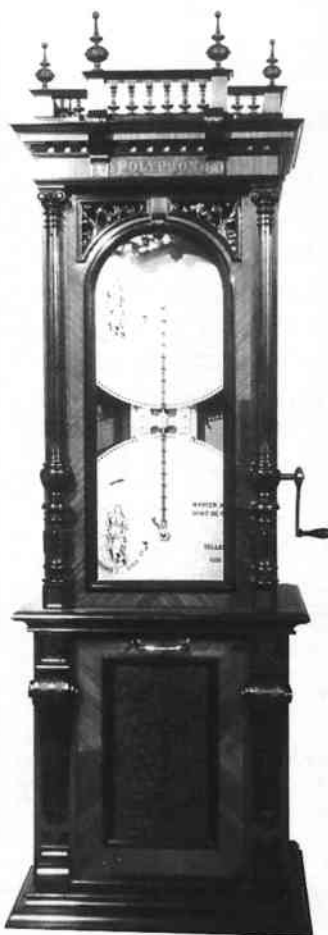
had only two requests for wanted cylinders, this being the only surplus one.

May I remind all members that the project is still alive but only just, and a sketch is shown below with details of the available cylinder. The cylinder is nickel plated, plays six tunes and has several features of a Paillard Sublime Harmony movement which I have with

cylinders which, unfortunately, are 12mm longer than this. If anyone has spare or unwanted/damaged cylinders, 371mm over end caps with an unpinned centre track between two sets of 51 pinned tracks, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Further details of the scheme and contacts can be found in issue No. 3 of Volume 20, page 95. ■





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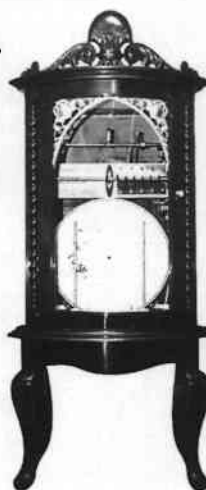
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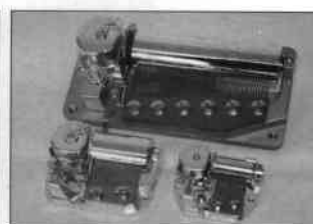
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Copies of Tune Sheet book still available, with free latest supplement, £12 plus £2 p&p (£4 p&p overseas). Can be paid by dollar equivalent cheque. Contact Richard Kerridge or Ted Brown.

Society badges for sale, £1.50 or \$2 including p&p. Money to Advertising Secretary – address in front of journal.

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Any old catalogues and musical box ephemera - Ted

Brown, 01403 823 533.

Wanted. Music books for the 48 note Racca Piano Melodico or information as to where recut music might be obtained. Contact Arthur Cunliffe at the address given at the front of the journal.

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Volume 8 Number 7 Autumn 1978



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