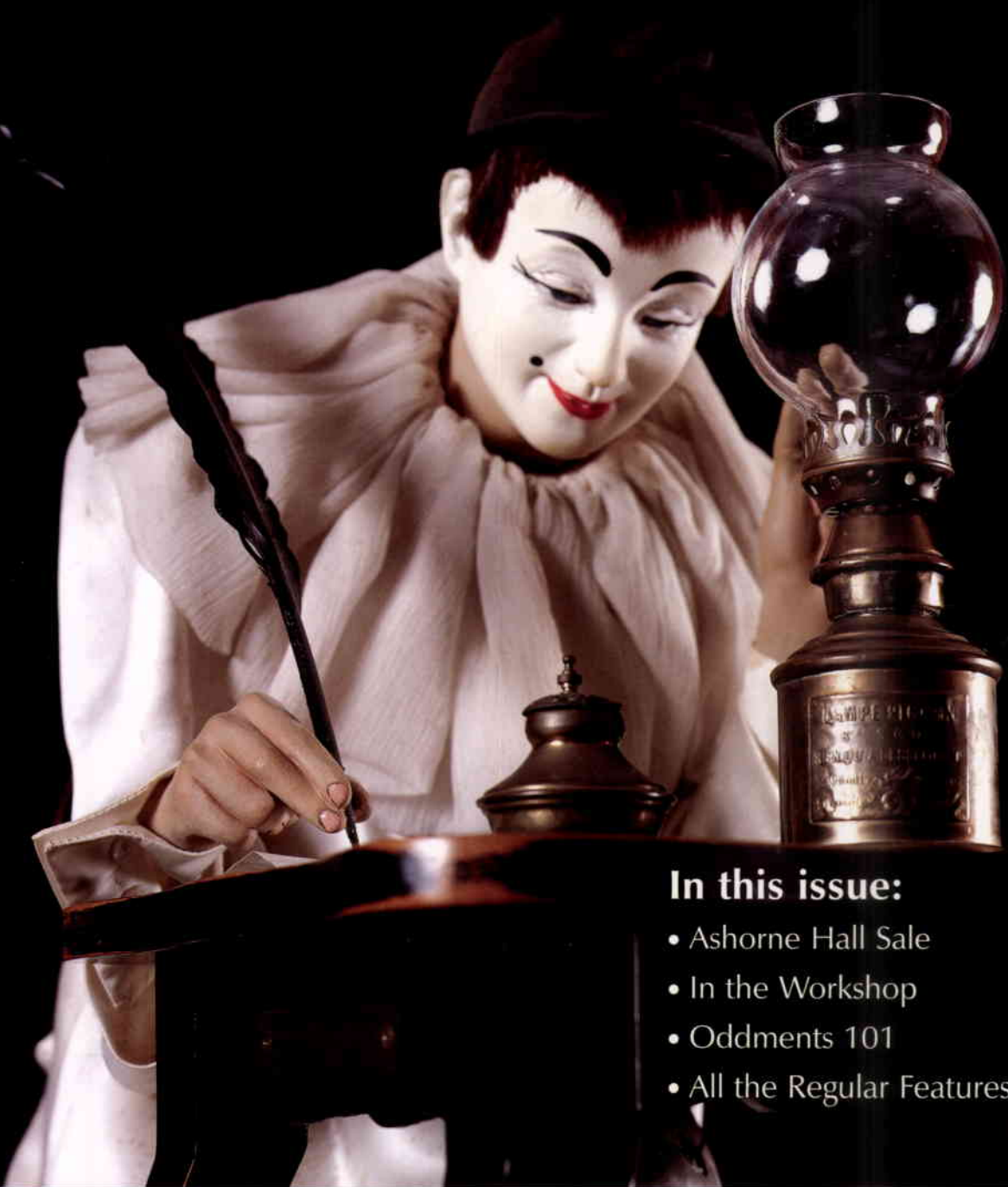


Volume 21 Number 6 Summer 2004  
Edited by Alan Pratt

# *The Music Box*

*An International Journal of Mechanical Music*



**In this issue:**

- Ashorne Hall Sale
- In the Workshop
- Oddments 101
- All the Regular Features

**The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain**

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## Mechanical Music and Automata

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25 May 2004

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# Changing Times



Alan Pratt

**T**his is to be my last issue of *The Music Box* as editor. Since I took over from Graham Whitehead six years ago, 24 issues have been assembled and distributed and, I hope, enjoyed. That represents almost half a million words that have been read, edited and, with the help of my wife Doris, proofed several times over. Phew!

Among all those pages a few errors may have crept in, and the grammarians among you may have been irritated – or even offended – by some rogue apostrophe that has insinuated itself improperly into the text. These pesky little things can be so difficult to control. But I take heart in such matters by noting that publications by such worthy organisations as the UK Passport Office and the British Library contain similar errors. Nobody is perfect, it seems.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles and reports during my term as editor. A magazine such as ours is, as I have said on so many occasions, only as good as the contributing authors. Every piece is welcome, but special

thanks go to those whose names appear regularly at the head of the pages. I am sure you all know who they are. Having completed some piece of research, or a restoration, it takes real discipline to sit down and put all that work down on paper so that it may be enjoyed by fellow members. By sharing your knowledge and experience you have advanced our hobby and given great pleasure.

It is hoped that all contributors, and those who have yet to join the ranks, will continue to delight and interest us with their work, and will give every support to my successors. I hope to continue to be active in the Society, both on the Committee and contributing the occasional article for *The Music Box*.

On looking back over the Society records, it seems that I am the fifth to hold the position of editor. I trust that I have built upon the good work of my predecessors and that I hand on the magazine in good form to those who follow.

Once again, my thanks to everyone who has given help and encouragement to me over the last six years. It has been greatly appreciated. ■ **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.

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

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## Our cover picture

This pierrot automaton from the Graham Whitehead collection writes with two movements of the right hand, his eyes following the words across the page. As the lamp dims, he lowers his head and his eyes shut. He awakes, raises his head, turns up the lamp with his left hand and continues to write. (See full sale report on pages 179-181).

Picture courtesy of  
Christie's South Kensington

Back numbers obtainable from:

Roy Ison, 5 East Bight, Lincoln, LN2 1QH © 2004 The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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## Autumn Meeting Reminder

As mentioned in the last issue of The Music Box our Autumn meeting is to be held on the Isle of Wight. Terry France, our local organiser, has put together an attractive package which includes a first class hotel and ferry crossing from Portsmouth. On the Saturday morning there will be an organ grind in Godshill, a pretty village not far from our hotel. The weekend follows the usual pattern of informal presentations on Friday evening, the organ grind on Saturday and more talks on Sunday morning.

There are a number of interesting places to visit on the Island including, of course, Osborne House.

In case you have mislaid the Booking Form another copy is included with this issue. You are advised to book early as hotel and ferry availability on the Island is limited and gets booked up quickly.

## Open Day

Maurice and Wendy Adams are holding an Open Day at their home in Weedon near Aylesbury on Saturday 19th June from around 11am until 4 pm. You are invited – indeed encouraged – to bring along an instrument to add to the enjoyment of the day. Places are limited so please phone if you would like to attend. 01296 641 580 or (mobile) 07890 159 632.

## Summer Open Day

There will be the usual summer open day organised by the Chanctonbury Ring on the 14th August 2004. It will be held at the Old School from 10.30 a.m. until late afternoon.

We will be displaying and playing various musical boxes in the morning and after the supplied lunch there is an opportunity to hear a large selection of street and chamber organs which will be playing all afternoon, outside if weather permits, otherwise in the hall and canteen.

Contact Ted Brown if you wish to attend. There is limited seating, so don't leave it too late.

## New Members

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

2866	Whytock Brian, Scotland	2871	Bullivant John, Dorset
2867	Tucker David, Bath	2872	Halsey Simon, E. Sussex
2868	Wright David, Berks	2873	Entwisle Albert, Lancs
	(Mrs Joan Wright	2874	Wilderspin R, Herts
	Associate Member)	2875	Whitworth E.A., Surrey
2869	Jensen S.V., Gibraltar	2876	Oldham Peter, Hants
2870	Lowrey Arthur, Shrops	2877	Clark Dave, Herts
		2878	Licals A.V, Devon
		2879	Turner S.R., Hereford
		2880	Wooding C.T., Kent
		2881	Baldock D.J., Devon



## AGM – Venue Change

Since the last issue of The Music Box, the venue for the Annual General Meeting and Society Auction has been changed. It will now be held at St. Albans Organ Museum – NOT at Roade as stated previously. The date remains the same – Saturday, June 7th – but the venue has changed!

So, if you noted details in your diaries, please make sure that you change them – we don't want anyone to turn up at Roade.

## Directions to the Organ Museum 326, Camp Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire

### From the M25

- Turn off the M25 at junction 22
- Follow signs to St Albans onto the A1081, after about 1.5 miles you will come to a roundabout.
- Go straight over and continue on the A1081, after about 1.25 miles you will come to traffic lights.
- Turn right into Drakes Drive, continue for about 0.6 of a mile.
- Turn left into Camp Road, the museum is about 0.3 of a mile on the left, It is just before a school

There is some parking at the museum and we are hoping to get the use of the school car park next door. If this is not possible there is plenty of parking in the road outside.

### From the A1M

- Turn off the A1M at junction 3  
(If travelling south this is at the far end of the Hatfield tunnel)
- Take the A414 towards St Albans
- After about 2.5 miles you come to a roundabout.
- Turn right onto the A1081, after about 1.25 mile you will come to traffic lights.
- Turn right into Drakes Drive, continue for about 0.6 of a mile
- Turn left into Camp Road, the museum is about 0.3 of a mile on your left, it is just before a school

If you need further instructions telephone  
**Bob Ducat-Brown: 01438 712585**

## 2005 Joint Meeting Request for Speakers

We had hoped to give details in this issue of the costs for the 2005 meeting. Unfortunately, all the information is not yet to hand and so it will be the August issue when we give the final costs.

At the same time you will receive booking forms for this meeting. Planning continues to go well but additional offers of help will be appreciated.

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 ¾hr – 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**

## Members' Other Interests

As collectors of instruments from a bygone age, we all have an interest in the past. But one member has

taken his interest in history further by researching his home town of Long Eaton for a newly published book.

Keith Reedman, as many members will know, monitors the e-mails of the Society and is also responsible, along with his wife Jean, for compiling the invaluable Index to The Music Box. But over more than two years, he has been researching old pictures of his town and taking new ones from the same viewpoint – as nearly as possible.

The result is a book containing 200 pictures of Long Eaton recording the changes over 200 years entitled "Long Eaton – then and now".

## 2004 Events for Amateur Organ Builders (Early Season) Strumpshaw near Norwich - 29th-31st May.

At this full 3 day steam fair we will be displaying from our awning. I am hoping to arrange for an official gathering of AOBs at this years event but this is only a maybe at the moment. There were a good number of us there last year many just coming in for the day with their organs. Like a lot of steam fairs

they already have enough organs on display so it is important to make them realise that we are there as a group, much the same as model engineers with their locomotives, Please mention this if you wish to apply for this event:

**Mrs D Baker**  
**Marsh cottage**  
**Low Road**  
**Strumpshaw**  
**Norwich NR13 4HS**

The first International gathering of amateur organ builders in the UK, this will be at Peter Hoods site near to Ramsgate. 1, 2 and 3 May.

We have planned this gathering as a social weekend where we can display our organs mainly to one another with a few locals popping in to look. The aim is to start a

recognised group or club for our hobby. There will be facilities for camping and caravans for the three days including a marquee for us to use, a party night is planned. The toilets will be off site by Tuesday but there is an option to stay a little longer to make a bit more of a holiday out of it.

For more details and help with B&B accommodation contact Peter Hood:  
**Rollcutter@btopenworld.com**  
**2 Windsor Road**  
**Cliffsend**  
**Ramsgate**  
**Kent CT12 5EB**

For all these events all communications should mention AOBs as a group and include a Stamped Addressed Envelope. ■



### New Editorial Contact

From the next issue our new editors are taking over and all contributions should be sent to:

**David and Lesley Evans**  
**DEvans7331@aol .com**  
**01730 894086**

For the time being, material by post should go:

**C/o C. Proudfoot**  
**The Old Rectory**  
**Fawkham**  
**Longfield**  
**Kent DA 38LX**

## Chanctonbury Ring

A mere eleven hours separated our two loves - the end of Valentines Day and the start of the February 2004 Chanctonbury mechanical music gathering. Grand opera, or even operetta, may not be a love of some members but it did prove to be a subject with sufficient content to occupy us for the majority of the day.

