

The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue:

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- Special report - Reuge
- The Story of the Polyphon
- Barrel Piano Rescue



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MECHANICAL MUSIC
AND TECHNICAL APPARATUS

South Kensington, 31 May 2007

CHRISTIE'S

SINCE 1766

From the Editors' Desk

It is still snowing here in Revelstoke. The official word is that 16 feet has fallen so far this winter, though we don't know where it fell, as we only have 6 foot snow banks in our front garden! Probably up the mountains, where it is welcome to stay!

We are at the beginning of a New Volume, and you may notice a few subtle changes to the layout of The Music Box. These hopefully will not cause shock or consternation, nor echo resoundingly around the Society portals, they are introduced in the hope that our Journal may look a little more 'modern' without sacrificing tradition. We are, after all, a society for collectors of antiques, and we feel our magazine should not look exactly 'Space Age'. We hope you will find the changes acceptable. Do write to The Editors if you would like to comment on them!

We have a special centre fold in this issue, largely as a result of our Vice President's visit to Switzerland with a small group of members. It is arranged as a type of supplement so that, should you wish, it can be removed without affecting the pagination or the rest of the magazine. It is a piece of history in its own right and we thank and compliment President Arthur for supporting this work. It is a rare privilege to have a tour around the Reuge factory, and the supplement will be of lasting interest to the vast majority of us.

We have some interesting articles in this issue. We commence a multi-part series on repairing small musical movements - In the Workshop contains a wealth of information on

'do-it-yourself' repairs to the more modern small cylinder mechanisms that lurk in items many of us have in our collections.

Collector's Showcase highlights a less common approach to mechanical music, the ephemera that supplements the hardware and software - perhaps the 'firmware' in computer-speak!

We all had to start somewhere in our collecting field. For Colin Durham it came through LP records of instruments. Your editors remember visits to Keith Harding's shop in Hornsey and the purchase of LP records from his excellent stock, then the journey home impatiently anticipating hearing them for the first time! The Story of the Polyphon struck a chord, as it were, with us.

Our regular contributors are also with us, and make fascinating reading as always.

Happy New Year!

Auction Flyer for Salisbury Mechanical Music auction Security issue

You may have recently received an auction flyer advertising the impending sale of the collection of the late Mr Wooton.

We have been asked to point out that all labelling and mailing was carried out by Society volunteers, and that no membership details have been released to outside agencies.

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Front Cover

A Don Giovanni,
a 144-note instrument.
see the special report, centrefold

The Editors welcome articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editors expressly reserve 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 Editors.

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ESSEX MEETING

The next Essex group meeting will be held at 10.30 on Saturday 31st. March 2007 . The meeting will be held in the Parish Centre of Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh, Essex.

A wide range of topics and speakers has been arranged, including a members' forum where members can bring along their instruments to demonstrate, ask questions etc.

Kevin McElhone will be bringing his "shop", so please contact him direct if there is anything specific you wish to purchase from him. Tea and coffee will be provided, but lunch will be 'bring your own'.

The church is very easy to find as it is the big church at the north end of the High Street (which is a one way system). The parish centre is behind the church and is accessed by following the road around the church and taking the first left into Rectory Garth. The car park is 100 yards on the left.

Rayleigh is about 30minutes from the Dartford River crossing, so members from Kent would be very welcome.

If possible please let me know if you are coming, so that I can ensure we have sufficient tea, milk etc.

Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting,

Bruce Allen
Tel. no. 01702 232040

President's Message No.3

In this the first journal of 2007, I would like to take the opportunity of expressing a few thoughts as to how I would like to see the Society develop in both this and future years.

I believe that all Societies and Clubs face an uncertain future as life styles change. Many of these institutions now appear to be in serious decline, so we must make sure that the Musical Box Society is not one of them. The structure of society is altering at an alarming speed. Technology is having a great influence on all of us with a significant number of individuals now preferring a solitary and sedentary life staring at the one eyed monster in the corner of the room or sitting alone with a computer. This bodes ill for the hobbyist! The gathering together in social groups seems also to be in decline.

Membership of our Society is the entry point to enable us to enjoy a number of things. First, is the fact that our Society is a learned institution and has been from the very early days. Much knowledge can be gained and disseminated from our journal, publications and from studying the archives. Secondly, there is much enjoyment to be had by attending both our main meetings and the smaller local meetings which are now springing up in many parts of the country. At these meetings, skills are freely shared and many new and exciting items of mechanical music are brought along for all to appreciate.

So then what is the Society really all about? True it is a learned institution with all the advantages, but it is also an institution where good will and enjoyment can be found. More importantly, it is an institution where friendships can be forged and

strengthened as the years pass by.

What does all this cost? A mere £24 per annum for membership together with an option of joint membership limited to two people registering one postal address and receiving one copy of the journal. At the present time, joint membership is priced at an extra £6. Of course the Society is a delicate flower requiring to be fed with suitable funding. If you feel that this is becoming a plea to renew your subscription, then you are quite right! I would sincerely ask all existing members to renew your subscription promptly and ask those who are contemplating not joining again to have a change of mind. There may be many reasons for not renewing your membership, but I would ask you to pause and think again of all the pleasure the Society has given in previous times and then decide to continue your membership. By doing this, you will be helping the Society to progress into the future and at the same time help the up and coming generations of mechanical music enthusiasts to develop their hobby. In recent times the Society has benefited from a few members who were kind enough to remember the Society in their wills. As a result of their generosity, the Society has been able to publish a further two books. These books are a lasting tribute to their generosity. I hope that in the future the making of a bequest to the Society will become a course of action many will wish to consider.

In summary, what is the Society really about? a) enjoyment b) making of friends c) gathering of knowledge d) sharing of expertise e) a means of communication between like minded people f) a vehicle to be used in the acquisition or disposal of items of mechanical music. g) a method of registering valuable items of mechanical music

for security and for research.

There are other pecuniary reasons for being in the Society. Many books and publications can be purchased at discounted prices. Some museums and similar organisations offer discounted entry fees and at least one auction house offers a substantial discount on their seller's premium to members. Our journal also has a Sales and Wants section available to all for a most reasonable fee and we do have a most professional web site on the internet which can be used by everyone. Having said all this, I believe that friendship and enjoyment offered by the Society is the most valuable of all. In the words of an Australian saying, "*it is only people and animals that matter, everything else is artificial.*"

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all well during the coming year. I would also like to express my personal thanks to the editors of the journal and to everyone on the committee who work unceasingly to help in the running of the Society. All these people of course are unpaid and seldom claim their expenses! The work of the committee often involves undertaking extra jobs and tackling unforeseen problems. They are indeed the backbone of the Society.

To all who have contributed to the life of our Society in any way, whether it has been the writing of articles for the journal, assisting at meetings or taking on responsibility for the very necessary jobs, my sincere thanks.

Arthur Cunliffe.

News Flash 1

Revelstoke Nickelodeon

The last Journal carried an account of our Editors, David & Lesley Evans, museum in Revelstoke, Canada. In a Christmas letter they tell us that snow has already fallen to a depth of two feet but was then followed by an early thaw. Museum activities in December included a Grand Magic Lantern Show, a Silent Film evening and a Carol Concert. Film shows will take place once a month during the winter season and, not to be put off by February snow, an intrepid group has booked a coach to get to the Nickelodeon, and thus word is getting around. Of course, it is a working museum with items to restore such as a Mills Panoram recently brought to life by David and the (Alphons Bursens) Banana Tree Dance Organ (not edible, we hope) aimed for completion for the Christmas activities. A website is also up and running: www.revelstokenickelodeon.com.

The great news, though, is that the efforts of the Evans family, including son Mike, for creating the Nickelodeon have been recognised by two awards. They received the Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Also, a prestigious Heritage Board Award for the Commercial Building renovation of the Year, 2006. This is a great achievement and really well deserved. We congratulate them for keeping mechanical music and cinematic entertainment alive and well in the 21st century.

MBSGB Committee.

News Flash 2

Printed Word

We were pleased to receive an invitation from The Printed Word, the printers who produced both The Nicole Factor and The Tune Sheet Book. Both now

feature in their advertising, thus projecting MBSGB to a wider audience. Members of Printed Word's staff also had an invitation to the museum. The photographs show Ted Brown with the books and Ted with Manager Dave Richards at The Old School, as featured advertising.

News Flash 3

The Nicole Factor

The good news is that, initial book sales have gone well. The bad news is that the US dollar is still high against the pound. Good for us when visiting the USA but not so good for sales. Thus we have decided to hold the discount at £45 plus postage, until the end of May. The price after that date will be £48. This is still extremely good value for money, bearing in mind the production costs of the book and its two CDs. We already have a lot of feed-back by way of new information, which is very encouraging. Also, several buyers have found missing gammes by using the Register CD and have identified appropriate tune sheets by using the dating charts and the illustrations of tune sheets

in Chapter 14. One enthusiast wrote: 'The Nicole factor is cheap at twice the price', having found all this information within days of receiving his copy. He is not alone. Also, the Registrar has received numerous enquiries and people like Jean-Marc Lebout have donated a whole set of new listings. We are grateful for this type of response because the Register is an international record of which we are merely custodians. Anyone from any society can supply information in total privacy; safe in the knowledge their ownership details are immediately destroyed. In fact, by using the register form (down load it from the Register CD or go to the website www.mbsgb.org.uk) details can be sent anonymously. If only museums, collectors and restorers would recognise this fact, we could then produce one of the most comprehensive records of disc and cylinder musical boxes and thus provide feed-back services to the world-wide clubs of enthusiasts seeking that gamme, tune sheet type, etc.

The principle Swiss library, The Biblitheque publique et universitaire accepted free copies of all our publications, the Tune



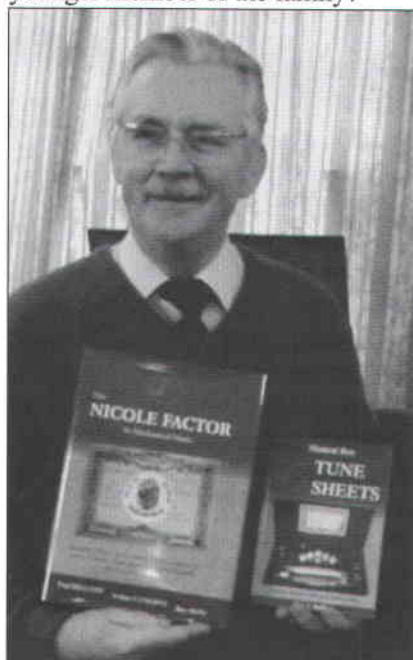
Ted Brown with Dave Richards, the manager of The Printed Word, the company which printed the Nicole Factor book.

Sheet Book, The Organette Book and the Nicole factor. On a visit at the end of last year, we were invited to hand them personally to the librarian Jean-Phillipe Schmitt (see photo on page 21). Jean-Phillipe is an accomplished organist and a pleasant hour was spent talking about music and the impact the Nicole family and other makers had on the history of Switzerland. On our return to the UK, we received a delightful note of thanks from Alain Jacquesson, on behalf of the Bibliotheque.

Newsflash 4

Membership

Remember, joint membership is available for only £30, providing one address is used. This is not just for two people living at one address but also allows a younger person, perhaps at university or school to become a member with full membership rights. We can offer lots of advice and guidance. The modern young technologist, musical enthusiast and historian will find much of interest in the world of music produced by mechanical means! So, do you have a younger member of the family?



Ted Brown holding two of the Society's publications

Chanctonbury Ring Christmas Meeting 25th November 2006

By Alan K Clark

The thirty five Members who attended this meeting held at Ted Brown's Old School, Bucks Green were in for a surprise when they entered Ted's music room. The chairs were arranged around 5 tables and a quiz answer sheet was provided on each table. Ted had planned a 30 question quiz based on tunes played on his instruments. Following some brief readings from the 1892 edition of Work Journal, Daphne produced a photocopy of a piece of newspaper found inside a church organ main bellows. The adverts in the paper included one from Keith Prowse for musical boxes, the prices started at 5 shillings, those were the days.