A number of visiting instruments, together with a selection from Ted Brown's collection, all made their contribution to another feast of mechanical music. As each of the composers and the name of their composition were declared, the meeting took on something of the air of a TV Eurovision Song Contest, so it was tempting to record the popularity ratings. The result cannot be relied upon for absolute accuracy which would satisfy the Electoral Reform Society, but the approximate results were:

Verdi	9	16%
Bellini	8	14%
Rossini	7	12%
Donizetti	4	7%
Lehar	4	7%
Gounod	2	4%
Humperdinck	2	4%
Mascagni	2	4%
Mozart	2	4%
Strauss J	2	4%

Balfe	1	2%
Bizet	1	2%
Flotow	1	2%
Gaspard	1	2%
Hess	1	2%
Linke	1	2%
Meyerbeer	1	2%
Saint Saens	1	2%
Strauss R	1	2%
Suppe	1	2%
Wagner	1	2%
Weber	1	2%

which confirms Italy with maximum votes and Ireland with minimum votes, but then the Irish quite often win the modern-day TV contest so they shouldn't be disappointed. All this rambling just confirms you can make statistics illustrate whatever you want them to! What happened to poor old Puccini, I ask? Wasn't he favoured in the mechanical music field?

On a more serious note, a small number of visitors used the lunch break to debate if musical boxes or organettes best interpret music from the opera. To start with there were differences of opinion, but we did manage to refine our thoughts and conclude with the consensus that grand opera is probably better on the musical box and operetta on the organette. We thought this may be due to the widely differing number of notes available in the

scales of these two dissimilar instrument types combined with the musical demands of the different styles of composition.

On a sad note, we were all defeated by every unknown air on an 'eight air box sans tune sheet' - Chanctonbury must now be approaching the bottom of the league when it comes to guessing that tune. However, we can justly hold our heads high when it comes to selecting new adjectives to describe the mechanical musical instrument arrangers' art. We have now added 'tinkles' and 'runs' to the vocabulary; these to be used where and when appropriate!

As always, our thanks again go to all who toiled to provide the appetising mid-day sustenance and tidied up after our departure.

Visitors planning to attend the Chanctonbury meeting on 20th June are advised to bring a packed lunch with them on that day - we will supply the puddings. The programme is "Tabatieres, Bells and Things on musical boxes and the composer Balfe". The summer programme is rapidly filling with conflicting activities, so it was agreed that the Chanctonbury meeting scheduled for Sunday 15th August will now be an MBSGB Open Day and will be moved to Saturday 14th August. Please amend your diaries accordingly. ■

# The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

## Auction Sale – Entry Form

Leave Blank	Description of Item	Reserve Price (See note below)	Leave Blank

Entered by:-      Name .....

                         Address .....

                         .....

I agree to abide by the Conditions of Sale as set out overleaf.

Signature ..... Date .....

**Reserve Prices**  
 The reserve price is the figure below which the Lot will not be sold. If you wish the Lot to be sold without reserve, enter NR in the ‘Reserve Price’ column. **Reserve prices will not be accepted on Lots expected to sell at £10 or below.**

## **CONDITIONS OF SALE**

1. The Seller and the Buyer will each contribute a donation to Society funds of 7.5% of the hammer price of each lot. **Lots selling at £5.00 or less will be treated as donations to the Society, and the full proceeds will be retained.**
2. Reserves may be placed on any Lot by the Seller, provided that the likely hammer price is above £10.00 in cases of doubt as to suitability of reserves, the Auctoineer's decision is final.
3. The conduct of the auction and the resolution of any disputes which may arise are solely at the discretion of the Auctioneer.
4. Bids can only be accepted from members of the MBSGB or their registered guests.
5. While the Committee will make every effort to safeguard items left for sale they do not accept responsibility for loss or damage to any item while it is in their custody.
6. All statements by Members of the Committee concerning the description or condition of any Lot are statements of opinion and are not to be relied upon as statements of fact. Any intending Buyer must satisfy himself by inspection as to the true nature of the Lot.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Committee has decided that a final bid of £5.00 or under on any item will be regarded as a donation to Society funds.



## VII. Abteilung:

# Dreh-Organ mit Harmonika-Tönen

und auswechselbaren Notenscheiben.

VII. Section: Handorgans with crank, accordion tones and interchangeable tunes.  
 VII. Section: Orgues à manivelle, sons d'accordéon avec feuilles de musique échangeables.

VII. Sección: Organillos con voces de harmónica y hojas intercambiables.



## „Lilly“ mit Pressspahn-Notenscheiben.

14 Töne. Schwarz poliertes Holzgehäuse.

„Lilly“

14 tongues, with crank and interchangeable tunes of pressed-board; black polished case with painture.

„Lilly“

14 lames, avec feuilles de musique échangeables en carton; boîte polie en noir avec peinture.

„Lilly“

con hojas de cartón intercambiables; alisado y pintado, 14 voces.

Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño: 20×20×12½ cm.

Gewicht — weight — poids — peso: netto — net 1,100 kg, brutto — brut 1,400 kg.

## „Helikon“ mit Pressspahn-Notenscheiben

tunes of pressed-board — feuilles de carton — hojas de música de cartón.

„Helikon“ Nr. 1.

16 Töne. Schwarz poliertes Gehäuse.

„Helikon“ No. 1.

16 lames. Boîte noire polie.

„Helikon“ No. 1.

16 tongues. Black, polished case.

„Helikon“ No. 1.

16 voces. Caja negra bruñida.

Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

Nr. 1: 24×24×16 cm. Nr. 1F: 28,5×28,5×18,5 cm.

Gewicht — weight — poids — peso:

Nr. 1: netto — net 1,4 kg, brutto — gross 2,9 kg. Nr. 1F: netto — net 2,5 kg.



Nr. 1F.



## „Lucia“ mit auswechselbaren „Metall“-Notenscheiben.

12 Töne. Schwarzes Holzgehäuse mit poliertem Deckel.

„Lucia“

with interchangeable tunes of metal. 12 tongues. Black wooden case with polished cover.

„Lucia“

avec plaques en métal échangeables, 12 lames. Boîte en bois noir avec couvercle verni.

„Lucia“

con discos de metal intercambiables. 12 voces. Caja de madera alisada.

Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño: 18×17×13 cm.

Brutto-Gewicht

gross weight — poids brut — peso brutto: 1 kg.

Netto-Gewicht

net weight — poids net — peso neto: 0,8 kg.

„Lilly“ ohne Noten mit Karton — without tunes but with carton — sans feuilles avec carton — sin hojas de música, mas con cartón.

Nr. 1. Helikon mit 16 Stahlzungen, ohne Noten mit Kiste — 16 steel-tongues, without tunes but with case — 16 languettes d'acier, sans feuilles avec caisse — 16 lenguetas de acero, sin hojas con cajón.

1F. Helikon mit 16 Stahlzungen und Metallnoten, ohne Noten mit Kiste — 16 steel-tongues and metal-tunes, without tunes but with case — 16 languettes d'acier et feuilles de musique en métal sans feuilles avec caisse — 16 lenguetas de acero y hoja de metal, sin hojas con cajón.

„Lucia“, 12 Töne, ohne Noten — 12 tongues, without tunes — 12 lames, sans plaques de musique — 12 voces, sin discos.

1 Musiknote für Lilly (Pressspahn) — 1 tune of pressed board — 1 feuille de carton — 1 hoja de música de cartón.

1 Musiknote für Lilly (Metall) — 1 metal-tune — 1 disque de métal — 1 disco de metal.

1 Musiknote für Helikon Nr. 1 (Pressspahn) — 1 tune of pressed board — 1 feuille de carton — 1 hoja de música de cartón.

1 Musiknote für Helikon Nr. 1F (21,5 cm) Metall — 1 metal-tune — 1 feuille de musique métallique — 1 hoja de música de metal.

1 Musiknote für Lucia — 1 tune — 1 disque de musique — 1 disco de música.

Preis	Prices	Prix
Mk.	Pf.	Est.
8	—	8
12	50	12 6 15 62
17	—	17 — 21 25
7	—	7 — 8 75
34	—	4 — 42
38	—	4½ — 47
38	—	4½ — 47
50	—	6 — 62
26	—	3½ — 38

## Diana.

Drehorgel mit 14 Stahlzungen und Zinkblechnoten.  
 Hand-organ with 14 accordion steel-tongues and zinc-tunes.  
 Orgue à manivelle avec 14 lames et plaques de musique en zinc.

Organillo con 14 voces, discos de zinc.



Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

24×21×15 cm.

Netto-Gewicht — net weight — poids net — peso neto:

1,5 kg.

Brutto-Gewicht — gross weight — poids brut — peso

bruto: 2,3 kg.

## Intona Nr. 1.

Drehorgel mit 16 Harmonika-Stahlzungen und Zinkblech-Notenscheiben.

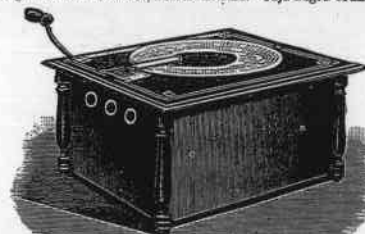
Schwarz poliertes Gehäuse.

Hand organ with 16 accordion steel-tongues and zinc-tunes.

Black polished case.

Orgue à manivelle avec 16 lames et plaques de musique en zinc. Boîte polie en noir.

Organillo con 16 voces, discos de zinc. Caja negra bruñida.



Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

28×24×17½ cm. 11×9½×7 inches.

Netto-Gewicht — net weight — poids net — peso neto:

2½ kg.

Brutto-Gewicht — gross weight — poids brut — peso

bruto: 3½ kg.

## Intona Nr. 0.

129

Drehorgel mit 16 Stahlzungen und Zinkblechnoten. Schwarz lackiertes Gehäuse. — Hand-organ with 16 accordion steel-tongues and zinc-tunes. — Orgue à manivelle avec 16 lames et plaques de musique en zinc. — Organillo con 16 voces, hojas de zinc.



Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

32×25×19 cm.

Netto-Gewicht — net weight — poids net — peso neto:

2,4 kg.

Brutto-Gewicht — gross weight — poids brut — peso

bruto: 4,250 kg.

## Intona Nr. 2 und 3.

Drehorgel mit Stahlzungen und Zinkblech-Notenscheiben. Schwarz poliertes Gehäuse.



Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

34×26½×19 cm. 13½×10½×7½ inches.

Netto-Gewicht — net weight — poids net — peso neto:

2,6 kg.

Brutto-Gewicht — gross weight — poids brut — peso

bruto: 4 kg.

Nr. 3. 16 Doppel-Stahlzungen — 16 double steel-tongues

— double lames d'acier — voces dobles de acero.

Größe — size — dimensions — tamaño:

35×30½×19 cm. 9½×11½×7½ inches.

Netto-Gewicht — net weight — poids net — peso neto:

2½ kg.

Brutto-Gewicht — gross weight — poids brut — peso

bruto: 4½ kg.

Diana Nr. 1, schwarz lackiertes Gehäuse — black varnished — verni en noir — negra barnizada.

„ „ 2, schwarz poliertes Gehäuse — black polished — poli noir — negra bruñida.

„ „ 2d, schwarz poliertes Gehäuse mit 14 Doppel-Stahlzungen — 28 Stimmen — black polished case with 14 double steel-tongues — boîte polie en noir, avec 14 lames doubles — caja negra bruñida con 14 lenguetas dobles.

Intona Nr. 0, 16 Stahlzungen, einfache Ausstattung — simple execution — décoration simple — decoración sencilla.

„ „ 1, 16 Stahlzungen — 16 steel-tongues — 16 languettes d'acier — 16 lenguetas de acero.

„ „ 2, 16 Stahlzungen — 16 steel-tongues — 16 languettes d'acier — 16 lenguetas de acero.

„ „ 3, 16 Doppel-Stahlzungen — 16 double steel-tongues — 16 double lames en acier — 16 lenguetas dobles de acero.

Notenscheiben — „Intona“ — discs — plaques de musique — discos de música.

„Intona“ ohne Kisten in Pappe gepackt (für Export) billiger — the instrument „Intona“ packed in cardboard (without case) for export less — l'instrument „Intona“ emballé en carton (sans caisse) pour l'exportation coûte de moins — „Intona“ sin cajón, embalaje de cartón (para exportación) menos.

ohne Noten mit Kiste

without tunes but with case

sans plaques avec caisse

sin discos de música con cajón

Preis	Prices	Prix
Mk.	Pf.	Est.
11	50	11 6 14 88
12	50	12 6 15 62
16	—	16 — 20 —
16	30	16 5 20 88
17	—	17 — 21 25
17	50	17 6 21 87
24	—	24 — 30 —
40	—	5 — 50
52	—	6½ — 65
40	—	5 — 50

# Corrosion of Lead Tuning Weights

by John Powell

**A**t the London Society Auction in June 1986 I acquired a four air Mandoline instrument with a 185 tooth one piece comb playing on a 33.1cm diameter cylinder. The comb, pinning and governor were severely damaged and were finally restored in March 1999, nearly four years ago. One of the repairs was a new 45 tooth section of teeth at the base end of the comb with associated new leads. It started sounding 'off' about three months ago and was accompanied by a "clicking" sound and I therefore stopped playing it.