Having formed ourselves into teams, the quiz began and we were asked questions relating to tunes played on cylinder and disc boxes, organettes, street piano, gramophone, orchestrelle and pianola. This proved great fun, but none of the teams received full marks.

Next we ate Ted and Kay's excellent hot dinners and puddings, which were very well received.

During the afternoon we listened to a happy mixture of modern mechanical and electronic Christmas musical items ranging from the musically quite acceptable, to the most revolting ones members could find. Between these items we were also entertained by Barry with a QRS duo-art roll of Liberace playing a Gershwin selection, and with Christmas tunes on a range of disc boxes. Daphne brought a number of Christmas novelties, including her wonderful automata ballet theatre. The afternoon finished on a high note with David Worrall's very superior musical Christmas tree stand. This had a polished fancy

shaped wooden base and played 8½ inch edge drive discs. The maker was not marked anywhere on the mechanism, but one disc had what was probably the remains of the name Polyphon.

Yet again we had a very enjoyable, educational, and relaxing day. Thanks go to Ted and Kay, and their helpers for making it possible. The quiz was a very good idea, and shows the hard work and preparation put into these meetings by Ted to keep them fresh and different to previous ones.

The next Chanctonbury Ring meeting to be held on 18th February 2007 will be reported in the next journal.

Spring Meeting

*Friday 23rd March
to Sunday 25th
March 2007*

Our spring meeting will be held in Oxford. Here we will visit the Amersham Fair Organ Museum, which is now home to the Teddy Reed Collection. We will also visit Keith Harding, at The World of Mechanical Music Museum.

Chanctonbury Ring

The next Chanctonbury Ring meeting is on 20th May at The Old School. Early booking is advised due to its popularity and numbers are limited.

**Contact Ted Brown
on 01403823533.**

Web Site Update

From Robert Ducat-Brown

Our web site has now been in existence since 1998, quite early days for such a venture by a club or society. We are now on our second edition, which was introduced just over a year ago. We were fortunate in being able to have the site produced to a professional standard free of charge.

Many thousands of people have visited our web site, some have perhaps got on to it in error, and may have no interest in mechanical music, many however have found us by typing key words, such as "musical box" or "Polyphon" into a search engine like Google or many others.

If you are a regular user of our web site you will be aware of how it works, for those who are not this will explain it to you.

Having entered the site you are given several links to pages that may be of interest, such as details of specialist auction houses, restorers, museums, publications and suppliers of musical boxes. We limit the list of suppliers and services to those who advertise in our journal.

It is possible to order our publications or back copies of 'Music Box' through the web site.

The majority of the work I do as Correspondence secretary is answering e-mail enquiries from our contact page. Using this anyone can ask us questions relating to mechanical music. Often they wish to buy, sell or have a musical box restored. People often inherit boxes and want to find out more about their history. I can usually find out the information by looking through our own publications or those written by other

specialists in mechanical music. If I cannot find the answer I call upon other members who might be knowledgeable on a particular subject.

If someone has a disc musical box without any discs or an organette without a music roll, there are members who might have some, so I put them in touch with each other.

Several people have asked how they can make a musical box, I have not yet found the answer to this one, so if you can help, please send me the instructions.

Of course whenever I feel that a correspondent may be interested in the society I suggest they join, and I like to think this has sometimes been successful.

We receive a good number of enquiries about membership through the Membership page of the site. Those interested may send in an automatic reply form via the site, which I send on to the Membership Secretary. They then receive further details, or they can print out an application form, which they can post with a cheque (check) to the society.

The web site has a Notice Board/Forum. This is for the use of members only. You will need the user name, **musicalbox** (in lower case letters) and the password, **BABREMOND** (which must be in capitals). This password will change from time to time and the details will appear in the 'Music Box'. Once on the forum you will need to register, so you will need to think up your own personal user name and password.

The forum is for you to pass on information and ideas to others, to ask questions or start discussions. There is a Sales and Wants section, which members may use. I must point out that the society accepts no responsibility for anything that is bought or sold or any service, which is used (you should read the disclaimer on the web site).

I personally would like to see greater use made of the web site by members, especially the forum and message board pages. Perhaps you have a tip, which you could pass on; you probably think we all know it already but I doubt if we all do.

If you have any news which you would like passed on or details about forthcoming meetings, I can have these posted either on the News Page or the Announcement section of the Forum. Details of how to contact me are on the Officers' page of the journal.

STOLEN BOX

A Nicole musical box has been stolen among other items whilst the owners were abroad on holiday over the Christmas and New Year period.

It must have a late period tune sheet with the numbers S/No. 52438, the gamme number 5317 and L308. The box has a rosewood lid with a central inlay.

The box was stolen from somewhere in Nottinghamshire. The police crime number is DB/001564/07. Please keep a lookout for this box.

Teme Valley Winders

Saturday 25th November, 2006, saw the first "Christmas" themed meeting of the group, with some 26 attendees. Most were regulars, but there were several new attendees:- Pat Corbett from Malvern, Richard and Jean Grace from Cheshire and Paul Bellamy who bravely made the round trip of 400 miles from Kent, to attend.

John Phillips, wearing his Christmas Musical Tie, welcomed everyone and made introductions before inviting John Harrold to start the Show and Tell. John presented a Peerless organette, possibly one of the best of the American organettes. It sold for around \$20, in comparison with the Celestina which sold for \$5. The peerless has 20 notes and a proper valve system giving good repetition and volume, with a strong bass. John Farmer followed up with a (cheap!!) Celestina for comparison – also a 20 note instrument. A third 20 note instrument was demonstrated by Kevin McElhone. This was an early (pre-1889) pressure Gem roller organ with exposed bellows. Pressure models used leather for the bellows rather than the rubber cloth (tosh) used on the later suction models. This example had a date stamp inside, which was actually 3 weeks before the 1885 patent was granted. Kevin played "Jingle Bells", which many were surprised to find was actually written in 1859. The "cobs" played by Kevin were modern, computer produced examples from the USA.

The first of the cylinder boxes was shown by Richard Manning, this example was a "National", having 8 tunes with no tune list. The group were unable to help with the 2 unknown tunes, but



Kevin McElhone with the early pressure Gem Roller Organ.

agreed that all the tunes were very nicely arranged, although the box needed attention to dampers. Richard Grace followed with a 12 tune cylinder box, mostly of popular "Music Hall" tunes from 1880-90, but again listeners were unable to positively identify the 5 unknown ones.

Kath Turner introduced disc boxes with her Kalliope and played several Christmas tunes. The second disc box was from John Harrold and was a Criterion. These were only manufactured for about 7 years from 1898 and were of a somewhat lighter construction than the established Reginas & Polyphons. John Phillips later demonstrated his "Pièce a Oiseau" – a large cylinder box with a mechanical bird inset in the front of the box and a 12 note serinette-type

organ operated by bridges on the cylinder (as for the bird). The organ tune and the bird movements are separately pinned for each tune. John Farmer had restored the organ section but some work is still required on the bird and the organ keying to synchronise them with the main tunes.

John Moorhouse showed a bird-in-cage mechanism, which had a minor problem. The intermittent action did not work properly and was proving difficult to resolve. John also talked about his project to produce an engraved metal egg and the problems of trying to engine-turn the curved surface. He showed some examples of his work so far. Finally, he showed the latest stage of his ultra-miniature snuff box, which

now has a prototype movement installed. Returning to cylinder boxes; Bernard Weekes played a Nicole Freres musical box, his first cylinder box purchase. Everyone agreed it was nicely arranged with a good sound. To finish off the morning session on a lighter note (!), Maurice Adams played his electronic concertina, later handing it over to John Harrold (an experienced squeezer !), who played a number of Christmas tunes. We were all then treated to a delicious lunch provided by Hilda, helped by some of the other ladies.

The afternoon session was reserved for novelty items and organs, with Doug Pell demonstrating over two dozen



Kath Turner played Christmas discs on the Kalliope.



John Harrold, experienced squeezer!

metal wind-ups (not all musical but amusing nevertheless). Kevin McElhone, Maurice Adams, Peter Murray and John Farmer also showed several musical novelties whilst Peter also played his 20 note Stuber organ, followed by Angie Harrold cranking John Phillips' Pell organ.

The next TVW meeting will be held on Saturday 14th April, 2007 at a different venue. Peter Bill, who has a small private collection of early keyboard instruments, has invited us to his house in Rock, a village between Kidderminster and Eastham. The meeting will start at 1.30p.m.; those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on **01584 781118** to get directions and book their place.

Register News No. 54



Fig. 1 Ami Rivenc 39714

The production of the new Society book "The Nicole Factor" has rather delayed work on the Register. Understandably, the only boxes that have been regularly registered at this time have been those made by Nicole. All the other boxes have been somewhat neglected so now there is a long list of boxes other than Nicole waiting to be registered. Disc machines and organettes have slipped even further down the field!

When sending in your Register forms, could you please ensure that they are posted to 5, East Bight, Lincoln. LN2 1QH. If you have an email address it would be most helpful if you included it on your Register form. Then I will be able to let you know a) that your material has arrived safely and b) I might just be able to give you an indication of when I will be able to register your boxes.

Recently, a member sent in details of a box that they had just purchased. On checking the Register form, I found that the box had already been registered some 5 to 6 years previously. It was now

possible to check the accuracy of the first entry made for this box and, by chance, more photographs are now available. However, if the previous owner had marked the Register number underneath the box and let the Register entry go with the box when it was sold, the new owner would not have been put to so much trouble.

In the worst case scenario, how could the Police have cross-checked the Register number with the serial number if the Register number was not there? In these cases, the chances of the police being able to assist have been significantly reduced. Please do make sure that any Register number you have been given is put on the box straight away. The correct place is under the box on the baseboard at the rear L/H corner. Press hard so as to indent the wood and do not forget to add a full stop after the number.

May I strongly recommend that a copy of the Register entry is made and kept separately in a place of great safety for your personal use. The original may be kept within the box and passed on with it whenever it is sold. That way the new owner can see instantly that the box has been noted in the Register and does not need to be notified again. Remember that personal details are never recorded on the Register.

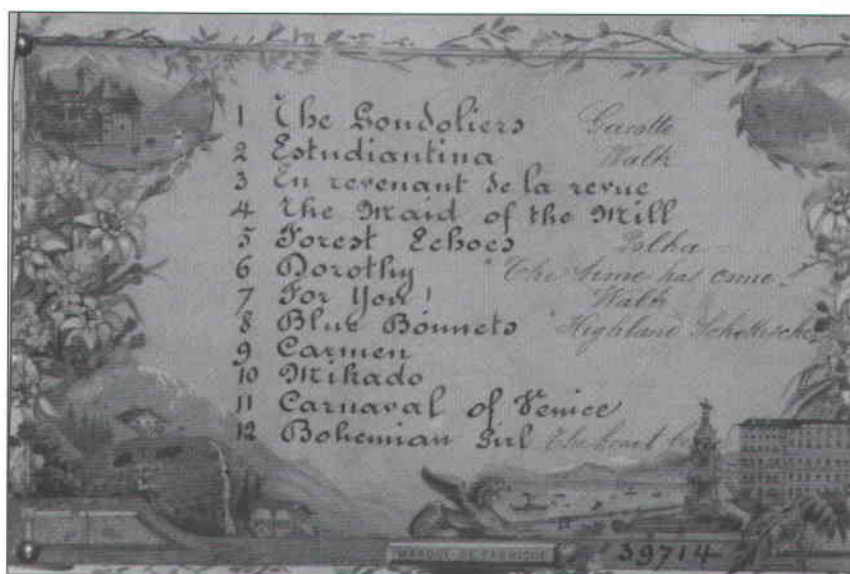


Fig. 2. Tune sheet of Ami Rivenc box

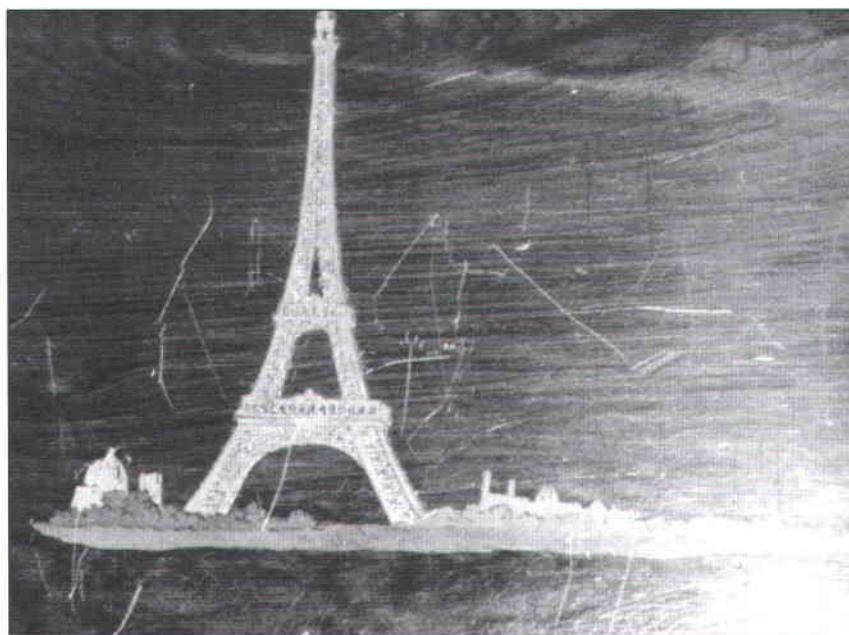


Fig. 3. Unusual Eiffel Tower motif, inlaid in pewter.

Another unsuspected factor which is emerging from the Register is the curiosity most owners seem to have about the previous history of their musical box. Most hope there is some sort of human story behind this object that brings it to life. Provenance, I think the antique world call it. Little notes like "sold at Christies in 1967 and Bonham's in 1971" do add interest but a note saying "Given to Joseph White on the occasion of his wedding 5th May 1872" seems to generate much more curiosity. Please send in details of your collection if you have not already done so and always remember to include snippets of social information. This will be added to the card system if there is insufficient space on the computer file.

I would like to ask any member who is fluent in either French, Spanish, German or Italian languages to offer their services in translating should it ever be required. Please send me a little note saying you would be pleased to help. I have not forgotten an almost hysterical situation at the Guildford meeting

when a Polish gentleman was trying to explain the workings of a small movement to an audience of one German who had a smattering of French, an Italian who just smiled at everybody, a Swiss gentleman who spoke only the French/Swiss language and a Japanese couple who seemed to wish to bow to everybody. The resident Englishman in the party just waved his arms about a great deal and shouted louder and louder as things became more difficult. All good fun!

Now for something which unfortunately does not rate in the fun charts at all and which has just come to my notice. A Nicole box serial number 52438 was stolen in a raid on a house in Nottinghamshire. It must have had a tune card as the number 5317 was quoted for the gamme number and L308 was also marked. It was housed in a case with an inlaid rosewood lid. The police crime number quoted for reporting anything of interest is DB/001564/07. The box is said to play a mixture of dances and

waltzes. The theft took place over the Christmas and New Year period whilst the owners were abroad on holiday. This shows the importance of making sure it is not obvious that your house is empty. It also demonstrates the importance of organising trusted friends and neighbours to keep a good lookout whilst you are away. Other factors of note are the fact that the box had not been registered, few details had been kept and there were no photographs. This is a distinct disadvantage when trying to trace stolen property. How much better it would have been if more precautions had been taken. I hope you will all take note! Should you happen to see the box, either report to the police or get back to me via my email.

The musical box featured in this edition of Register News was made by Ami Rivenc and has the serial number 39714. It is one of their later boxes which has the later type of tune sheet bearing a sphinx in the lower margin with the Brunswick memorial on the right hand side; the writing is recognisable as the work of one person. He or she always wrote the titles and the secondary information was always written by another person. Again, I believe this person, like the first mentioned, must have worked for Rivenc for many years. Compare the writing styles with those examples in the Tune Sheet book for other similar examples. The lid design is rather out of the ordinary being a representation of the Eiffel Tower inlaid in pewter. I hope the picture is of a good enough quality to reproduce in the Journal. These Rivenc boxes were of very good quality and, if they have not suffered from the ravages of time, play well.

Collectors' Showcase



Fig. 1. Cover of the puzzle box.

Collectors of musical boxes and other mechanical musical items often get great pleasure from finding ephemera associated with the hobby. In fact, items such as catalogues, postcards, prints and pictures are not only a good way to form a collection at an affordable price but are an important and historical adjunct to mechanical music.

Fig 1 shows the cover of a rather beautiful child's puzzle box containing six puzzles, each one complete with a picture to show how the pieces connect. It is 12 x 9 x 1 3/8 inches, circa early 1900's. The box and its contents are in very good condition leading one to suspect it was somebody's treasured possession. The cover carries the legend 'London, Ernest Nister' who is presumed to be the artist. The box itself is labelled 'Little Folks Picture



Fig. 3. Cylinder phonograph doll

Puzzle Book' and was printed in New York by E P Dutton & Co. Two of the six puzzles are scenes of cats plus the odd mouse or two, playing musical instruments, dancing, and riding a circus carousel. Another is of a prince and a peasant girl, the remaining being animals and birds. With one exception. Fig 2 shows a cat playing a monkey organ, surrounded by cavorting cats and a rather brave mouse.

The monkey organ was obviously a familiar sight at the time this puzzle was produced. The pictures are in the style of Louis Wayne and, if actually drawn by him, would make this item highly collectible. Sadly not the case but a charming toy nevertheless.

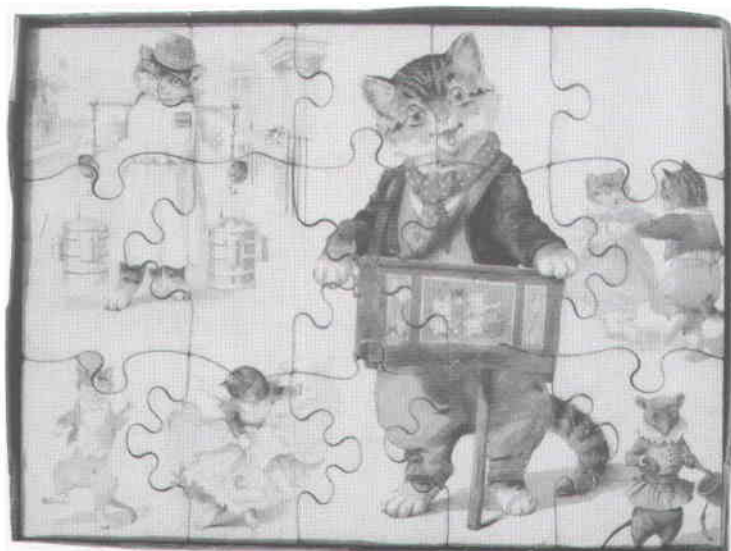


Fig. 2. One of the puzzles.



Fig. 4. Body of the phonograph doll.

A slightly different showcase item comes by courtesy of the Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art. This private collection is just East of Seattle at Bellvue, Washington, USA. Now, the museum in which the collection is housed is not just for the girls. It is a delight in many respects for the boys as well, not just the way in which each item is displayed in a beautiful custom-designed building but because of the historical and social context of the items. There are dolls from all periods and countries, including automata and mechanical musical ones. VDU displays add to the enjoyment as all the items of this type can be seen in action. It is one of the world's finest collections and is constantly being changed to display show items tucked away in store. The dolls shown are 'talking dolls'.

The larger one is musical, the metal body of which remarkably houses a complete cylinder record, thus dating it to the early part of the 1900s. The face is charming, the porcelain arms and legs fully articulated. It is spring-motor operated, the winding handle just evident in the illustration. The close-up of the body reveals the 'speaker' aperture just below the neck-line. The smaller doll is bellows-operated, as shown by the enlarged view of the 'voice box', a metal reed-box sitting on top of a spring actuated bellows that, when depressed, causes air to pass through the reeds. When released, the spring re-charges the bellows. It probably says 'Mamma'.

In The Workshop, Part 1: Small Musical Movements — *The Three R's* By "Odd Job"

Volume 20 number 7 (Autumn 2002) of *The Music Box* illustrated different types of miniature movements fitted to musical pottery novelties such as Fielding's Crown Devon, Winton and Carlton Ware. These small movements need care, and sometimes repair. They were made by the thousand and fitted to all sorts of other novelty items. This article applies to any small movement, including the ceramic novelties, hand-cranked toys (manivelles), Swiss chalets, platters, musical cake stands and even novelty musical toilet roll holders!

Many now need a little, and sometimes a lot, of Tender Loving Care (TLC) if they are to survive another hundred years or so to give pleasure to future collectors. The novelties, much derided by some collectors and yet often found tucked away amongst their more expensive treasures, are also a good starting point and hunting ground for the collector with shallow pockets. They provide amusement and interest. Lots are worthy of our attention if we are to preserve them for future generations.

Although rare examples command exceedingly high prices, the professional restorer is not usually interested in the repair of these small movements because the cost of repair is rarely an economic proposition, at times exceeding the value of the item. Preservation is therefore largely the preserve of the amateur. Having trod that indefinable path called 'The Learning Curve', (another TLC), this 4-part article may help others to make the attempt.

So what are the three R's? Perhaps Repair, Restoration and Replication will suffice.

In many ways, the small movements are just like their big brothers and sisters. Much of the restoration work is similar in principle and well catered for in publications by Anthony Bulleid, Arthur Ord-Hume, Graham Webb and others. One needs to approach the repair of larger and more valuable instruments with great care but the small movements are a good starting point for the novice restorer. Despite their small size, there are a number of useful tips that can aid a successful overhaul or repair that are not catered for in the larger tomes.

The various types and period of manufacture of the musical movements fitted to ceramic novelties were covered in the previous article on *Miniature Musical Movements*, (Vol. 20, No. 7 – *More Musings about Musical Mugs, Part 4*). Alan Roberts, in his book on the Crown Devon Musical novelties, rightly urges caution about cleaning and restoration. Each comb is uniquely tuned to a particular arrangement of melody. A '28'-note John Peel arrangement by Thorens will be entirely different to the same melody on the same sized comb of a Reuge movement. However, all combs can be re-tuned. Thus, almost any comb by any maker with compatible dimensions can be re-tuned provided the tuning scale is known. The only practical way to get hold of this tuning scale is to have access to an identical movement.

Most of Fielding's pots comprised a range of sizes ranging from small tankard, large tankard,

jug, whisky decanter and often a cigarette dispenser. When collecting, it is nice to have more than one example in the set. Thus, if one of the sets has a missing movement there is the opportunity to copy the tuning scale and hence to effect a repair. Also, being in a Society such as ours, there will be a willing member somewhere who may oblige with the information. One approach to repair is to remove a movement from one of the more common and cheaper pots, particularly if chipped or cracked, and use it to repair or replace the movement in a more valuable pot. The downside is that few chipped or broken pots seem to exist and, if they do, often get repaired badly and then resold to an unsuspecting purchaser.

Modern movements are sometimes available, such as *God Save The King* (or *Queen!*). Reuge still make this tune in their Romance range. Of course, the seller may put a high price on, say, one of the commemorative pots whose missing movement has been replaced with the modern counterpart. That is why it is always wise to inspect the movement before purchase by unscrewing one or two of the three metal tabs that hold the wooden base in place. I once purchased a rare 1937 commemorative coronation jug. The tune, GSTK, was very short and turned out to be one by Romance. Armed with this knowledge, a very good discount was obtained. Using the tips outlined in these articles, a replica movement was made for this jug from a combination of original and re-created parts. The GSTK musical programme was copied from an existing commemorative Crown Devon pot and a comb re-tuned to suite that programme.

The result is very satisfying and virtually indistinguishable from the original, both musically and upon close examination.