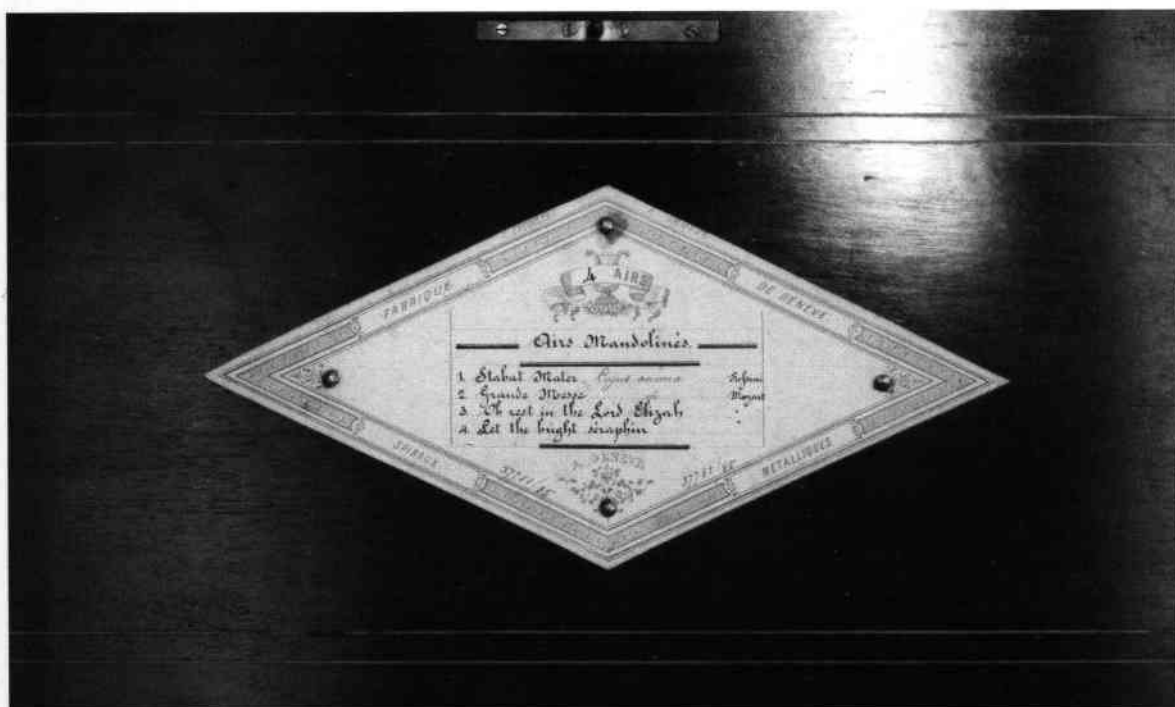
When examined recently all the new leads were corroded to the extent that most of the new section was locked solid having moved some of the teeth sideways so that the pin fell off the side of the tooth, hence the "clicking" sound. The odd thing was that all the original leaded teeth were completely unaffected, as were the leads on the

original replaced 45 tooth section which had been kept to aid re-tuning of the new teeth. The primary concern was to clear the gaps between the leads being only 0.011" wide, and I managed to find a fine fretsaw blade which would pass between the teeth. This was worked up and down the section and, with a bit of lead bending, I managed to clear all the slots.

Whilst sawing away at the leads I was thinking about the cause of it. Early on, before my Mechanical Music interest took over so much of my spare time, I did a lot of work on the house and accumulated lead from flat roofs, plumbing and leaded windows. Some was sold and some melted down and cast into useful sized billets. The point of this is that whilst all were stored together, some ended up covered with that well known powder, while others remained perfectly bright. This led to the thought that there may be other elements in the lead which may cause or contribute to the formation of this compound. In an attempt to

find a way of avoiding this I resorted to an authoritative description of lead and its compounds.

The production of lead from naturally occurring galena (principally lead sulphide) goes through various processes including the separation of silver, before becoming usable in its metallic form. It probably ends up with a variety of trace elements which may have something to do with the varying stability of the metal. Lead hydroxide appears to be the most likely form of our corrosion being "readily formed when lead, water and atmospheric oxygen come together". The water part could be a light condensation film due to varying atmospheric conditions which would be in its distilled or pure form. The reason that lead pipes could be used for the transmission of domestic water is that the water usually contains elements of carbon and sulphur in a form which readily produces lead salts, is virtually insoluble and adhere firmly to the lead metal



The tune sheet of the box described. It is just possible to see the name 'C. Lecoultré' on the top left hand edge.

surface which prevents further deterioration of the metal.

There appear to be two possible solutions. Firstly, to soak the leaded part of the comb in river or spring water, but that would probably not be very good for the steel part of it. Secondly, to isolate the lead from both atmospheric condensation and oxygen by coating it with an impervious film. This I have done using a light varnish produced by Winsor & Newton called "Artists Gloss Varnish" for the protection of oil and allied paint finishes. This

was brushed liberally onto the leads and worked into their surfaces using a thin card to ensure coverage of all surfaces. This comb will be regularly checked for further corrosion and, hopefully, it will not be a case of "going back to the drawing board."

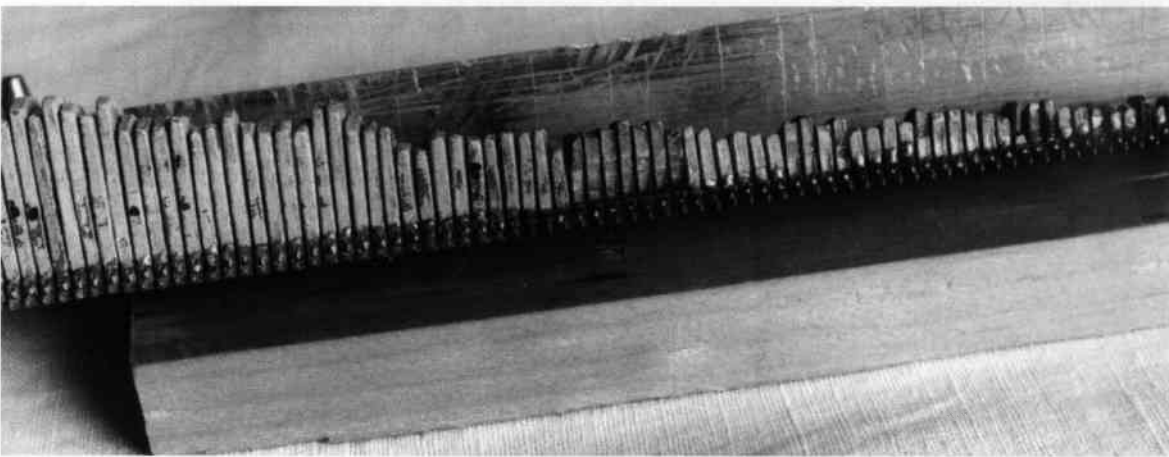
I recently received another restored fine comb movement by Lecoultrre et Falconett which plays four overtures which some of you heard playing at Daphne and Alan Wyatt's New Year meeting at Landbeach. This comb was releaded

and restored by the same workshops as the above and, as a precaution, I will give this a coating of varnish before any corrosion takes place.

Further comments and experiences on this subject will be welcome. ■

*Editors note.*

*On high class building work, Patination Oil is sometimes specified on lead flashings etc. Would this be usable on musical box leads and does any member have experience of this product?*



The seven original leads in the centre of the comb show no sign of corrosion.

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# Copy or Fake

– is a copy (or reproduction) genuine?

by Kevin McElhone

**M**any members will be un-aware of the new mechanical music instruments which are being made today that are exact copies of original instruments made 80 plus years ago. In recent years there have been copies made of Triola 25 note Zither, Ariston Organette, Tanzbar Concertina and some types of Nickelodeon, Banko, Automatic Harp and Violin playing machines. I think the idea of owning a copy is good as long as it looks and sounds the same as the original and, of course, plays the same music. This is especially the case where the original is particularly rare or difficult to find in good restorable condition or perhaps beyond your own modest abilities to restore.

One example I would like to mention is a new copy of a c.1780 French Serinette, a bird-organ. These are currently being made in Belgium by an Italian man and the copies are made from exactly the same types of wood as the original. It is hard to tell the sound from an original, indeed we made this comparison at Alan Wyatt's meeting on New Year's Day 2004, and visually the case looked almost exactly the same. There were several different makers of these instruments originally centred on Mirecourt in France and they all made instruments with slight detail differences, for example, perhaps how they secured the hinge staples to the lid.

These instruments were used by the wealthy to train house pet birds to sing so they usually only played one note at a time. There were usually 10 pipes made of metal, sometimes of wood, and in some rare instruments two sets of pipes were used. I am not clear whether this was to train two different birds which sang at different pitches or some other purpose.

They are pitched rather higher than most pipe organs. They play a

*I think the idea of owning a copy is good as long as it looks and sounds the same as the original...*

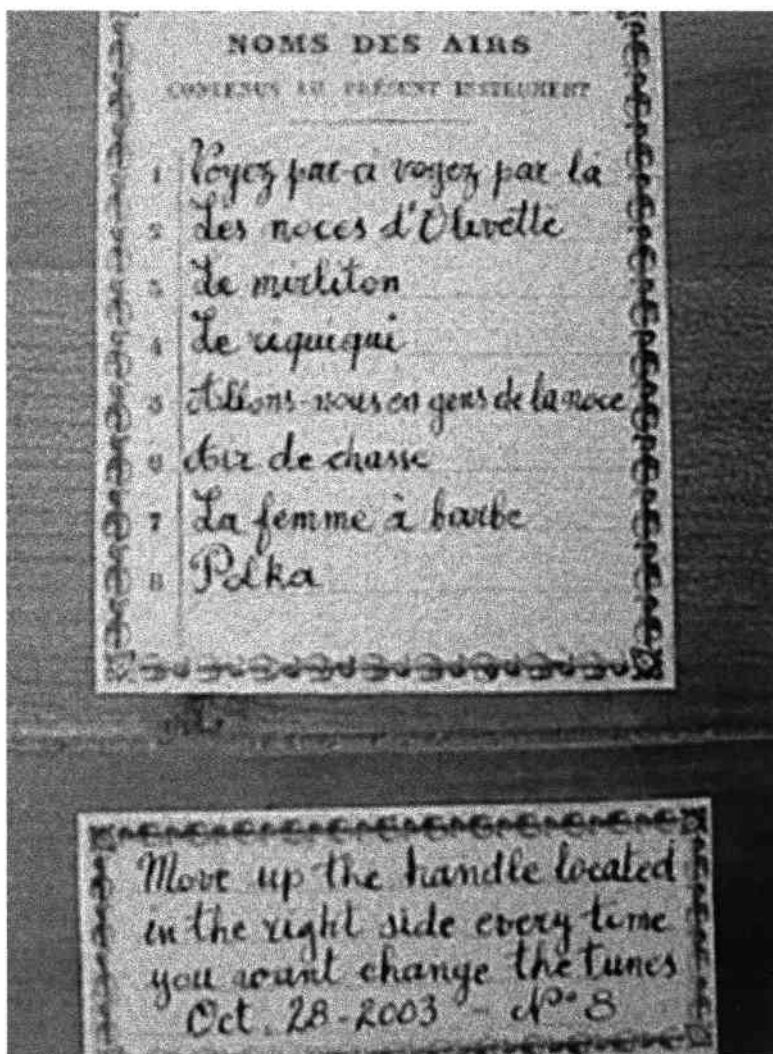


Fig. 1. The tune sheet on one of the new instruments.



Fig. 2. The modern construction follows the original very closely.



wide variety of tunes, most of which take a full revolution of the barrel to play. Some tunes are much shorter and play through twice during one revolution of the barrel.

This particular modern-day maker has nearly 50 original tunes available and customers are invited to selection the tunes they would like to have pinned on the barrel or to have a programme selected by the maker. Additional barrels are, of course, also available.

Like all such projects the quantity produced remains low, currently about ten units have been produced. I

think it is important to encourage people who are prepared to make instruments like this as there are additional benefits like a supplier for replacement pipes for old instruments where the pipes have been squashed and generally mangled beyond repair in the past 220 years!