Technically, the majority of problems with small movements lie with the comb. Bent and missing teeth are common, often as a result of setting the comb far too close to the cylinder. Rust is another major hazard. Light rust is common but deep pitting can de-tune teeth, particularly if located near the root. The excessive application of oil, done with good intent but little knowledge, is a curse. Invariably the comb sounds 'dead', oil lies between the lead weights and dampens down vibration, ruining the sound of the movement. Oil can affect the governor's gears, attracting dirt and causing it to run slow or not at all. WD 40 sprayed over a movement and its wooden base is even worse. WD 40 seems to un-glue the feather dampers. Dampers are often missing anyway or so badly worn so as to be ineffective, resulting in that dreadful 'buzzing' noise. This problem can be rectified quite easily and is dealt with in a later part of these articles. A spot of clock oil is all that is required, available by mail order from any clock repair supplier.

Cylinders often have missing and damaged pins. If one leaves a ceramic pot on a windowsill or near to a radiator where it becomes hot and stationary for a long time, the cement within the cylinder can soften and drift to the lowest point under the force of gravity. When played, particularly if still warm, treble pins tend to become depressed. This is because treble teeth are much stiffer than the rest and can push down their pins. The whole tune or just the treble can 'come

and go' as the cylinder rotates. Again, it easy to rectify and is dealt with later.

Springs are another common problem. A spring usually breaks because someone over-winds it in attempt to 'get the thing to play', or the 'little fingers' of one's offspring, (not an intended pun), turn a stiff key the wrong way, causing the spring to detach from its winding arbor. Rust on the winding spindle's screw thread is usually the cause of a seized winding key.

Some movements were fitted with stop-work. The mechanism is often described as a Maltese cross but more accurately termed the Geneva stop work. This device avoids the problem of over-winding and also leaves some tension in the spring, when unwound, so that it does not become detached from its arbor. Unfortunately, many small movements were not fitted with stop work. Of all the small movement makers, Thorens were, in my opinion, better engineered and invariably fitted with a Geneva stop.

Turning a stiff winding key anti-clockwise may also damage the flat, S-shaped ratchet spring. When this happens, the spring either will not wind up or will slip when the spring tension becomes too great. (The ratchet allows the main spring to be wound up by slipping over grooves cut into the main driving gear, the crown wheel. When the winding key is released, the arms of the ratchet spring then engage the grooves to transmit spring power to the crown wheel and hence to drive the cylinder). The springs have either two or three arms. Fig. 1 illustrates a typical three-legged ratchet spring, crown wheel and

winding spindle for an 18-note movement, together with a typical crown wheel for the larger 20- and 30-note movements. If this spring is weak or broken, it fails to engage correctly in the crown wheel's grooves causing it to slip and rotate backwards again.

To dismantle a small movement, follow these steps:

- Let the main spring run down.
- Unscrew and remove the comb.
- Unscrew the winding key. Wedge the drive gear by hand if a Geneva stop is not fitted.
- Unscrew the governor screws. There may be a packing washer under each of the two screws.
- Release the cylinder. There is an adjustable bearing comprising a cone-shaped screw at the non-drive end or a brass bush bearing. Both have to be 'backed off' first.
- Unscrew the spring case. There may be a packing washer under each of the two screws.

After cleaning and repair, including the replacement feather-quill dampers, re-assemble in the reverse order. Final setting of the comb can be a problem. One way is to leave the spring unwound and set the comb just clear of the cylinder pins with the two fixing screws lightly set. Ensure each tooth tip is opposite to and central with the line of cylinder dots on the cylinders. Apply half a turn to the spring, sufficient to rotate the cylinder but then 'gag' the governor vane with fingertip or strip of card. Release the governor vane and very gently tap the comb alternately at the bass and treble ends, allowing the vane to run a turn or two between taps until either the top or bottom pins engage. Depending upon which end first engages, tighten slightly more the fixing screw

at that end. Repeat the operation until the whole comb engages sufficiently to play without excessive lift of the teeth. Never allow excessive lift, particularly at the treble end. If in doubt, keep the vane gagged, release the comb, then start again.

What is excessive lift? It is best judged by observing another movement that is known to be playing well. By looking down the line of the tooth tips, the lift should just about cause the bottom of the tooth to be level with the top of the others, say about 0.010 for the treble end and 0.020 inches for the bass. The amount of tooth engagement with pins will also be very small, about 0.002 – 0.005 inches. Let the movement play under light mainspring pressure but with it placed upon a suitable resonating surface. The bottom of an upturned draw makes a good soundboard. Beware, though; a bright sounding treble is a sign of danger.

Finally, recheck the central alignment of teeth-to-pins and the amount of tooth-lift at both bass and treble ends, the bass lift being about twice that of the treble.

We can now start to think about repairs.

Repairing a comb:

If one or more teeth are missing, replace in the conventional way as described in the published works. One method, using a mini-grinder, was covered in 'Make Do – And Mend', (Vol. 21, No. 1). Here, the tooth was sourced from a broken and discarded comb, thus avoiding the need to harden and temper it. A piece of 'gauge plate' steel, obtainable from any model engineer supplier, can also be cut

and filed to shape. Tie the tooth to a heavy object with a bit of wire. Harden by quenching from 'cherry red' and then temper by 'cooking' in molten lead for a few minutes before it is soldered in place. The steel will keep the tooth immersed in the molten lead. There are better and more accurate ways of tempering but the molten-lead method is sufficiently practicable for these small movements.

Even cheap modern movements can provide a source of comb teeth for the mid and treble range of a damaged comb. I had a Victorian manivelle with a whole rank of 8 missing teeth in the middle of a 28-toothed comb. These were replaced using a chunk of 8 teeth cut en bloc from a modern 18-note movement. Teeth dimensions have been more-or-less standard for over a century and so this 'patch repair' proved very successful. There are still a lot of these 18-note movements around and novelties fitted with them can be bought cheaply from boot fairs and charity shops.

Most small movements are hidden. Thus one does not need to be so careful in trying to achieve a perfect fit for the replaced tooth or teeth but it is good practice to make the attempt. Earlier movements have a separate comb base made of a cast alloy soldered to the comb. When soldering the replacement tooth, use a small clamp to hold the original base in place and wrap a bit of wet tissue or cloth around those lead-weighted teeth so that they do not melt or drop off!

A missing comb base is quite easy to replace. Brass or steel will do the job but it is better use a metal that approximates to the original. There are a number of items cast in this type of alloy, often plated, such as found on some household or car door handles. The profile of the comb base is that of the comb itself, as are the positions of the two fixing holes, (Fig. 2). The top surface of the base is angled at about seven degrees. This is not really important for the small movements but it is important to get the comb teeth to align with the cylinder dots and to point towards the cylinder's axis.



Fig 1. The re-tuned comb (right) and the comb base (centre), cut from a car door handle. The base is viewed from its underside. The thickness of the comb base is angled (about 7 degrees) such that the comb's teeth point towards the axis of the cylinder.

Tuning:

If only one or two teeth are missing, it is relatively easy to tune to the right pitch providing one has a good idea of the approximate pitch of the missing teeth compared with its neighbours. If more teeth are missing, the problem gets worse. If you have access to the scale, (that other pot, another collector or the future yet-to-be-published tuning-scale reference list) then there is not a problem. A good way of finding the right pitch is to remove the comb, turn it around on its base but with the teeth projecting away from the cylinder (see Fig. 3). Set the movement on a firm resonating surface and 'ping' each note in turn with the tip of a large darning needle, scribe or dental probe. Compare the sound against an electronic tuning meter or a keyboard instrument. You will now get a scale of sorts. Write this down, starting from the base end and allocate a number to each of the teeth starting with the bass tooth as number 1. This scale provides a good guide to the pitch of the missing teeth.

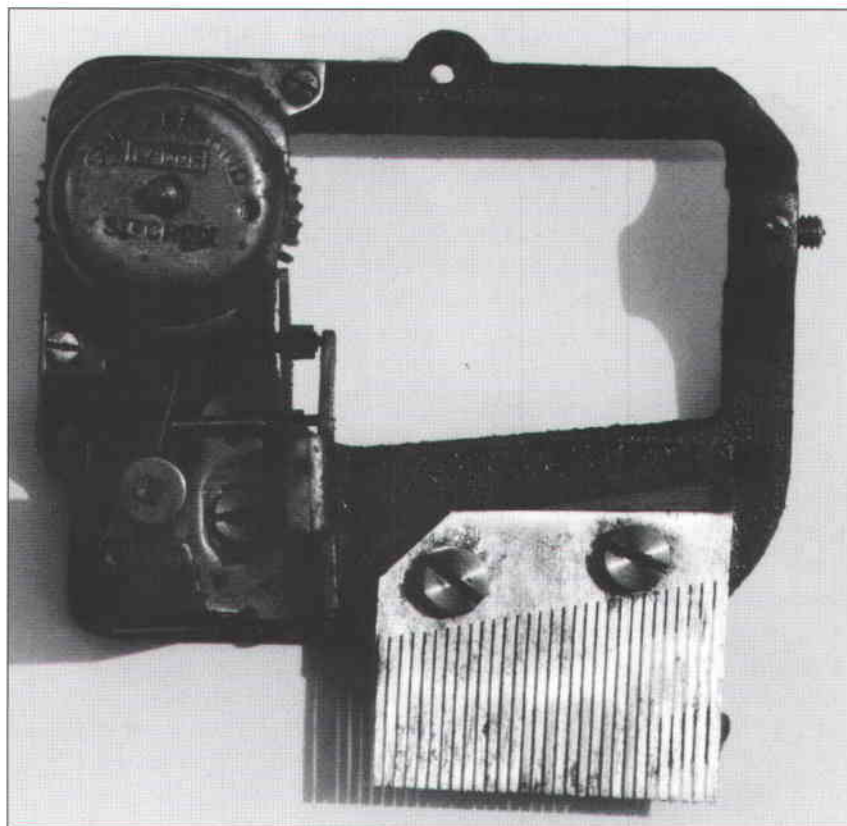


Fig. 2. The comb ready to check each note's pitch (against a keyboard or tuning meter).

Even if the comb teeth are not exactly in tune with the keyboard (and they nearly always are), you will find that they will be consistently 'flat' or 'sharp'. All that matters is

that you have now produced a scale. The range may be as large as four octaves with the base notes of the comb somewhere about 'middle C' on the piano.

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Next, replace the comb but set it just clear of the cylinder. Rotate the cylinder slowly and see if there are any teeth that should lift simultaneously as the pins rise. If two or more teeth lift together, they will form a chord. Reference to your scale will allow a good guess as to what the missing tooth was tuned to. The existing teeth, particularly at the base-end, also give a good guide to the pitch of the missing teeth since they must also form a chord. This chord could be a third, fourth, fifth or an octave interval. Also, look for repeat notes. These will appear as adjacent but slightly staggered pairs of pins on the cylinder. Of course, not all of these will be repeat notes; that is, pins playing two adjacent teeth tuned to the same pitch in quick succession. A lot of early manivelles favoured tune arrangements that gave as many as four repeat notes at the top end of the comb, giving rise to a typical descant trill. These are very easy to spot as they form a pattern on the cylinder.

Finally, as it is only a small cylinder, you can actually write out the sequence of notes as the cylinder revolves. Do this by holding the governor vane with the tip of a finger and release it in short bursts. Watch each tooth

as it rises and record the note. There will be a basic 'one two three' or 'one two three four' beats. So remember, pins rising in quick succession are likely to be in between the basic beat such as the 'ands' in 'one and two and three and four'. Believe it or not, you do not have to be a musician; just a methodical observer and the result can be played on that keyboard. It soon becomes evident what those missing notes should be, even if you have never heard the tune before.

Now tune those replaced teeth and then give the movement a run. If you have not got it quite right the first time, the sound of the odd tooth (or teeth) will stand out like a sore thumb, sounding either flat or sharp. (See below for tuning teeth).

If a replacement comb has to be re-tuned, the problem gets slightly more complicated than for the odd one or two replaced teeth. Firstly, there is no choice about the scale of the replacement and there can be a huge difference between the desired scale and the one you have got. Let's consider any arrangement, the following example from recent 'repair'. Fig. 4 illustrates a chart produced for a 22-note movement.

1	Bass → Treble	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23
2	Original Scale	C D F F A B C D F F G A A B C C C D D F F X
3	Replaced Comb	F B C D E F A B D F G A B B C C D D E E F F F
4	Raise 1, Lower 3 rd 2	1 X
5	Transpose Scale 2 Down 2 Semitones	B C D E G A B C E E F G G G A A B B C C E E
6	Raise - Lower Scale 3 as shown by arrows	1 1

Fig 3. The tuning chart for a 22-note comb. The replacement comb has 23 teeth, so the treble tooth is ground off near its root.

Part 2 of this series will appear in the Summer 2007 edition of *The Music Box* - Ed

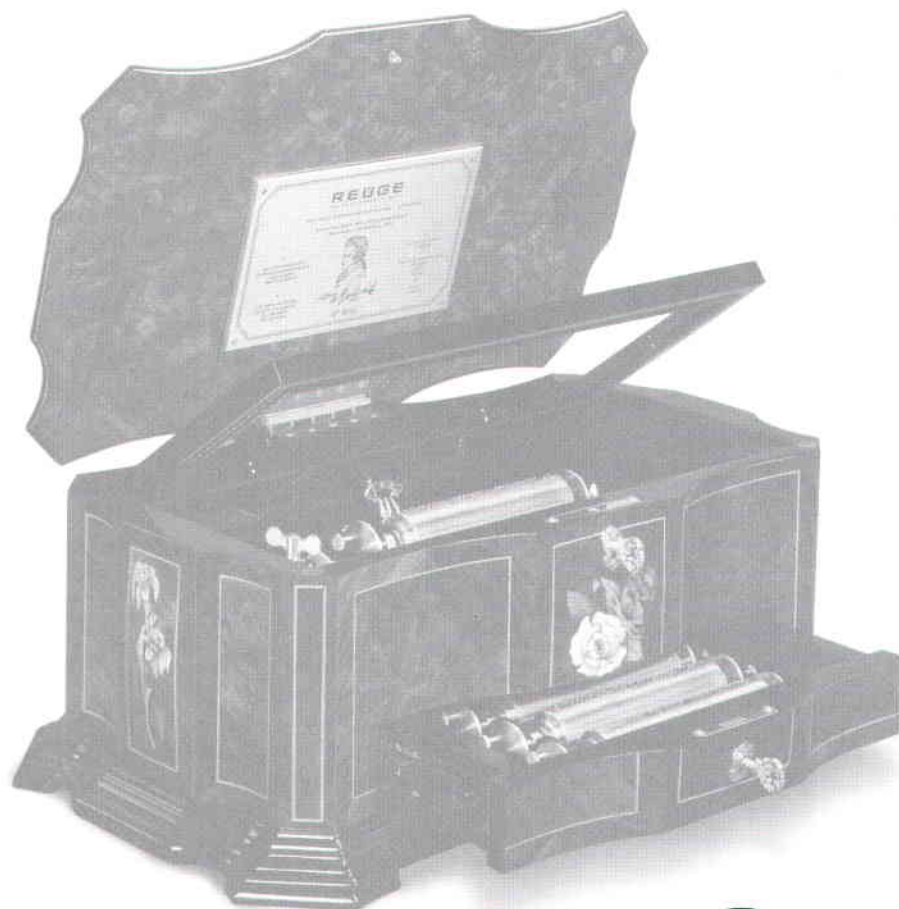
New Members

We welcome the following new members who have joined us since the last journal was printed.

If you would like to get in touch with members near to you please contact the correspondence secretary.

If you would like to start a NEW Local area group please contact Kevin McElhone on 01536 726759, or kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com or Ted Brown on 01403 823533 as either will be pleased to advise, having successfully set up a new group in Essex in 2006.

- 2960 Hugo Modderman Monaco
- 2961 David Ball Bedfordshire
- 2962 Martin Ellis Northants
- 2963 Gerald Whitbread Surrey
- 2964 Martin Langer Wales
- 2965 Clay Brookes-Irvine Bucks
- 2966 M.F. MacDonald Berkshire
- 2967 John Moorehouse
West Midlands
- 2968 Philip Crouter Hampshire
- 2969 Sheila Child Leeds
- 2790 David Vaughan Birmingham
- 2971 Frank Gamble London
- 26 John Sherriff Cornwall
[joined using his Father's old number].



Reuge

President Arthur Cunliffe and past President Ted Brown support the idea that the contents of The Music Box should also reflect present day commercial work in, for example, the manufacture of musical boxes and associated areas such as automata. Thus we hope to feature other makers and restorers in the years to come.

MBSGB have for many years organised an annual overseas trip, hosted for the past twenty years or more by Alan and Daphne Wyatt. Like all good things they relinquished the reins last year and Daphne Ladell is currently organising an Italian trip to meet our good friend Franco Severi. Whenever our annual pilgrimage to the musical Meccas takes us into or near to Switzerland, we invariably visit St. - Croix, the home of Reuge. There is the CIMA museum housed in the old Paillard factory and, of course, the Reuge factory, as well as our good friends Arlette and Michel at the Musée Baud in nearby L'Auberson. So what better place than to start with Reuge, the only surviving example of the Swiss musical box Industry?

Last October, a few of us had a tour around this same circuit, including a private tour of the Reuge factory. The visit was not just for personal interest but to discuss with management how it has once more overcome the pressures of the modern market to remain the leading maker in the world for mechanical music and automata such as the singing bird and musical watches.

One hundred years or more ago, the musical box industry was in crisis. The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music summarises aspects of this in the demise of Geneva as the principal manufacturing base and its subordination to the dominance of St.-Croix. The latest MBSI publication, a translation of Piguet's book *Les Faiseurs de Musique*, now entitled *The Music Box Makers*, tells most of the St. - Croix story. Thus, for us modern day visitors to Reuge, we were as much interested in the recent history of its survival and the managerial efforts that sustains the business to this day.

Reuge has fought many battles to survive in those past hundred years. Those challenges never ceased. In recent times it has faced the same crises of competition in a world offering a wide choice of alternative technologies and distractions. It is a remarkable achievement that it still survives in a healthy state. Business survival is about knowledge of 'the market'. One then has to produce a range of products at a price and quality that the market can afford as well as marketing the product through advertising, placement, innovation and all those other 'business tools' which sound unutterably boring but are necessary for the survival of any business activity. In the case of the cylinder musical box, including automata, it has been a precarious and niche market for more than a century.

Charles Reuge was a clockmaker from the Val de Travers who set up a workshop in St.-Croix in 1865 as a maker of musical pocket watches. His son, Albert Reuge, then opened a small musical box factory in the town in 1886. This was a significant step in the transition from traditional workshop manufacture to industrial production and was to have a major effect on the development of St. - Croix as the major centre of musical box production. The third generation of the Reuge family, Guido, Albert and Henri, indulged in other forms of manufacture as well by inventing the Kandahar ski binding in 1929, not surprising when one considers the mountainous climes of St.-Croix and the development of Skiing as a sport and leisure activity.

This invention is preserved in the nearby CIMA museum, which has a showroom dedicated to Guido, his wife Jacqueline and their private collection. Also on show is a replica figure of Guido made by the famous automata maker François Junod. Part of the CIMA collection is exhibited in Kyoto, Japan.

The present Reuge factory was built in 1930 on the rue des Rasses. Although Switzerland remained neutral during the Second World War, the survival of the industry was under constant pressure. Post war, the rising influence of Japan and its impact on the world as a developing industrial nation was the greatest challenge. In 1960 Reuge acquired sophisticated machines enabling work to be rationalised even further and this led to them becoming the world leader. They also bought Bontems of Paris, famous for the manufacture of singing birds.

Reuge continued to survive as the market shrunk, depending more and more on novelties. Thus musical

boxes survived mainly as novelties, not of great musical interest but, in fact, a huge market. Without it and the 'income stream' that arose from the sale of small musical movements, Reuge could not have survived at the other, high quality end of its product range. Further acquisitions between 1977 and 1991 were as a result of changes in the world market and the rise of the Eastern economies, affecting not only Switzerland but the West and the world economy as a whole. In the UK we saw similar declines in manufacture, losing our world-renowned Potteries along with the musical novelties for which firms such as Fielding's Crown Devon. Winton, etc, were famous. Thus Reuge absorbed Eschele (manufacturers of snuffboxes and singing birds) in 1977, Mélodies SA (Thorens disc musical boxes) in 1985, Lador (makers of 18-note movements) in 1986, and Cuendet (makers of cuckoo movements) in 1991.

By 1988, Reuge was taken over by a group of Swiss investors and a modernisation program was set in motion. Trade secrets were kept away from the public



Fig 1.

Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.



Fig 8.



Fig 7.



Fig 9.

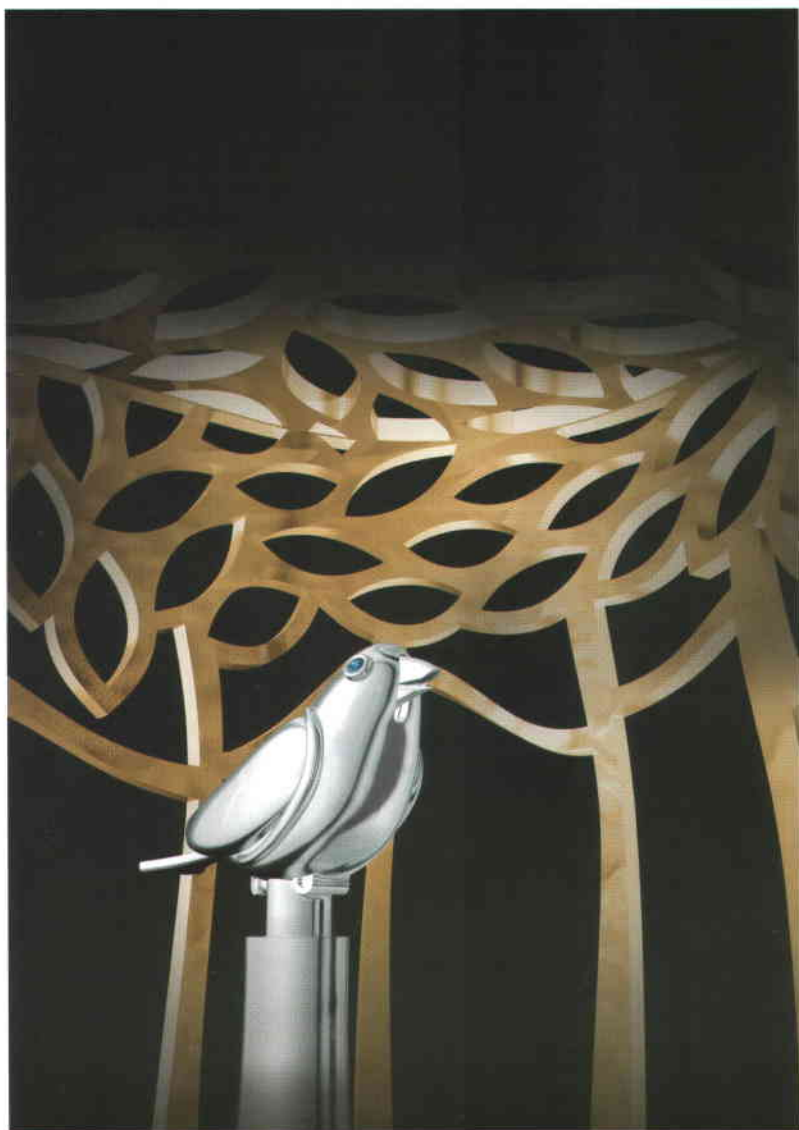
Fig 10.



Fig 12.



Fig 11.



eye, particularly from avid foreign makers who sought an easy path to research and development by high-jacking carefully developed Reuge manufacturing Techniques. Distribution, particularly the US market, was enhanced when Reuge bought a Los Angeles distribution and assembly company to create Reuge Music USA in 1993. More recently in 2002, the Italian company Arte Intarsio was acquired, the main supplier of casework.

Despite all these efforts, Reuge was on the brink of failure with the further down-turn in the Western world manufacturing economy but once again, management restructuring brought them through. A drastic and innovative programme was put into place aiming at high quality and value for money with an exquisite range of new products, modern styling for some and re-enforcement of the more traditional products for others that were still in strong demand. Thus small movement manufacture was abandoned to the competition and distribution networks were overhauled.