In a hundred years time it might be difficult to tell these copies from an original except for the date of manufacture written clearly inside - October 2003. So they are not a fake but a good example of a lost art made with skill by someone who obviously would have been happy to work 200

years ago, although he may well like today's comforts as well such as decent lighting in his workshop. ■

*Editors note:*

*I first saw these serinettes when the maker exhibited some parts and drawings at the organ festival in Longiano, Italy, in 1998. It was clear then that the workmanship was of a high order and it is good to see that they are now available. Depending on the prevailing exchange rate, the price is around £900 and details can be obtained from Kevin McElhone on 01536 523988.*

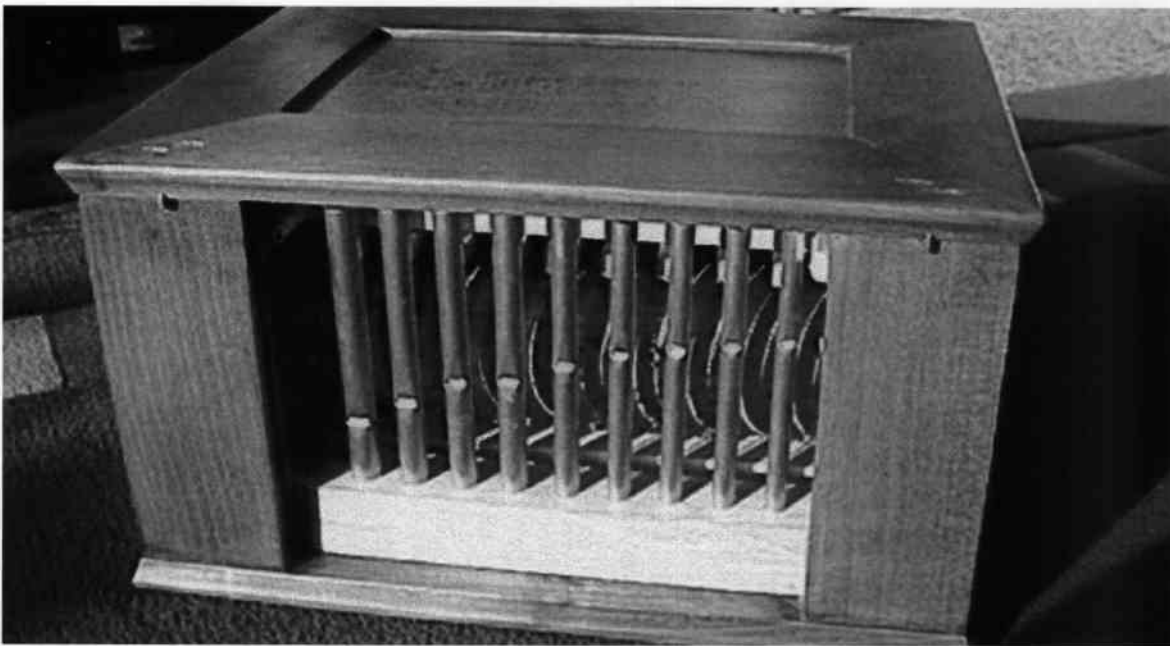


Fig. 3. Front view of the Serinette.

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# Tortoiseshell Repairs

by David A. R. Tallis

**T**ortoiseshell comes from the hawks-bill turtle for which it forms the protective covering for its back. It grows as plates which overlap each other to one third of their total area. The plates are arranged with a line of five down the centre of the back, with four either side of the centre-line, each turtle having 13 plates in all.

Its advantage over horn is that tortoiseshell can be brought to a much higher polish and is naturally decorated in a wide range of colours and patternings. It can be worked in the same way as horn but requires greater skill since it is more brittle. Under the influence of heat up to about 150°F tortoiseshell can be bent to shape quite readily but, if the temperature is raised too much, its basic structure can be attacked and the shell will start to swell, crack and split. At even higher temperatures the shell will char. It is an amorphous material and can thus crack in any direction but, if it is viewed by holding it up to the light, or in reflected light, it is possible to see lines indicating its rate and direction of growth. Only one adhesive has proved practical with tortoiseshell – Araldite.

## To Polish Shell

Use medium wet/dry paper with water and sand down until the surface is flat. If adhesive has been

used, rub until all signs of the Araldite have been removed. Scratches left by the first treatment are removed by using fine wet/dry paper. Now apply pink burnishing paste (jewellers rouge) with a soft cloth, rubbing in the direction of the previous polishing until all roughness disappears. Polish with a dry duster but, if scratches still show, repeat the treatment with fine paper. To re-polish dulled shell, you can use metal polish such as Brasso.

## Tortoiseshell Repairs A Crack

Ease the crack apart and insert Araldite with a modelling knife or small spatula. Hold the crack shut with an elastic band and allow it to set – on a radiator if available. When hard clean off and polish.

## Joining a break

Clean the pieces, but be careful to preserve the profile. Apply a minimum of Araldite to both surfaces, making sure all of each surface is coated. Press the pieces together and leave on a radiator to set. Constantly check the joint for position until it can support itself. When hard, clean off and polish.

## Missing piece

Make the profile of the missing area easy to match. If possible make it a straight line or a simple curve. Look at the patterning and

select a piece of shell which matches it as nearly as possible. Cut the piece to the profile with a metal fret saw, but keep the piece oversize. File away by small degrees until the piece fits snugly. Do this by holding the piece in place and filling only at points of contact until the contact is complete. Keep open side proud to avoid any chance of the piece ending up too small. Stick in the piece, allow it to set thoroughly, sand down level and then polish.

## Useful Tips

If angular or curved pieces are to be joined, the adhesive will be sufficient on its own. If the joint is straight and unsupported, it is better to peg the pieces with short lengths of shell dowel. Whenever possible, fill a gap with shell – Araldite will show although it can be disguised by the addition of a little colouring agent. Tortoiseshell can be welded by pressure under steam heat. When remaking an old join, clean off all traces of the old adhesive first. You can impart a good shine on to tortoiseshell using the palm of your hand. ■

*First published in The Music Box – Volume 3, No.3.*

*Editors Note: As trade in products derived from animals, such as ivory, is now banned, we may have to turn to substitutes for some repairs. An artificial tortoiseshell is available from; GPS Agencies Unit 3, Hambrook Business Centre, Cheesemans Lane, Hambrook, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8XP Tel.01243 574444. They have a very realistic 'tortoiseshell' in sheet form 0.5mm thick- Colour 16052 - and in bar form 25mmx35mm. The sheet material could be very good for repairs to inlaid work whilst the bar could be cut to the right thickness for case work. The same company also have substitutes for ivory and ebony – just the job if you are restoring a keyboard instrument.*

*Look at the patterning and select a piece of shell which matches it as nearly as possible.*



A typical tortoiseshell-cased snuff box.

# Reunited in the Workshop

The Music Box

- From Egyptian plywood to broken sound boards, by Peter Howard

**T**here are many examples of a cabinet maker using a flat single-layer panel of softwood to form a dust protecting back to a structure, the bottom of a drawer, or a sound-board for a musical instrument. This construction method is justified for sound-boards because the acoustic requirements outweigh the strength disadvantage, but it is difficult to see why such a fragile technique was adopted for non-musical applications when the much stronger alternative of plywood had been invented by the Egyptians some 3500 years B.C. Perhaps it was that the industrial production of bulk quantities of plywood did not commence until the 1890s.

Whatever the reason for adopting this construction method, we are occasionally faced with the problem of one of these single layer panels being split along the grain. This damage may have been caused by maltreatment or by natural contraction of the timber as it completed the seasoning process. This short article describes a couple of ways to overcome some of the difficulties in re-uniting the resultant pieces.

The first example is of a panel which will slide out from the locating slots in adjacent panels and is typified by the back of a small pipe organ. Once removed, the flimsy nature of a large six millimetre thick sheet of softwood is immediately apparent. Any attempt to clamp the unsupported pieces back together whilst a glue joint dries will at best result in a banana shaped outcome or, more likely, in a realistic attempt to mimic a mouse-trap as the parts suddenly explode from the clamps and hurtle across the workshop. Figure one illustrates how I have employed two separate battens, clamped to the opposite edges of the panel, to maintain secure alignment

of the parts whilst the glue joint cures. Both battens are first clamped to one panel part. These overhang like a pair of outriggers. The second section of the damaged panel is then pushed tightly against the first, sides in line, and the clamps applied between it and the battens. Here we have another case for using modern glues with the best adhesive properties – after all this joint does not need to come apart again for any future restoration work! For this technique to work, it is important to locally apply small pieces of aluminium kitchen foil between the panel and the battens to prevent the latter becoming a permanent part of the end product. Before starting, it is important to ensure the break in the panel is a clean break. In order that a nice snug fit is obtained, any loose splinters or foreign bodies need to be removed prior to making the joint. I strongly recommend a 'dry run' to check before applying the sticky stuff.

The advantage of the described process is that it may all take place on the work bench, away from the main carcass of the piece being restored. However, a split sound board in a cartel musical box is most likely to be captive within the grooves of the four box sides so, unless the sides of the box itself have parted company and the sound-board can be extracted, we have to adopt a different technique. (If the box sides have come apart then you have my sympathy!) My experience is that the sound-board is not glued in the side grooves. The broken parts may therefore be slid together, provided sufficient pressure can be applied in the right direction. It is simply a matter of devising a scheme. My method for pulling the broken parts together within the assembled box sides is illustrated in figure two. For clarity, only one end is shown assembled. The same set up of clamps has to be duplicated at the other end of the box and the two assemblies need to

be drawn together, in parallel. The whole set-up requires a minimum of two sash cramps and four 'G' cramps of five or six inch capacity. The 'G' cramps hold wood blocks tightly against the sound-board and the sash cramps then act on these blocks to close the joint.

Proceed with caution because a surprising amount of pressure may be applied by this clamping method. What you may think to be immovable will shift quite easily but what is not intended to move may equally easily break and move with potentially disastrous results.

If a sound board in your box will not slide in the side grooves, the split has to be tidied to snugly accept a new strip of similar timber which can be glued and driven into place - but that is an exercise outside the scope of this article. ■



Fig. 1. First operation.

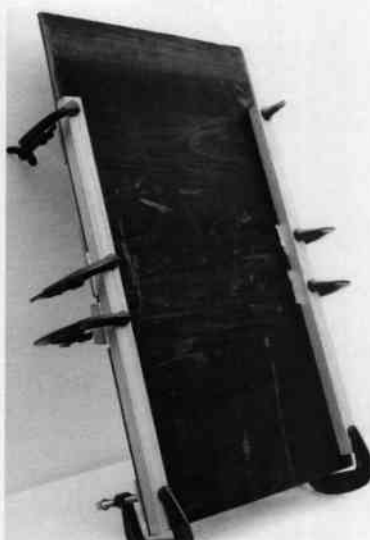


Fig. 2. All clamped together.

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*...the much stronger alternative of plywood had been invented by the Egyptians some 3500 years B.C.*

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# Greisbaum Whistlers

by Robin Biggins

**W**ay back in 1995, Joseph Schumacher wrote a comprehensive article for the Journal about the Karl Greisbaum whistling figures (Spring, 1995, page 23), and I thought as a follow-up someone might be interested in the double whistler illustrated in photo 2.

Some double figures play two songs consecutively as explained in the above article, but this one plays the same tune in harmony as a duet. As can be seen in photo 2, the two movements are connected by an idler gear, which keeps them synchronized. It also helps with the sound volume since they both whistle at the same time.

The other fascinating aspect of these figures is the exquisite carving; particularly the detail shown in the faces. Another "Charlie Chaplin" figure is so well carved it needs no explanation of who it represents! Obviously, some artists were better carvers than others and this is no doubt reflected in the recent prices for these very collectible novelties. ■

*The other fascinating aspect of these figures is the exquisite carving;...*



Charlie Chaplin.



Double Whistler.



# Ashorne Hall Sale

- report by Alan Pratt on the sale of the Graham Whitehead collection

**A**shorne Hall, in Warwickshire, has a rather special place in the world of mechanical music. Described as a 'Nickelodeon', it was the creation of Graham Whitehead who, for ten years, was editor of *The Music Box*. It was a place where mechanical music was played and enjoyed, unlike so many museum-style collections. Since its opening in 1991, Ashorne has been a popular venue for Musical Box Society meetings and an introduction to the delights of mechanical music for many in the Midlands.

Graham's first 'Nickelodeon' was opened in Napton in 1982 in a converted chapel. The centrepiece was, as at Ashorne, the Compton organ which was originally at The Regal, Hammersmith.

Even before his sudden death in May 2003, Graham had decided to sell much of his collection to concentrate on his cinema organ concerts. The sale, at Christie's on March 18th, was unusual for the number of 20th century organs and orchestrions. Indeed, it is the first sale of such a collection at a London auction house since 1981.

The viewings, for three days prior to the sale, were well attended. MBSGB members were out in force and it was enjoyable to hear again

many of the instruments which have given so much pleasure over the years.