Their success also encouraged competition and opposition. The competition came from the East, particularly Japan. In fact, the Eastern automated production lines are still churning out thousands of musical movements for novelties; so much so that, in recent time, the directors of Reuge have re-thought their marketing strategy. A little more about this later. The fact that novelties are still in demand is good because we retain the subliminal message of the fact that mechanical music is alive and well, even if digitally and electronically enhanced in other quarters by other makers.

So, what about the opposition. Much of that comes from those who demean any modern reproduction or continuation of the modern version of the musical box. Of course, everyone has a right to elect their preference but they should also support the fact that, without a modern market, the infrastructure of collection, restoration, repair etc. and the human skills we need to maintain our aging collections would simply collapse altogether. Also, there would be no starting point for the beginner to buy an affordable item. Fortunately, most collectors will have some interesting and entertaining item in their collections and unashamedly show them off to visitors. We do this regularly at MBSGB member's house meetings and have a lot of fun in doing so. Reuge quality and novelty items of just a few years ago are now collector's items in their own right. Made to a high specification in every

respect, with some of limited edition, they have earned their rightful place amongst more traditional earlier musical boxes.

This fact is an important aspect in Reuge's modern-day business plan and it is evident when one visits the factory. They have abandoned small-sized musical box movements altogether and concentrated on quality and innovation. The workforce is smaller but still quite large. The human skills are evident alongside the mechanised tasks such as drilling, pinning cylinders, cutting hardening, tempering and mechanically tuning combs. Individual orders receive the same care as bulk sales.

Reuge is now vertically integrated having bought Arte Intarsio that once supplied the beautifully designed and crafted caseworks which house the musical mechanisms. Also, innovative and creative designs have been added to the product range, something the makers of old would have admired. Thus there is something for everyone. Of course, it is both difficult and wrong to compare a modern musical box with those of the 19th century. One has to remember that it was probably more costly in the early days to produce a high quality product than it is today. During the whole of musical box history there was always a balance between cost and quality. Many collectors favour the very early years before the musical box pandered to the public demand of more volume, additions to 'enhance' (sometimes but not always) the musical performance with drums, bells, castanets and organs. We should also remember that the musical box began life as a novelty.

The current product range comprises 36-, 72- and 144-note movements, singing bird automata in cages and also incorporated in musical boxes plus pocket watches and wrist watches, with or without musical movements. The colour centrefold illustrates just a few of the product range.

The Chief Executive Officer of Reuge is Kurt Kupper and he employs in excess of 70 skilled workers producing for the European, Eastern Europe, Hong Kong, US and the Middle Eastern markets. It is ironic that the pressures from the east are part of their success story. We wish them well and that MBSGB members will be welcomed long into the future.

Our thanks to Reuge for permission to reproduce the colour pictures in this centre-fold article. The captions are as follows:

Fig.1. **Young Guido Reuge with older brother Henri and parents, 1908.**

Fig.2. **Tribute to Mozart, 250th anniversary.**

Fig.3. **Amadeo. Another Mozart tribute, an interchangeable musical box version.**

Fig.4. **Calla, a novel 36-note instrument.**

Fig.5. **Don Giovanni, a 144-note instrument.**

Fig.6. **Francastel. Named after a local St. - Croix edifice, this is a singing bird automaton alarm clock finished in burr amboyna.**

Fig.7. **Verona, a traditional style 144 - note interchangeable movement with drums and bells.**

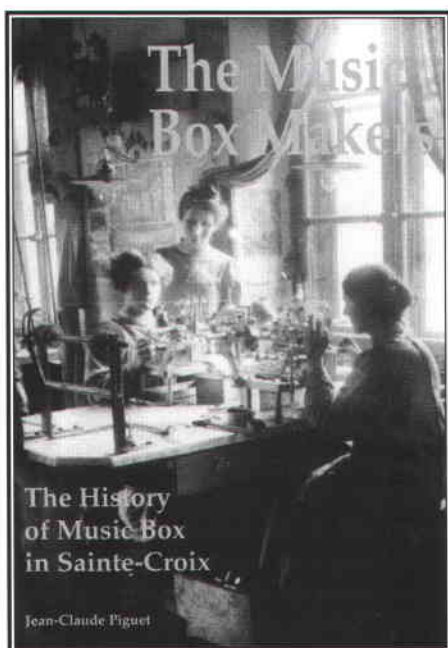
Fig.8. **Ambiente, an innovative candle - light musical table centre - piece.**

Fig.9. **Butterfly, one of a range of interchangeable 72 - note musical boxes.**

Fig.10. **Flower Power, a novel 'graffiti inlay' musical box in Maplewood.**

Fig.11. **Detail of the Magic Forrest singing bird automaton.**

Fig.12. **Automaton musical pocket watch.**



The Music Box Makers, The History of the Music Box in Ste. Croix

Jean-Claude Piguet's compilation of two separate works chronicles the development of the musical box industry in the Ste.Croix region of Switzerland. Beginning in the early 1800's before mass communication and electricity were common and continuing through to the age of assembly lines, this fascinating story describes the erratic fortunes of the people who were involved, their companies, and the social and economic climate they endured. An outstanding and important work, originally in French, now in English.

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Bonhams — 17th October 2006

This sale offered a wide range of mechanical music instruments among the 70+ lots.

Among the gramophones, a rare Klingsor with dancing figures on a matching record storage base made £860 (Fig.1), whilst a large brass concert horn for a phonograph attracted considerable interest and realised £385.

Cylinder musical boxes ranged from small snuffboxes to a splendid Billon-Haller interchangeable (lot 39) on a matching table. With ten cylinders, this made £4850. (Fig. 2) Another interchangeable, this one by PVF (lot 50), was



Fig. 2. Billon-Haller interchangeable musical box.

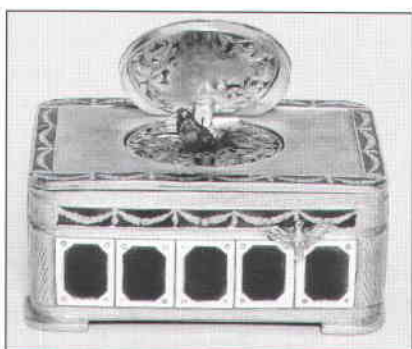


Fig 3. Griesbaum singing bird box



Fig. 1. Klingsor gramophone.

good value at £2100. A Britannia two-per-turn in buffet style cabinet made £1330. One of the rarer instruments was an organocleide musical box by C. Lecoultre. The twin combs stamped with the 'C L Geneve' in a diamond marked this out as unusual and was sold for £2550.

Six boxes by Nicole Frères were offered ranging from a late (Serial 50865) twelve air box with damaged comb which made only £270, to a fine four air overture box with 3 1/8" diameter cylinder which realised £5500 (lot 68).

Among the disc boxes, a Polyphon Style 45, (15 1/2" discs) was in demand and made £1860 (lot 56).

Singing bird boxes remain popular and two good examples by Griesbaum were on offer. One in a gilt filigree case made

£850, whilst a box from the same maker, in an attractive case with enamelled panels and a landscape scene made £1875 (Fig.3).

Finally, a Polyphon style 63 hall clock/musical box playing 11" discs attracted much interest. The traditional heavily ornamented case was in outstanding condition and justified the price of £7100. (Fig.4)

Bonhams' next sale of mechanical music will be in May 2007, for which entries are now being accepted.



Fig. 4. Polyphon hall clock Style 63

The Story of the Polyphon.

By Colin Durham

I was on holiday in the Isle of Man during the summer of 1968 pursuing one of my hobbies, viz. Vintage Transport. I had ridden on the Isle of Man Steam Railway, the Manx Electric Railway and the Douglas Horse Tram, all of which, even then, were approaching their centenary. For a final ride I decided to catch the Snarefell Mountain Park Railway to the summit and on the return journey alight at what is known as 'Bungalow'. Bungalow is about half way down where there was a museum known as Murray's Motor Museum, devoted to Manx T.T. 'bikes'.

I entered the premises and found not one but four 19⁵/₈ inch Polyphons in full playing order. Evidently they had all come from pubs on the island. I listened to the machines absolutely transfixed and stayed the whole afternoon; this the reader will understand was the first time I had heard a Polyphon play. The museum has long since gone – I wonder where the machines are now?

I took the memories home and have never forgotten them. Later, in 1968, I was looking through a specialist record magazine when I spotted a new LP release entitled 'The Story of the Polyphon', fig.1. The record comprised a talk on the history of the Polyphon and musical boxes in general, with music from discs played on 15¹/₂, 19⁵/₈, 22 and 24¹/₂ inch machines as well as a Lecoulre Overture musical box as a bonus. The record made fascinating listening. I duly sent away for the record. I think it cost 17 shillings and 6 pence in 'real' money and it arrived just in time for Christmas.

I played it over the festive period and fell in love with it; it became a firm favourite of mine and was

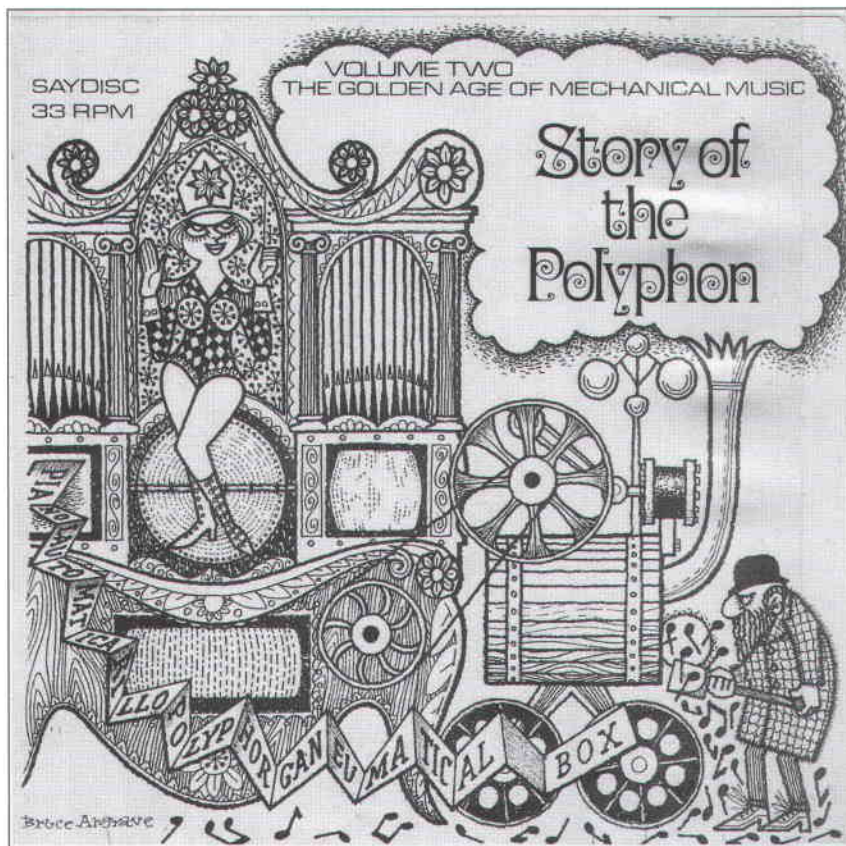


Fig. 1. Saydisc cover, designed by Bruce Angrave

regularly played over the years. One day, I thought to myself 'when I have some money to spare I will buy myself a Polyphon!' This day did not dawn until many years later after a house move, in August 2005. I found myself in Cowdrey's Antique Shop in Eastbourne, and spotted the exact machine I wanted, a 19⁵/₈ inch Polyphon with a coin-in-the-slot mechanism, in perfect condition and complete with 11 discs. I brought it home for Christmas 2005 – absolute bliss! Then the memory of my record, The Story of the Polyphon, all those years ago, came back to me. Where was it? I'll play it again, but tragedy! The record was lost, presumably in the house move.

About this time I made acquaintance with Paul Bellamy at one of his talks on mechanical music. He

suggested a 'Wanted' advert in the Music Box to see if anybody had a copy, or even an audio cassette copy – without avail. Perhaps no member had heard of the record. A great disappointment; but never mind, I had a real machine now and must thus be thankful.