The 73 note Racca piano melodica in a painted case with Horas decoration made a modest £2,300, whilst the next lot, a very sweet-sounding Bacigalupo barrel organ, realised £5,300 - well above the estimate (fig.1). An Oehrlein 33 note keyless organ with automaton figure (figs.2 and 3) made £4,500, and a Hicks style piano - also with animated figures - made £4,000.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4. Ramey banjo.



Fig. 4a. Close-up of Fig. 4.





Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.

Several smaller instruments went for around their estimates, but it was the larger instruments which attracted most attention. A Ramey mechanical banjo realised over £26,000 (fig.4) and a near-life sized accordion player made a surprising £23,900 (fig.5).

The Poppers Happy Jazz Band (Fig.6) remained unsold, but the various automaton figures (fig.7) proved popular, with a Pierrot "writer" by Michel Bertrand going to over £10,000 (see front cover of this issue). A rather splendid mandolin box with extravagant carving to sides and lid made £8,900 (fig.8). A Gothic-style trumpeter clock with the trumpeter emerging from behind double doors (fig.9) realised £3,100, but the Decap 105 key jazz organ made a very modest £3,300 (fig.10).

Keeping the best to last, as usual at auctions, the final lot was the Wurlitzer cinema organ which was originally installed in the Plaza Cinema, Piccadilly, in the "Twenties" (fig.11). The price of £29,800 makes an interesting comparison with the original cost of £5,796.11s.3d. in 1926!

Another collection dispersed; let us hope that the instruments give as much pleasure to their new owners as they did at Ashorne Hall. ■

*(All prices quoted in this report are inclusive of the Buyers Premium.)*

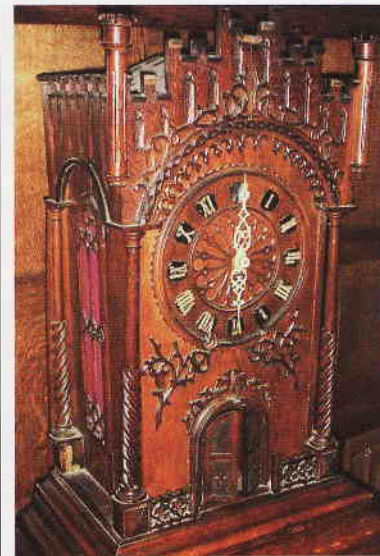


Fig. 9.





Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



*Some of  
the larger  
instruments.*

Fig. 12. The magnificent Compton, on stage at Ashorne Hall.

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## ...a growing movement

By John Smith

2003 saw the first organised gatherings especially for Amateur Organ Builders at a number of leading Steam Fairs and we were very lucky to receive support from the organisers of these events. There are always doubts about changes to a set pattern, but the world is changing for everyone and it would seem that our contribution to these events was seen as a welcome one.

Our first gathering was at Banbury where a marquee was provided. At first this looked as if we would be lost in it, but as things got underway it proved to be just big enough. Thanks to Brian Wells for his help.

Lincoln was our next event where Dorothy Robinson had allocated the small walled garden as our base, with some awnings erected for our displays. The Great Dorset Steam Fair did us proud with a large marquee next to the model tent. Once again this seemed over generous but when we were set up it all looked very nice and attracted a lot of attention.

Finally there was a display table provided at the Donnington Park Model Engineering Exhibition. Not

too many entrants for this as it clashed with the BOGA AGM. However an unexpected bonus was that my 98 MIDI Dance Organ won first prize and Brian Oliver's Universal 26 won 2nd in the miscellaneous section.

For the participants, all these events were seen as a success. We were assembled as a group and able to discuss our organ building amongst ourselves and with the general public, who seemed totally amazed when they realised that all our organs were home built. It seems that one amateur organ can be overlooked but a dozen together are irresistible.

There was a very sad event for us all when Arthur Butcher died suddenly, he had attended Banbury and had a wonderful time, but died soon after attending the Hunstanton Street Grind. I should add that Arthur had become a very enthusiastic organ grinder and very innovative builder. I shall always remember Arthur as someone who really came to life when a member of the public showed an interest in his organ building. His own design home made organ sounded lovely at Banbury, but the cart was something else, it was like Dr Who's Tardis

there was a compartment for everything, sandwiches, broom, tool box, Avo meter, I would not have been surprised if he had even pulled an oscilloscope from within. In fact it was a test bed on wheels, with a view to ending up as an organ that could play every conceivable form of music format.

In 2004 we are expecting to repeat our Rally appearances and possibly add a few more venues. One event, which should prove very interesting will be at Dorset, where we plan to be seen building an organ on site in the 5 days of the event. Edward Murray Harvey will be composing and cutting a special piece of music for the occasion. The finished organ will be auctioned for charity. This has to be something never seen before.

As a result of our first season there is a general view that we should form some sort of group and with this in mind we are holding a social gathering of Amateur Organ Builders where we can hopefully get things underway. Peter Hood is offering facilities for this at his home in Kent. If you are an Amateur Organ Builder and interested in joining any of our activities please contact me. ■



...we plan to be seen building an organ on site in the 5 days of the event.

Email [johnsmithbusker@supanet.com](mailto:johnsmithbusker@supanet.com)

John Smith, 55 Willow Way, Flitwick, Bedford, MK45 1LN Please include SAE for reply.

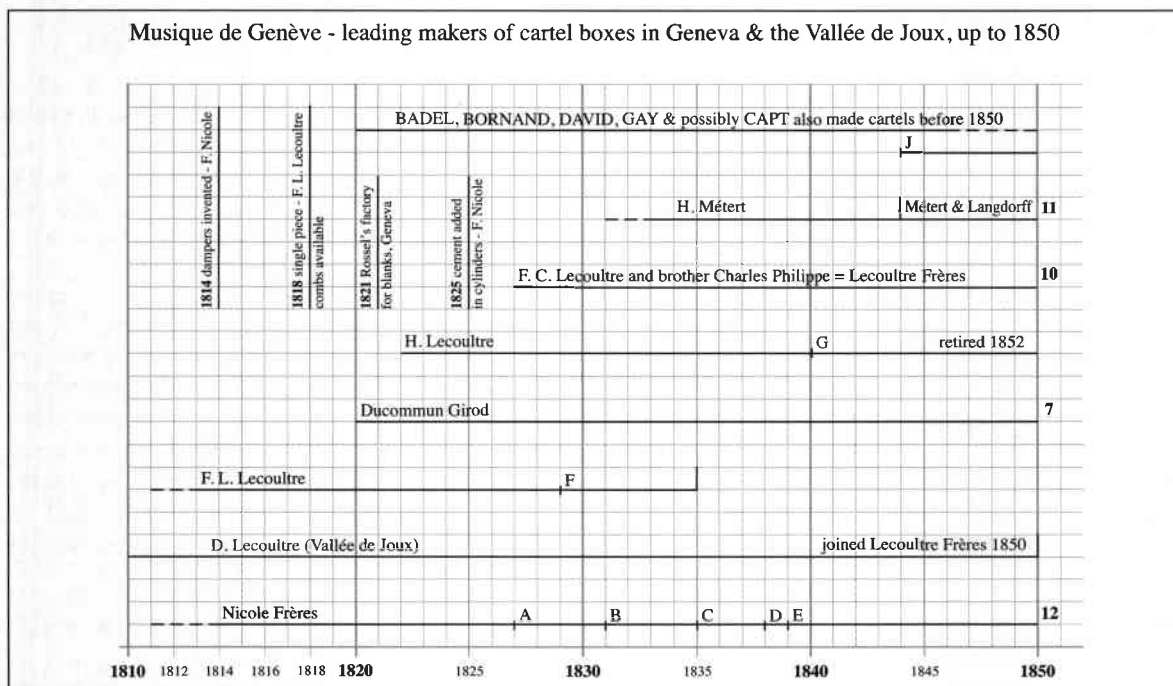


Fig. 1. Geneva makers, 1796 to 1850. Events marked on the chart:-

- A - Nicole stopped buying combs from Antoine Lecoultrre in 1827.
- B - serial numbers reached 10,000 in 1831, mostly on petites musiques.
- C - the brothers were François, and David who died in 1830. By 1835 François had handed over to his young assistants, David and Pierre Nicole.
- D - made only cartel boxes after 1838.
- E - serial numbers in 1839 included 18860 with FRERES NICOLE and 18863 with NICOLE FRERES on their respective tune sheets.
- F - F.L. Lecoultrre died in 1829. His brother Henri ran the business until about 1835
- G - Henri Lecoultrre was in partnership with Granger, 1840 - 1844.
- J - Jean Billon making blanks in 1844, with foundry marking JB on bedplates.

### How did it all start?

I started off my second book with a chart showing the Geneva makers of cartel musical boxes from 1850 until 1902. That was a labour-saving device, because the pre-1850 history was very obscure. Now it is a bit less obscure, so here is my attempt at showing the pre-1850 years, as charted in Fig. 1.

The Favre invention, published in 1796, was specifically aimed at replacing carillon bells and strikers in watches with comb teeth. Its announcement was at first overshadowed by threats of war with France and by the invasion of Geneva in 1798.

Despite this serious inconvenience, which was not removed until 1814, the highly skilled watchmakers of Geneva and their closely-linked compatriots in the Vallée de Joux provided a fertile ground for the invention to develop its potential. By the early 1800s its musical value was already starting to overtake watch making, and small musical movements were ready to form an industry of their own.

Workers in the Vallée de Joux were spared some of the war stresses suffered in Geneva and probably made even better progress with the new technique; but their efforts are less well recorded. Incidentally, valuable information about making petites musiques was obtained from the Lecoultrres in the Vallée and taken to Ste. Croix by Abraham Cuendet in 1811.

These historical notes about the early makers keep getting repeated, - and occasionally verified. What really adds to our knowledge about them are facts about what they produced, and when they did it. That is the aim of the chart in Fig. 1. It provides a framework for adding facts with their dates, and examples are noted in the caption. It also reminds us about some of the important unknown facts and dates, such as the range of blanks available by 1820 and the date of the first Grand Format box. A similar chart is sorely needed for Ste. Croix... who'll have a go? The MBSI's English translation of the Piguet

book will be a big help.

The Geneva chart for 1850 and onwards was first published in Oddments 46, Vol 14 page 202, autumn 1990. Here in Fig. 2 it comes again with sundry corrections, improved art-work(!), and more information in the caption notes. It is, after all, an inescapable bed-fellow of Fig. 1.

### Searching for Clues

Several makers turned out lots of those attractive 8 inch 4-air boxes in the late 1830s and the 1840s. They came in tight-fitting plain cases with end flap enclosing the three control levers, and often only a side-hook lid fastener. They have useful combs with about 100 teeth playing generally attractive melodies. They make a pleasing addition to any collection and in my experience their quality is no better if they carry the stamp of a famous maker.