Imagine my surprise and delight, then, when in October of this year, I was looking through some items in a cupboard! Hey Presto, there was the missing record and, delight, still playing well after nearly 40 years! I have it now, of course, transferred to a modern day CD, so what a happy ending to a story covering all those years.

Fig. 1 was produced by Saydisc and the commentary was by a Bruce Angrave, recorded in London in July 1968 and produced by Gef Lucena. The recordings are of a



Fig. 2. Bornand 7" 45 rpm record sleeve

variety of music played on several sizes of Polyphon from the famous A.V. Bornand collection, USA).

Fig. 2 shows the sleeve of a 7 inch 45rpm record actually produced by Bornand.

Fig. 3 is another delightful old Saydisc sleeve for a 7 inch 45rpm record.

Colin Durham

Note: Colin's story evokes many such memories from the past which become, with good fortune and perseverance, reality. Do you have such a story to share?

Since receiving his article, we searched the 'net' and found Saydisc is still in production. A letter from them tells us:

"Gef Lucena formed Saydisc in 1965 to preserve a variety of sounds and music that were in danger of becoming extinct or that were too un-commercial to interest major record companies. Areas of interest include dialect, change ringing (church bells), traditional music and, of course, all varieties of mechanical music. Gef became intrigued by this form of music when Roy Mickleburgh, of the long established Bristol

piano merchants, introduced him to his collection on the top floor of his shop. Over the next ten years or so Gef recorded Roy's pianola rolls, street and barrel pianos, barrel organs and organettes, phonograph cylinders and, of course, his large collection of cylinder and disc musical boxes. Other collectors and museums heard of Saydisc's interest and recordings were made including Tony Sherrif's collection, The West Cornwall Museum of Mechanical Music, The Scott Polar Institute Museum (for the barrel organ taken on artic explorations by Admiral Parry) and the renowned cartoonist, Bruce Angrave's Polyphon and barrel organ. It was Bruce who brought the sound of the Polyphon to millions when it

was featured in the long running BBC programme, The Archers. The locals of The Bull, the public house featured in the series, liked it but landlady Peggy certainly did not. The Polyphon has long gone from The Bull and, regrettably, Roy's collection was split up and sold on his death in the 1980s. The recordings still live on however, which was ever the aim of Saydisc".

We are delighted to publish this interesting account. Anyone interested in further information is welcome to contact them by fax: +44 (0)1454 299858; email: Saydiscrecords@aol.com; Web: www.saydisc.com.



Fig. 3. 7" Saydisc Christmas record, again featuring a disc musical box.

'The Musical Box Woman' is no more

Death of Madeau Stewart Ends Era

by Arthur W J G Ord-Hume

The widespread acceptance of the importance of mechanical music in the world today can be attributed to the early endeavours of just a few people. Amongst those select few, the ones that really counted were those even fewer in number who had the ability to influence the majority. And it is to them that we should tip our hats.

I know from almost 60 years of involvement in mechanical music that in that time there were just two such people in Britain. One was the late Stanley Sadie, far-sighted organiser of The New Grove Dictionary, and the other was Madeau Stewart whose death occurred in August 2006.

Madeau was not a member of the Society but she was an ardent believer in the concept that mechanical music was a forgotten or overlooked resource of musical knowledge and awareness. It was her unique position at the BBC that gave her the spade with which mountains began to be moved.

Born on May 10th 1922 on the Isle of Wight she was related, distantly, to the Mitford sisters through her father while her mother was French. Madeau was brought up to be bi-lingual. After school she won a scholarship to study piano and flute at the Royal School of Music but a turning point came when she attended a lecture on early musical instruments given by Karl Geiringer.

The War brought service in the WAAF engaged in what was euphemistically called 'special services'. This meant involvement in the D-Day landings and missions in France and Belgium where she witnessed the liberation of Brussels before being posted to Germany in an intelligence role.

After demob she joined the BBC where she was put in charge of Sound Archives, at that time almost exclusively comprising spoken material. Quickly she began to develop a music archive of early music, folk music, non-British music and indigenous music. She began travelling the world with her tape-recorder to collect material.

It was at this time that I was first introduced to her, initially through a shared love of organ-music and, conveniently, using tape-recorders to record the sound. Quite quickly we built up a friendship which resulted in her visiting my home where for the first time she came face to face with musical boxes. There proved no need for me to explain them or their music for, almost intuitively, she realised that they were original performers of musical taste.

Over the following years she encouraged me to make many radio broadcasts of mechanical music. I found my part hard enough: for her it was even worse because she had to convince a puritanical hierarchy at Broadcasting House that such programmes were worthwhile resources. Her endeavours paid off and the occasional series drew enthusiasts as new members to the Musical Box Society. Meanwhile she found herself dubbed 'that musical-box woman' in the corridors of Broadcasting House.

Madeau also entrusted me with a few recording missions on my own. These were adventures in themselves like the time I led a tiny production team to an isolated church in the north of Spain to record a unique pipe-organ. We had to spend three days living in a barn while repairing the organ to make it capable of being recorded. Only then did we discover there was no electricity to power the tape-recorder! The story of the 440-volt petrol generator with an open exhaust, 850 yards of bare barbed wire as a resistance to produce 240 volts and the consequent 40 minutes of recording has already been told elsewhere.

But our most memorable moment of collaboration came in the heart of London when, a good thirty years ago, I got a tip-off that a rare Charles Clay organ-clock was in a Bond Street showroom. I went at once with my professional Uher tape-recorder and microphones to this well-known shop only to find that the magnificent clock was out in the rear warehouse surrounded by a gang of men building a big packing-case. The clock had been sold and was due to leave that very afternoon and be shipped overseas.

I begged permission to record this piece because it played some very fine and otherwise lost music by Handel. I was allowed a couple of moments. Hastily I connected up the recorder only to find that something was seriously wrong and it wouldn't work. I begged use of a phone, called the BBC, spoke to Madeau and implored her to send me a BBC portable at once. Gamely she turned up herself ten minutes later with the Beeb's best. Fate was not smiling that day, for that machine wouldn't work either. Fidgety men waving hammers, perspiration flowing freely and a mounting sense of despair reigned. Madeau picked up the duff machine and dashed out into the Bond Street traffic to find another cab. Half an hour later she was back with another portable and this time it worked. I produced a brand new spool of best-quality recording tape and, with trembling hands, threaded the ribbon. Now, with grumbling men begged into silence for a moment, I recorded the whole ten melodies. As I finished, the clock was quickly whisked into its crate and nailed down. Only then did I discover my mistake.

In my haste to thread the tape, I had not removed the little length of sticky tape from the end of the strip. This had been transported to the recording head where it had neatly unfolded – and stuck firmly into place over the critical spot. The result was that the whole recording was faint, rather muffled and decidedly as if from another room.

This, though, was precious tape and it had to suffice. I broadcast it shortly afterwards – and the musical world was in awe at the marvellous and hitherto unheard interpretations of the Handel pieces. That story actually came full circle when, at the 2006 exhibition of Royal Music Machines in Utrecht, this self-same musical clock was loaned for show.

These little adventures spiced up life and I had the distinct feeling that Madeau was something very special at the BBC. She didn't fit into the pattern of other producers whom I knew and she was probably unpopular for her total disregard for the bureaucracy and red-tape that ruled Broadcasting House. On many occasions she would raid the Sound Archives, emerge with an armful of one-off hand-cut recordings (all in green wallets marked 'Not to be removed from BBC Sound Archives'), give them to me and allow me to take them home for appraisal.

Our unusual 'producer-presenter' relationship had one final curious twist to play out. We had worked together on mechanical music and organ programmes for a good decade when one day she announced that she had just visited her father and my name had come up. To her surprise he had made some comment that he knew me. Only when she told me this did I realise that her father was Major Oliver Stewart, a well-known aviation personality who edited that once-great monthly magazine *Aeronautics*. I had written technical articles for him for years!

Madeau contrived subtle swipes at the establishment and I was proud to be part of some of these. When we learned that the Victoria & Albert Museum had only a few instruments on public show and the rest in store, we jointly tackled 'the management', resulting in the creation of today's musical instrument gallery. With her backing, I pressed for the restoration of pieces which are now on show including what is surely the most ornate table serinette in the known world.

Madeau retired to the Cotswolds where she followed her many hobbies including calligraphy and playing the flute. Among her numerous publications was *Instruments of the Orchestra* (1980) with a foreword by Yehudi Menuhin.

She it was who, through intelligent far-sightedness, promoted mechanical music at a time when it was neither thought fashionable nor of any consequence. All true lovers of musical boxes owe her a debt of gratitude.

Madeau Stewart was 84 years old when she died on August 30th. She never married.



Jean-Phillipe Schmitt: News Flash 3, The Nicole Factor

Musical Box Oddments No. 112

by Anthony Bulleid



Fig. 1. The sad case, lid with detached stringing and exposed scumbling.

L'Epee 47451.

You can't help feeling sorry for L'Epee 47451. It was made in 1878, a modest 4-air box with 4" (10cm) cylinder, neatly clad in its stained beech case with its mechanism sparkling on the polished silvered bedplate.

Then what happened? About 127 years later it appeared at auction. Fig. 1 shows its deteriorated case and Fig. 2 makes you worried about its condition. It probably started life with a 4-air L'Epee or Thibouville-Lamy tune sheet like nos. 165 or 223 or 292, but that has been replaced, see Fig. 3.

At the 2005 auction it was valued at £200 to £300, but not a single bid could be coaxed, a cruel blow to a box's vanity. So it went to a 2006 auction, valued at £120 to £180. Then I heard about it and thought it an interesting item. On making due enquiries (but unable to travel and see it) I was assured that a "safe" bid would be £250 but in a reckless moment I sent in a bid at £260. When I rang the auctioneer after the sale, they said it had gone for £280.

Then a Curious Incident occurred. The auctioneer rang back to say that the buyer at £280 had

revoked and that I could have it for £280 if I liked. I said I didn't like, having offered £260 and the maximum valuation being £180. They said sorry, but that is the House Rule, and I could take it or leave it for re-sale. I took it... at £345.80. It was soothing to get it delivered, free, to my door in the incompletely charted wilds of north-west Sussex.

First impressions were not favourable. The cylinder was stuck to its arbor on tune 4, and the Bluebells opened with frightening chords because some pairs and

trios of bass leads were stuck together. Luckily that was not enough to push over the cylinder pins as can happen if several teeth are stuck in one block and every pin involved tries to lift them all. After freeing them, it played quite nicely. But, when "fully wound," it only played a tune and a half. That was due to faulty setting of the Geneva stop, as in Fig. 4, - but easily corrected. The spring was OK, so things were looking up, helped by good performance from the governor, - about which classic safe advice is: if it works don't fix it.

L'Epee made their own blanks, so only one number was necessary, here no. 18, as seen on a spring bearing in Fig. 5. The cast iron bedplate also had no. 18 under the comb with the serial number in conventional position, Fig. 6. The comb, with cast iron base which discourages scribing, has the serial and the gamme numbers scribed on the bass lead, Fig. 7.

The cylinder has the usual axial line of dots, one for each comb tooth, Fig. 8. Tune 3 is pinned

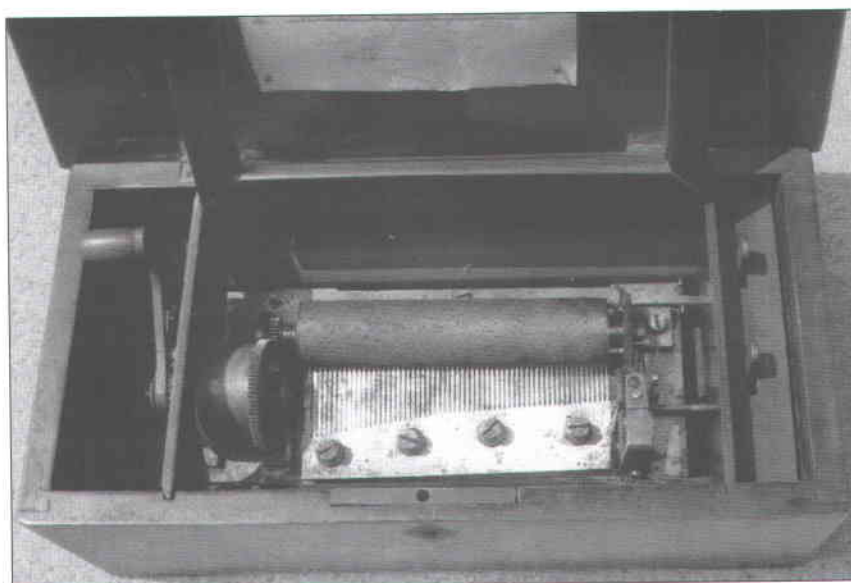


Fig. 2. L'Épée serial 47451 - nothing actually missing, except the tune sheet.