Most of them are anonymous; but it is worth gathering all the information they offer, from which useful fixes sometimes emerge. A typical example made in about

Musique de Genève - makers of cartel musical boxes in Geneva, 1850-1902

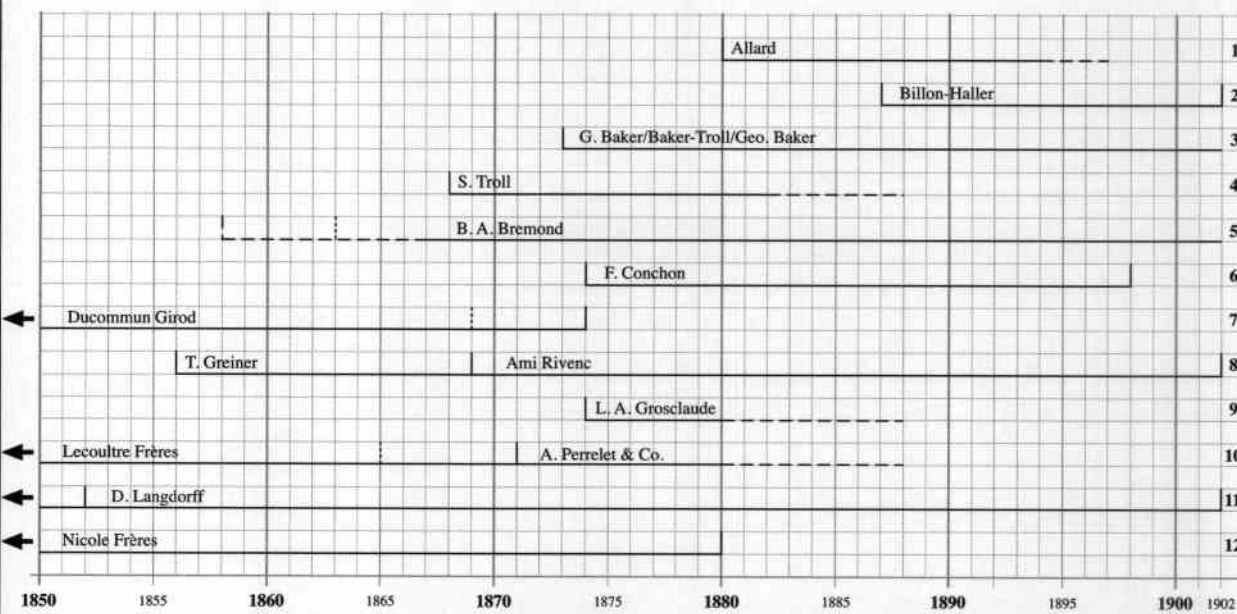


Fig. 2. Summary of 12 Geneva makers:-

1. D. Allard & Sandoz or D. Allard & Cie. on the tune sheets, to 1897 or beyond.
2. Jean Billon's father set up the firm SBI in 1862 from roots in 1844, and his son added musical boxes in 1887 until 1902.\*\*
- 3 & 4. Geo. Baker (1873 - 1906) and S. Troll (1868 - ??) had at least one period of partnership between 1880 and 1890.
5. B. A. Bremond, 1858 - 1906, started in partnership with T. Greiner until 1863.
6. F. Conchon, 1867 - 1898.
7. Ducommun Girod 1820 - 1874. From 1869, Ducommun et Cie.
8. Théodore Greiner from about 1855, and a 5-year spell with Bremond, until taken over by Ami Rivenc in 1869.\*\*
9. L.A.Grosclaude, 1874 to a few years after 1880. He worked previously with A. Perrelet, 1871 to 1874.
10. François Charles Lecoultre ran Lecoultre Frères until 1865 when he handed over to his son, Charles François who sold it to August Perrelet in 1871. He continued, with their serial numbers, until about 1890.
11. David Langdorff took over the Métert and Langdorff business until his death in 1873. Then his son John ran it as Langdorff et Cie. until 1898, when he renamed it J. Langdorff up to 1902. \*\*Then it joined the Société Anonyme des Fabriques Réunies des Boîtes à Musique, Anciennes Maisons RIVENC, LANGDORFF ET BILLON.
12. Frères Nicole, formally established in 1815, became Nicole Frères about 1835, ceased production in 1879, and became an agent in London from 1880.

\*\* These three merged in 1902. I have not seen any report on their subsequent output.

1840 is shown in Fig. 3, with the remnant of its tune sheet in Fig. 4. This tune sheet is 6½ by 3¼ inches (165 by 95mm) which suits the larger group of pin holes and the lighter area of the lid. So quite likely the smaller group of pin holes were for the maker's tune sheet, discarded after copying by the selling agent.

The brass bedplate has no casting marks, but the bass end back corner has three stamps: VALOGNE, probably an agent; a lone figure 2; and the "T.P/o" mark often seen but not yet attributed, Fig. 5. Tune 1 is pinned on the dots in the tune gap.

The main blank number is 16 N which is stamped as usual on the bass end of the bedplate as seen in Fig. 6. It is also stamped on both cylinder and spring bearings and underneath the governor block and

on the great wheel, see Fig. 7. The other blank number is 20, scribed on the bass end cylinder cap and on the comb base, and stamped

underneath the bedplate, Fig. 8. In each case the number 183 is scribed nearby, possibly the gamme number.

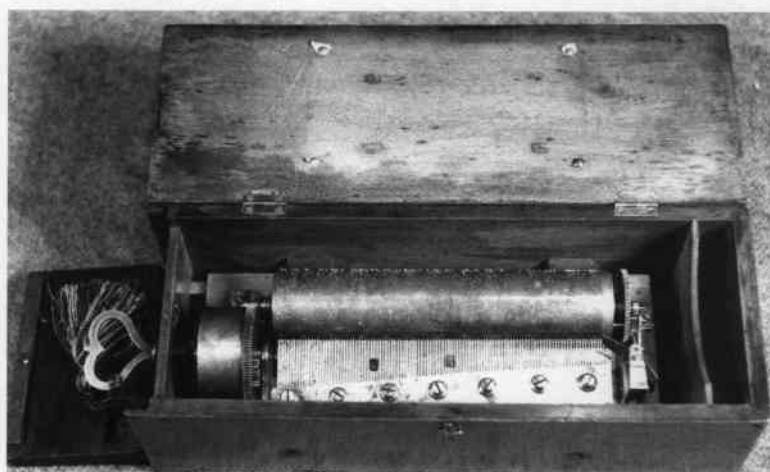


Fig. 3. Typical 1840s 8" 4-air box, serial number probably 11224 as shown on its tune sheet. Marked teeth are a 440 and 880Hz. An admirer of long ago embellished the brass key with a classy multi-coloured silken tassel.

...and the  
"T.P/o" mark  
often seen  
but not yet  
attributed,...



## musical box oddments no. 101

The comb base is stamped with the compact VC shown in Fig. 9. It stands for Vacheron and Constantine who were a watchmaking partnership in Geneva from before 1800 and also made musical movements and automata. Whether they were also agents or actually made combs is not known. Time may tell. They certainly supplied this comb.

Though this box is typical of its type, it does present two very unusual features. One is the female geneva stop for the spring, as shown in Fig. 10. The other is the pair of

slots filed under the comb base to help in lifting the comb from the bedplate. They are not the usual angled slots, but are strictly rectangular. And here is an interesting match – both items can be seen in the 1980 Ord-Hume book *Musical Box* on page 149, plate 65. That box is also reported to be freely stamped with the dagger mark here shown in Fig. 6.

There are two more stamped marks on the bedplate of serial 11224. I have put them both in Fig. 11, together with a closer look at the dagger twice mentioned above.

### Blanks marked with number and letter

Way back in 1989, in *Oddments* 40, Vol. 14 page 30 (or my second book page 4) I noted that blank numbers were occasionally accompanied by a letter. That happens on serial 11224; so I searched, and found two other examples. Both Nicoles! One is 30 with P on serial 17311 made 1837, in *Oddments* 40 mentioned above. The other is 31 with N on serial 18860 made 1839, in *Oddments* 68 (page 134 of Vol 17). (Digressing, I apologise for my error on that page 134 where I wrongly transposed the N and the P in the text and the caption for Fig 7.)

This style of blank numbering being so unusual, I have added Figs 12 and 13, examples from Nicole 18860. They show the rare female stop and numbering under the governor block, - both fads of this blank maker. So I think we can say without doubt that he



Fig. 4. Remnant of the contemporary replacement tune sheet, the hand-ruled borders with a few decorative squiggles, a cartouche for 11224, and the dampers note neatly abbreviated to Etouffoirs Spiraux. The latest legible tune is no. 3, 1836.

They show the rare female stop and numbering under the governor block, - both fads of this blank maker.



Fig. 5. Left side back of 11224 bedplate, with figure 2 in the usual serial number position.



Fig. 6. Bass edge of bedplate. The figure 6 at far left not yet explained. The dagger below letter N may perhaps represent agent Ami Geneux.

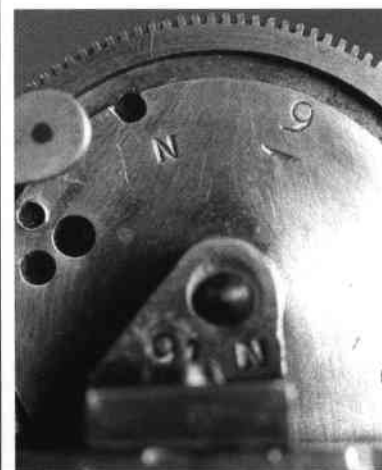


Fig. 7. N and 16 stamped on great wheel and cylinder bearing. The figure 1 is by a home-made stamp, a fairly common economy.

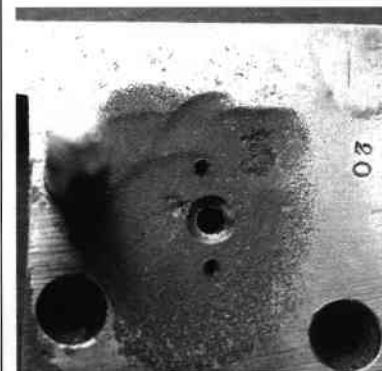


Fig. 8. Unexplained number 20 stamped under the bedplate, at left side back.

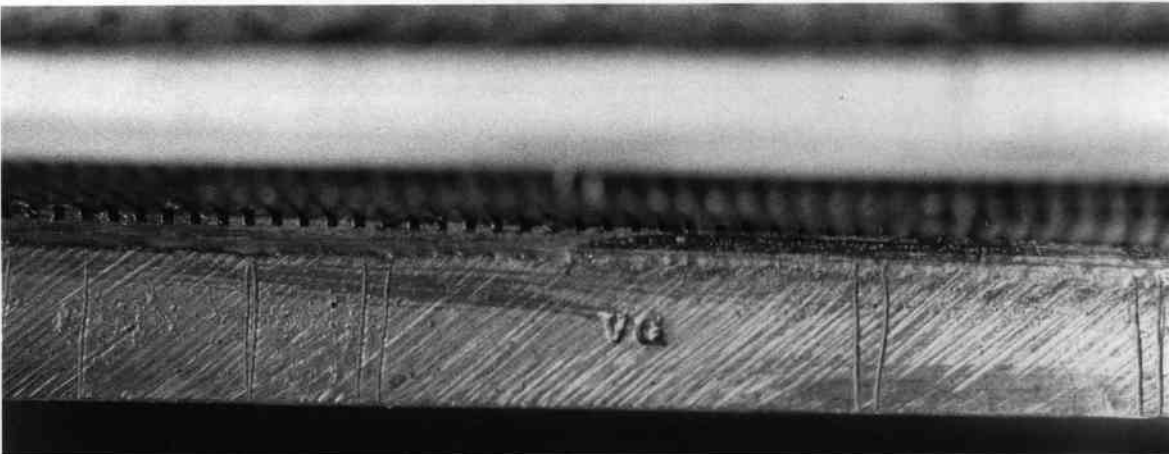


Fig. 9. Serial 11224 comb base with the VC stamp, and sparse pitch markings.

supplied the blanks for these three boxes. Although most of the blank makers must have supplied several musical box makers, I think this is the first specific case on record. Unfortunately, it still does not tell us who made serial 11224.

### Valogne tune sheets

Etienne Blyelle has established that Valogne used tune sheets with V.L.G. in the top border cartouche... for example, no. 290 in the MBSI series.

### Zither Controls

I think only two boxes with zithers operated by a third control lever are on record. The first was in Oddments 88, Vol. 20 page 24 – Bremond 43534, Harpe Eolienne made about 1881.

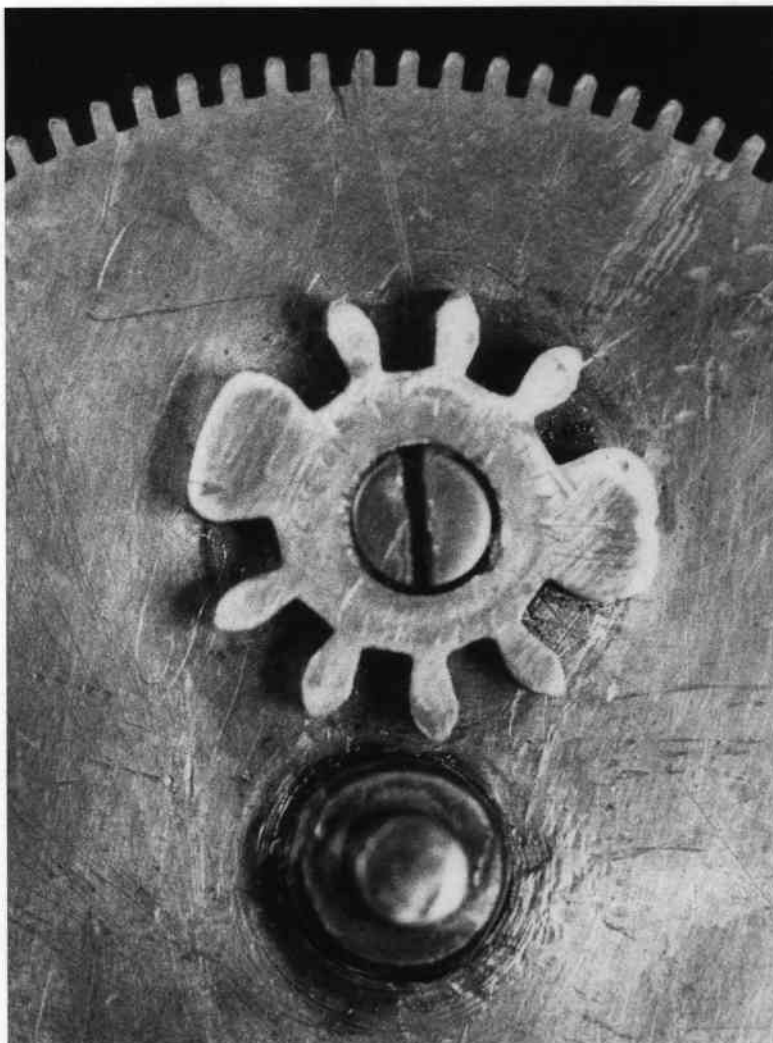


Fig. 10. The rare type of female geneva stop, with two stop positions and a choice of three or four lobes between them. The male peg awaits restoration.



Fig. 11. From top: 1 PR on bedplate under comb; -CP on treble edge of bedplate, both so far unexplained; and a close look at the dagger from Fig. 6.

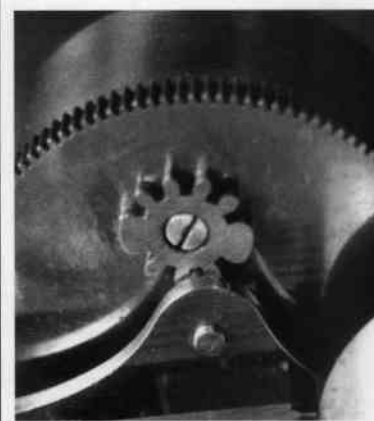


Fig. 12. Female stop on serial 18860 – compare Fig. 10.

*Etienne Blyelle has established that Valogne used tune sheets with V.L.G. in the top border cartouche... for example, no. 290 in the MBSI series.*

## musical box oddments no. 101

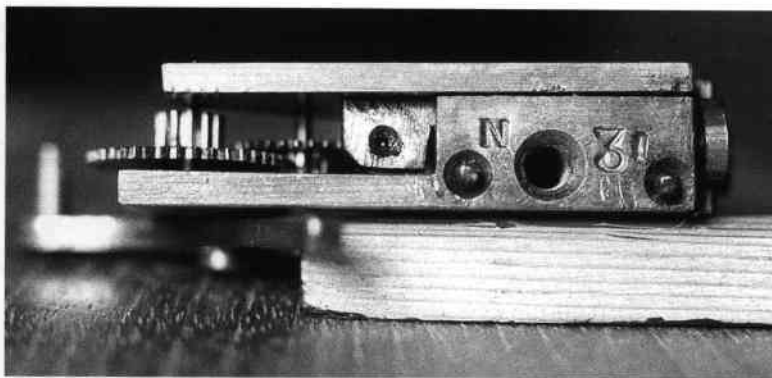


Fig. 13. Blank letter and number under 18860 governor. Note home-made stamp for the figure 1.



Fig. 14. Geo. Bendon's standard type of tune sheet, here pencilled 20979 in the top border. All tunes before 1837 except no.1, 1845 and no.5, 1859.

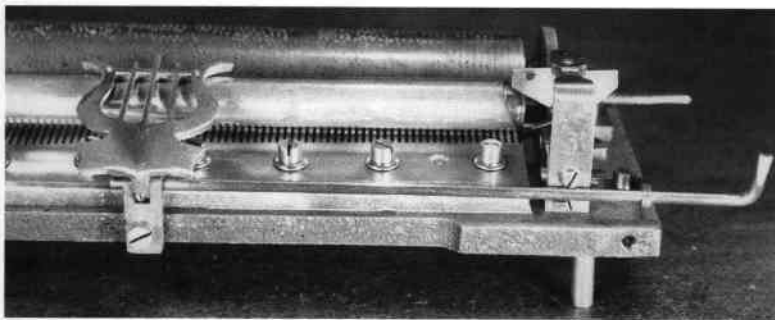


Fig. 15. Zither mounted from the bedplate with control rod fixed by a set screw to permit adjustment. The full-length tissue tube is cut away to clear the governor fan blades.

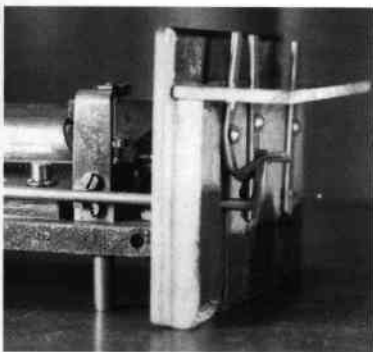


Fig. 16. The control rod end is bent to engage a third control lever.

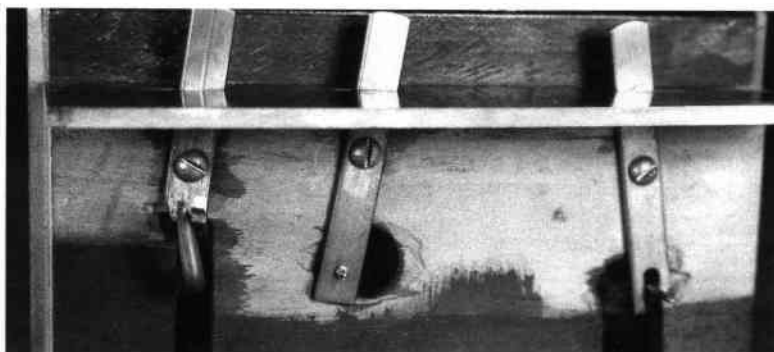


Fig. 17. The slot in the control panel fixes the on and off positions of the lever. The position of the zither is adjusted by the set screw.

The second is reported here. It is a classy six air 11" (28cm) mandoline box, the 103 tooth comb having groups up to five teeth. It has blank number 6 sparsely stamped on a few cylinder, spring and governor parts. Serial number 979 is scribed on the bass lead and stamped on cylinder and on great wheel beside that unexplained fairly common asterisk-shaped stamp.

The tune sheet is in Fig. 14, and on it the serial number has been seriously boosted to 20979. That really must be the true serial number; if not it was a strange whim of agent Geo. Bendon and very unlikely.

The case interior is black; the spring and governor are screwed from above the bedplate; and there is banding as well as stringing and flower inlay on the case. So its date must be into the 1880s despite the fact that its latest tune is dated 1859.

Despite this mystery it is worth reporting because the zither control was working, as shown in Figs. 15, 16, and 17.

I am not in favour of Zithers on any single-comb boxes, except possibly Guitare, but I tried several settings.... light, medium and heavy applications; and then favouring treble end or favouring bass end. Every setting simply demeaned the comb performance. I found it very strange that this zither with special control system should have been fitted by the maker and presumably welcomed by an experienced agent like Bendon. Possibly it was just in the first mad flush of the "zither mania" period. ■

I am pleased to say that recent computer problems have been partially resolved and that the entering of data into the Register file can be resumed. The old program is still being used having found a rather round about way of making it work within Windows. All is not lost!

The problem of transferring data into a Windows based database program still remains and will no doubt cause a few headaches in the future, but for the moment the old adage "if it 'aint broke, don't fix it" applies

It has been pleasing to receive a good response to my request for more information on Nicole's. One return that came from America proved to be most interesting in that it is the first record of a Nicole box playing a full programme of six Spanish airs. This unusual box is a forte-piano with a ratchet keywind mechanism. The box was sold in London originally and may well have been a special order. I would appreciate it very much if the American member who has this box could contact me again.

It always gives me great pleasure when I can answer a specific request for information. Recently a member asked if I had the programme for a Nicole. It was on the Nicole gamme number file and all the information was there. Extra information was available in that the file noted the serial numbers of other Nicole's playing the same

airs. In this particular case, Nicole had produced two batches of boxes with serial numbers a thousand or so apart.

I know that the owner of the box will be able to fix a replacement tune sheet on the box and make it look that little bit more complete.

On the subject of fitting replacement tune sheets, I believe that it is better to use any replacement card as it is rather than trying to "age" it to make it look like an original. To my mind this never works and is easily spotted. An honest replacement is far better. As to the writing on a replacement card, I am not too sure what should be done. There are all sorts of stencils and templates available in Art shops these days which do make it possible for an amateur to imitate copperplate handwriting in an acceptable way. Most desk top publishing computer programs have a bewildering array of fonts and styles hidden away somewhere in the program. The difficulty here is getting a printer to print what is required in the correct place on the card, and that is assuming the printer does not chew the card up!

There are so few calligraphers about these days it is difficult if not impossible to find one brave enough to attempt "old style" writing. The last one I tried complained bitterly about the card quality not being suitable for his pens.

It would be most useful to hear

your views about reproduction tune sheets and more importantly, how to repair and preserve damaged original tune sheets. A series of letters or possibly an article on the topic would help us all. To start it all off, I list below my first three rules that should never be broken:

- a) Never ever use a sticky back tape to repair a torn tune sheet.
- b) Always use proper archive quality acid free card and glues to make any repairs.
- c) Always retain as much of the original as possible. Think and think again before deciding what to trim.

If you have any further ideas or can add to this list, please let the editor know. We can all learn something from a good article. The editor waits!

To those members who are still waiting for a Register print of their register entry, I do apologise. It should get better from now on. Please remember to write any unique Register number underneath the box on the baseboard at the rear left hand side. It acts rather like a car registration number except that you will not get booked for speeding.

Finally, please send any Register returns to c/o 5, East Bight, Lincoln. LN2 1QH.

A few returns are being sent to the editor and whilst he does not mind too much, it is better to get them via the proper route. ■

Arthur Cunliffe.



# Keith Harding

## MUSICAL BOXES

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## nicole listing

## Serial Nos. 30000 - 31998

Nicole Freres. *	30009	6 air. Keywind.	R-4025.	Nicole Freres. *	31023	4 Overture. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-578.
Nicole Freres. *	30015	6 air. Keywind. Hymn box.	R-564.	Nicole Freres. *	31046	8 air. Keywind.	R-6714.
Nicole Freres. *	30022	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-4019.	Nicole Freres. *	31071	6 air. Keywind.	R-3948.
Nicole Freres. *	30023	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-565.	Nicole Freres. *	31077	6 air. Keywind.	R-4277.
Nicole Freres. *	30028	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-566.	Nicole Freres. *	31084	8 air. Oratorio box. Keywind.	R-5900.
Nicole Freres. *	30030	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-4294.	Nicole Freres. *	31086	8 air. Keywind.	R-1695.
Nicole Freres. *	30039	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-5101.	Nicole Freres. *	31096	4 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-2929.
Nicole Freres. *	30040	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-3096.	Nicole Freres. *	31118	3 Overture. Keywind.	R-4282.
Nicole Freres. *	30052	8 air. Keywind.	R-5967.	Nicole Freres. *	30121	8 air. Oratorio box. Keywind.	R-6715.
Nicole Freres. *	30113	4 air. Keywind.	R-6708.	Nicole Freres. *	31134	8 air. Keywind.	R-6156.
Nicole Freres. *	30114	4 air. Keywind.	R-5896.	Nicole Freres. *	31144	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4283.
Nicole Freres. *	30122	8 air. Keywind.	R-5985.	Nicole Freres. *	31147	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-579.
Nicole Freres. *	30136	8 air. Keywind.	R-5940.	Nicole Freres. *	31216	8 air. Keywind.	R-4276.
Nicole Freres. *	30146	8 air. Keywind.	R-5968.	Nicole Freres. *	31222	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-580.
Nicole Freres. *	30161	6 air. Keywind.	R-6710.	Nicole Freres. *	31228	6 air. Keywind.	R-6713.
Nicole Freres. *	30173	3 Overture. Keywind.	R-2787.	Nicole Freres. -	31237	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-581.
Nicole Freres. *	30175	10 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4280.	Nicole Freres. *	31245	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4258.
Nicole Freres. *	30176	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-4295.	Nicole Freres. *	31251	8 air. Keywind.	R-3372.
Nicole Freres. *	30181	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-5888.	Nicole Freres. *	31261	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-2927.
Nicole Freres. -	30185	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-3371.	Nicole Freres. *	31272	6 air. Keywind.	R-2713.
Nicole Freres. *	30200	8 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4023.	Nicole Freres. -	31287	8 air. Keywind.	R-4008.
Nicole Freres. *	30205	8 air. Keywind.	R-5938.	Nicole Freres. *	31301	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-6005.
Nicole Freres. *	30228	4 air. Keywind.	R-6706.	Nicole Freres. -	31304	? air. Keywind.	R-582.
Nicole Freres. *	30250	6 air. Keywind.	R-567.	Nicole Freres. *	31310	8 air. Keywind.	R-5939.
Nicole Freres. -	30295	6 air. Keywind.	R-568.	Nicole Freres. *	31324	8 air. Keywind.	R-2824.
Nicole Freres. *	30298	6 air. Keywind.	R-5379.	Nicole Freres. *	31349	6 air. Keywind.	R-583.
Nicole Freres. *	30300	6 air. Keywind.	R-2783.	Nicole Freres. *	31424	8 air. Keywind.	R-4238.
Nicole Freres. *	30308	6 air. Hymn box. Keywind.	R-6009.	Nicole Freres. *	31499	6 air. Keywind.	R-584.
Nicole Freres. *	30331	8 air. Keywind.	R-3212.	Nicole Freres. *	31507	6 air. Keywind.	R-6002.
Nicole Freres. *	30345	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4256.	Nicole Freres. *	31512	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4237.
Nicole Freres. *	30349	6 air. Mandoline. Keywind.	R-5928.	Nicole Freres. *	31547	8 air. Keywind.	R-585.
Nicole Freres. *	30353	12 air. Keywind.	R-1403.	Nicole Freres. *	31550	8 air. Hymn box. Keywind.	R-5927.
Nicole Freres. *	30382	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-6000.	Nicole Freres. *	31557	8 air. Keywind.	R-5462.
Nicole Freres. *	30392	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-6705.	Nicole Freres. -	31558	8 air. Keywind.	R-5512.
Nicole Freres. *	30407	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-4296.	Nicole Freres. *	31576	4 air. Keywind.	
Nicole Freres. *	30413	3 Overture. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-1693.	Nicole Freres. *	31578	4 air. Keywind.	R-586.
Nicole Freres. *	30414	3 Overture. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-5882.	Nicole Freres. *	31581	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-587.
Nicole Freres. *	30421	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4257.	Nicole Freres. *	31583	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4284.
Nicole Freres. *	30422	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-569.	Nicole Freres. *	31586	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-2772.
Nicole Freres. *	30423	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-2755.	Nicole Freres. *	31594	8 air. Keywind.	R-2735.
Nicole Freres. *	30428	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-6711.	Nicole Freres. *	31598	8 air. Keywind.	R-6016.
Nicole Freres. -	30431	6 air. Keywind.	R-570.	Nicole Freres. *	31603	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-6008.
Nicole Freres. *	30449	8 air. Keywind.	R-5015.	Nicole Freres. -	31607	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-2310.
Nicole Freres. *	30454	8 air. Keywind.	R-4240.	Nicole Freres. *	31608	4 Overture. Grand Format Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-588.
Nicole Freres. *	30455	8 air. Keywind.	R-571.	Nicole Freres. *	31609	4 Overture. Grand Format Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-4324.
Nicole Freres. *	30458	8 air. Keywind.	R-2914.	Nicole Freres. *	31611	4 Overture. Forte-piano. Ratchet wind.	R-1404.
Nicole Freres. *	30527	6 air. Oratorio Box. Keywind.	R-4247.	Nicole Freres. *	31612	6 air. Keywind.	R-5890.
Nicole Freres. *	30539	6 air. Keywind.	R-4026.	Nicole Freres. -	31633	8 air. Keywind.	R-135.
Nicole Freres. *	30541	6 air. Keywind.	R-5862.	Nicole Freres. *	31638	4 Overture. Keywind.	R-2773.
Nicole Freres. *	30597	8 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-572.	Nicole Freres. *	31655	4 air. Keywind.	R-2392.
Nicole Freres. -	30601	8 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-573.	Nicole Freres. *	31671	8 air. Keywind.	R-5941.
Nicole Freres. *	30606	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-2923.	Nicole Freres. *	31679	6 air. Keywind.	R-4497.
Nicole Freres. *	30619	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-3098.	Nicole Freres. *	31683	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-5321.
Nicole Freres. *	30654	6 air. Keywind.	R-574.	Nicole Freres. -	31715	3 Overture. Keywind.	R-1329.
Nicole Freres. *	30682	8 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-6707.	Nicole Freres. *	31825	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-3286.
Nicole Freres. *	30685	3 Overture. Keywind.	R-2391.	Nicole Freres. -	31835	4 air. keywind.	R-4199.
Nicole Freres. *	30690	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-5993.	Nicole Freres. *	31848	8 air. Keywind.	R-2476.
Nicole Freres. *	30813	8 air. Keywind.	R-5656.	Nicole Freres. *	31858	6 air. Keywind.	R-4228.
Nicole Freres. -	30840	6 air. Keywind.	R-3097.	Nicole Freres. *	31887	6 air. Keywind.	R-2736.
Nicole Freres. *	30866	8 air. Keywind.	R-1694.	Nicole Freres. -	31889	6 air. Keywind.	R-4914.
Nicole Freres. *	30884	8 air. Keywind.	R-6712.	Nicole Freres. *	31895	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4340.
Nicole Freres. *	30889	8 air. Keywind.	R-3315.	Nicole Freres. *	31897	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-1405.
Nicole Freres. *	30909	4 Overture Box. Ratchet wind.	R-6253.	Nicole Freres. *	31934	8 air. Keywind.	R-3099.
Nicole Freres. *	30916	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4335.	Nicole Freres. *	31952	6 air. Keywind.	R-4009.
Nicole Freres. *	30933	8 air. Keywind.	R-575.	Nicole Freres. *	31965	8 air. Keywind.	R-5934.
Nicole Freres. *	30944	4 air. Keywind.	R-576.	Nicole Freres. *	31971	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-6024.
Nicole Freres. *	30955	12 air. 2 per turn. Keywind.	R-4281.	Nicole Freres. *	31996	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-4297.
Nicole Freres. *	31020	4 Overture. Grand Format. Keywind.	R-6039.	Nicole Freres. *	31998	6 air. Forte-piano. Keywind.	R-1696.
Nicole Freres. *	31021	4 Overture. Grand Format. Ratchet wind.	R-577.				



# Reg Mayes

**12th August 1923-11th March 2004**

I regret to announce the death of Reg Mayes on the 11th March 2004 after a long period of illness. Having joined the Society as member 1307 in 1977, it was not too long before he became involved in Society business and joined the committee. As he attended all the meetings he also became the reporter for the magazine. The occasional speaker wondered if he had given "that" talk at a meeting as it was not unusual for Reg to catch up on the busy schedule by having a quick nap between sentences.

He attended all the foreign tours and after one eventful day he watched a live performance of William Tell in Switzerland. Waking with a start at the beginning of each scene he took a photograph and went back to his contemplation. We had a good chuckle when he handed us a bundle of about ten photographs on the back of a Swiss gentleman's head and an out-of-focus stage in the background.

He championed fights against the M25 which was to thread its way through green belt land past the edge of Ashstead, against leaded petrol and the pension rights for Electricity Generating Board workers. Reg helped to fit out Churchill's war rooms under Whitehall, and then joined the Fleet Air Arm until the end of the war. He spent his working life in the Electricity Generating industry and would often be seen leaping from his seat on one of our coach trips to video a cooling tower or wind turbine. He would do anything for anybody and was only too happy to demonstrate some of his musical boxes at the slightest excuse. Reg would accommodate foreign members when staying in England and ferry them round to see other collectors. Due to his dogged determination regarding the M25 he gained an 'accolade' from a Cabinet

Minister who referred to him as "a middle class, middle aged hooligan".

Our thoughts go out to Helen, Mike, Naomi and Abby, and I

close with one of Reg's favourite phrases, penned by Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing". ■ **Ted Brown**



Reg Mayes

Dear Registrar,

I read with considerable interest your article in the Winter 2003 issue of the Music Box concerning inlaid lid decorations. The two specimens illustrated in your article were of much assistance in an appreciating the task of understanding the intention of those who applied the decorations to musical boxes.

I read portions of the article to my wife Brenda, and concerning the "cat dressed in Tyrolean costume" I asked if she remembered anything about a "puss in boots". Her reply was "Wasn't that about Dick Whittington?"

So, as I am accustomed to doing when baffled, I sought my scholars' edition (1911) of the Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 28, p.615, portions of which I quote: "The Richard Whittington of history is thus very different from the Dick Whittington of popular legend, which makes him a poor orphan employed as a scullion by the rich merchant, Sir Hugh Fitzwarren, who ventures the cat, his only possession, on one of

his master's ships. Distressed by ill-treatment, he runs away, but turns back when he hears from Holloway the prophetic peal of Bow bells. He returns to find that his venture has brought him a fortune, marries his master's daughter, and succeeds in his business... the story was no doubt popular. When a little later Robert Elstracke, the engraver, published a supposed portrait of Whittington with his hand resting on a skull, he had in deference to the public fancy to substitute a cat; copies in the first state are very rare. Attempts have been made to explain the story as possibly referring to vessels called "cats", which were employed in the North Sea trade, or to the French achat (purchase)"

There have been earlier legends over the past three hundred years concerning such a tale. For example, In Puss and Boots, a poor miller dies and leaves his youngest son nothing but a cat. The son is none too happy about it, either; "...once I've eaten my cat and made a muff out of the fur, I'm sure to

starve," he says. But what a legacy the bequeathed cat turns out to be! The cat in tall boots creates a new identity for the youngest son, the Marquis of Carabas, complete with fine clothes, fields of wheat, a castle stolen from an ogre, and in the end, the respect of the king and the hand of the king's daughter.

My interpretation of the 'message' on the lid of the musical box is that the box was likely a gift to one of the nouveau riche who has pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, so to speak, showing its new owner, the puss in boots, striding from home to make his way in the world. Other interpretations welcomed

Concerning the haggis, well, I guess the message is that between scotch and music, there's bound to be some confusion! I second the suggestion that those who have musical boxes with unusual li decorations be cordially invited to provide us details so that we all might have something with which to mull over our morning coffee. ■

Olin Tillotson

## Book Review

### Mechanical Music Kevin McElhone

This is the second edition of the excellent Shire book by Kevin McElhone. This all-new edition is a comprehensive introduction to mechanical music covering everything from the simplest organettes, through cylinder and disc musical boxes, player pianos, orchestrions, to the larger street and fair organs. Along the way, Kevin describes the many forms of music media and explains some of the operating systems employed. Automata and singing birds are included, as are the toys and novelties intended for children which somehow have managed to survive.

For the beginner this is a good place to start and, even for the more experienced collector, the photographs are interesting and informative as they show some of the more unusual instruments – all in colour. If you want to introduce a friend to the delights of mechanical

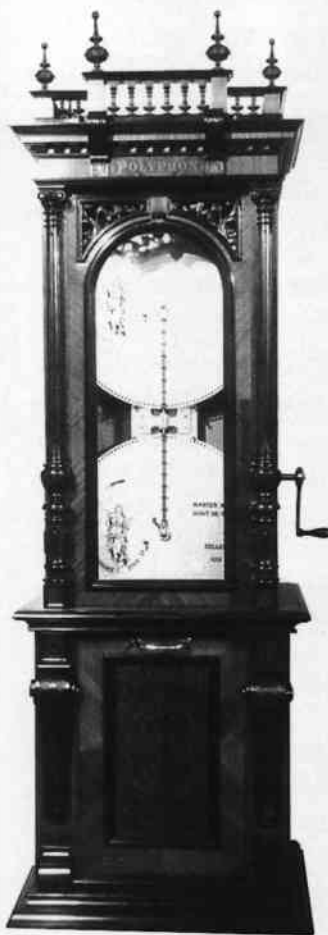
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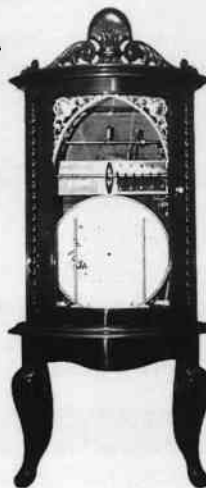
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Copies of Tune Sheet book still available, with free latest supplement, £12 plus £2 p&p (£4 p&p overseas). Can be paid by dollar equivalent cheque. Contact Richard Kerridge or Ted Brown.

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

Troubadour with bells, Polyphon with bells, New Symphonion, Gem roller organ, Kalliston with 2 bells and drum (drum missing) includes 11 music bands. 150 musical box discs and 88 note piano rolls, boxes, L.P. sleeves, C.Ds, last reprint Holzweissig catalogues, Polyphon etc. Contact: Kevin\_McElhone@hotmail.com Tel. No. 01536 523988.

10 x 15.5 inch discs, 8 polyphon, 2 regina for sale at £9 each or £80 the lot. Good condition. Tel: 01522 540406. Email: ison@bight.demon.co.uk

## CLASSIFIED WANTS

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Any old catalogues and musical box ephemera – Ted Brown, 01403 823 533.

Organette music wanted. Any Dolcine card music, any condition. 14-note Melodica and Clariona music (on spools). All other organette music, bands, spools, discs – any condition considered. Contact Ted Brown on 0144403 823 533.

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Contact Alan on tel. 01732-832873, UK.

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