Fig. 3. Stand-in song list, loosely nailed on the lid.

on the dots. There are only a few rather vague track lines. The tracks are 0.018" wide, a thou more than the Swiss. The pinning is for a cylinder speed of 0.07" per second, so one turn of the cylinder takes 48 seconds. The tune gap is slightly lavish at 0.3" wide.

There are five L'Epee specials about the case. (1) Control lever platform screwed to its partition. (2) Pivot screw for on/off lever clamped through its slot. (3) Glass slides into its frame and is secured by wood fillets. (4) Bedplate screwed to sounding board. (5) Wood stops for the front of the glass lid replaced by nails, protruding about an eighth of an inch (3mm). Very cost-effective.

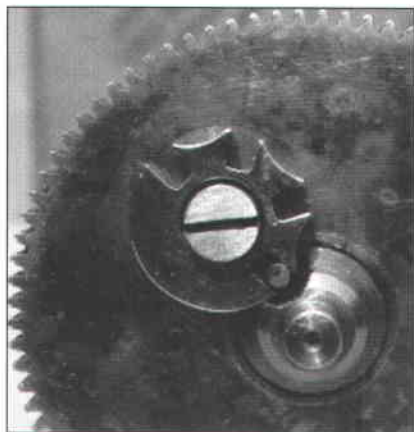


Fig. 4. Geneva stop in locked position, preventing further play, but unfortunately so set with the spring almost fully wound.

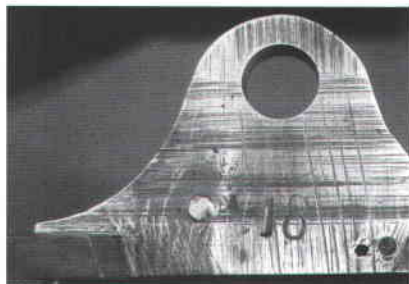


Fig. 5. Blank 18 on the inside of winder-end spring bearing.

But this pair were a bit thin, and bent down, marking the lid frame. I replaced them at about 1mm diameter, with domed ends!

If the comb vibrations are not fully conveyed to the sounding board there is a loss of volume. L'Epee were very keen to avoid this loss and screwed the board to the bedplate legs, see Fig. 9.

The comb teeth all ring very well, with no traces of weak or strident teeth. The relative stiffness of the 440Hz a teeth, nos. 13 and 14, is



Fig. 6. Serial number in usual position on the bedplate.



Fig. 7. Gamme and serial numbers scribed on the bass lead - seen in playing orientation.

about 150. That must be about the optimum for combs up to 6 inches and it allows a choice of playing, as I have proved over the years. If placed on a resonant surface like a piano top or a solid table it will be bright enough for a large room. For calmer enjoyment place it on a small cushion or an inch thickness of newspapers and you will hear it like "those pure remembered notes of the old key-wind musical boxes."

The tunes get off to a good start with that optimistic Limerick

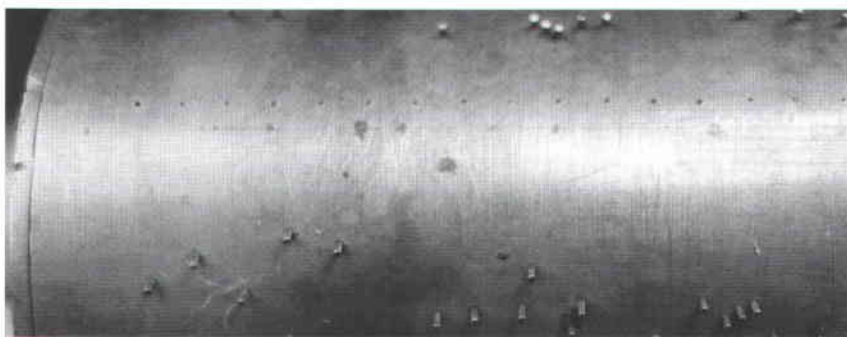


Fig. 8. One dot per comb tooth in the tune gap, but scant show of track lines.

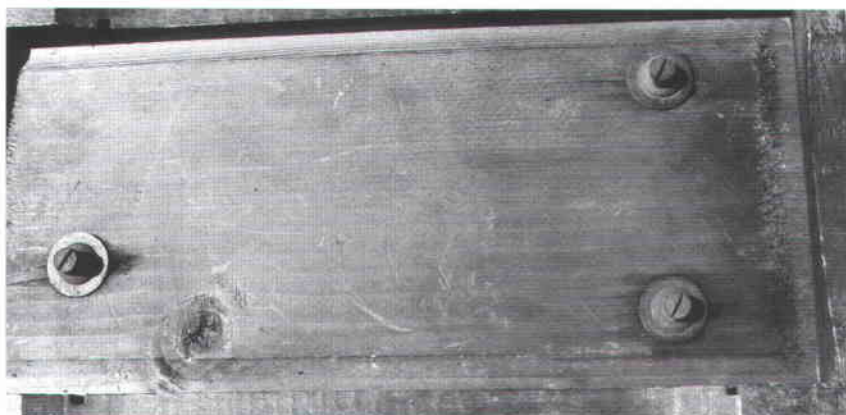


Fig. 9. Three screws firmly fix the sounding board to the bedplate - two at the treble end.

jig seeming to ensure winners! Tune 4 as usual makes a vigorous finale. But (as occasionally happens during the later stages of restoring) I was quite captivated by tune 3. It is rather like Stephen Foster's serious style, with two simple short melodies nicely decorated by the tune arranger and turned into a real charmer, - at least to my ears.

Early E&APaillard serial 1112.

Oddments 108 contains accurate detail notes about this 4-air keywind of about 1842 with its fine 114-tooth comb, - except that the cylinder length is 8" (20 cms) and track widths are the normal 0.017" wide. I have added its tortured tune sheet, here in Fig. 10.

However, I now have to report that those detailed notes also failed to record an absolutely salient feature about the comb; it has hooked teeth. How this could have been missed beggars belief and throws doubts on the reliability of this ageing writer.

More importantly, it casts a completely new light on this box. It has every appearance of a routine E & A Paillard product, based on an absolutely typical Geneva blank, with no special mention on their common tune sheet as seen in Fig. 10. And yet it has this complex comb exactly as used by Henri Lecoultré in Geneva to allow damping with long and short cylinder pins. See Fig.11.

Like everybody else in Ste. Croix at the 1842 period, every maker bought blanks from Geneva, and generally bought combs from specialist Geneva suppliers including the Lecoultrés. Of course it might have been a forte-piano movement, with long and short pins, but it has been repinned so that clue is lost - though Forte-piano or Expressif would surely have been noted on the tune sheet. Also, the tunes do not particularly lend themselves to that treatment. If pinned for forte piano, all the forte notes would be pinned a quarter of a second in advance of their natural positions to make up for their longer engagement period. This quite noticeably upsets the music in passages where both long and short pins are playing. No such upsets occur with this box.

So until otherwise proved, Paillard 1112 remains about the rarest classy box on record. It is in Ted Brown's museum, he added casually.

P.V.F. as Agents.

The "printers borders" Ste. Croix tune sheet with those bad pattern-joints at top left and bottom right but with the lower cartouche left blank appeared in Oddments 108. It has exactly the same borders as no. 23 in the series. Though not often seen, this modest



Fig. 10. The enduring presence of this original, battered tune sheet (like no. 22) makes it a certainty that the box was made by the Paillards, about 1842.

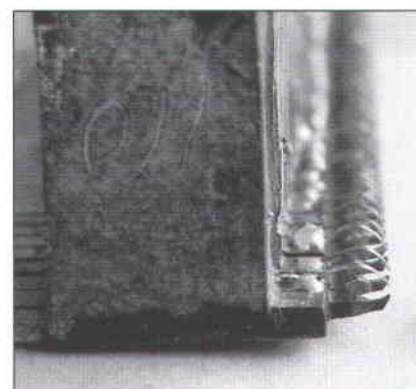


Fig. 11. The hooked comb teeth of serial 1112 with their soldered dampers. Gamme 110 is faintly scribed on the bass lead.

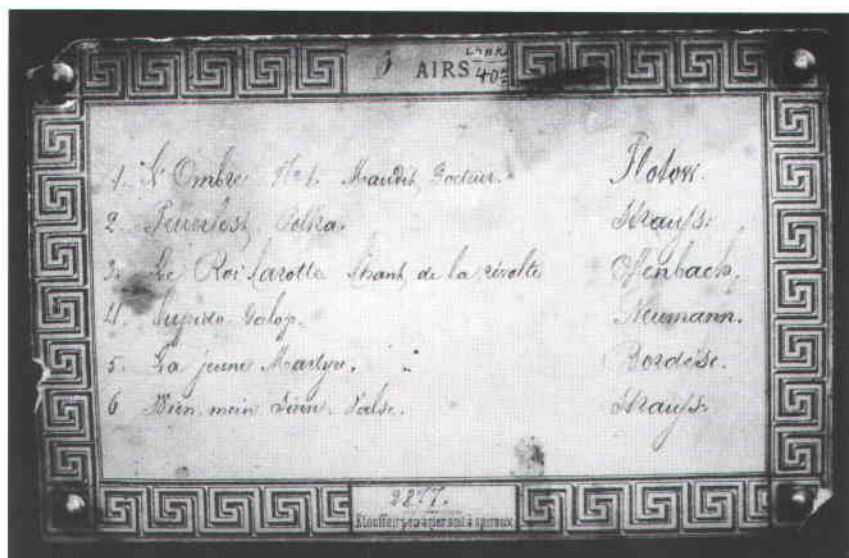


Fig. 12. This version of the "Printer's Borders" PVF tune sheet is exactly like no. 23 except that P.V.F. and Ste. Croix are omitted, leaving only the line and the dampers note. The serial number is not known; it may be the 2877 on the tune sheet. Latest tune is no. 3, 1872, box probably made about 1875.



Fig. 13. Cuendet and (gamme) 549 scribed on the bass lead of the box with Fig. 12 tune sheet. Good music with 78-tooth comb. I think this is a comb supplied to another local maker - quite feasible in 1875, and there would be no point in Cuendet signing combs on his own boxes.

design must have been widely used. It is reported (so far) in three distinctive printings, all with AIRS in the top cartouche but the lower cartouche either (1) with P.V.F. / Ste Croix Suisse above a dividing line and Etouffoirs etc, below as no. 23; or, (2) left blank as in Oddments 108; or, (3) with only the dividing line and Etouffoirs etc., as in Fig. 12 herewith. This one has the added interest that its bass lead is scribed Cuendet, see Fig. 13. He is already known to have used the P.V.F. agency.

As more examples are reported, these three different printings may provide useful dating information, - except that I feel they could suffer from that "found later at the back of a drawer" syndrome.

A distinctly sinister tune sheet.

At last I have received another promisingly sinister tune sheet to accompany no. 219.

All human effort in producing things inevitably includes producing the occasional unsaleable failure, which should be quietly buried

but sometimes manages to sneak through the checking system. It even happened with musical boxes, whose tune sheets could tell tales. And yes, it could even happen to the Nicoles, as shown in Fig. 14. This serial 32966, gamme 1316, is a typical Nicole key-wind of about 1855, with 12" (30cm) cylinder playing 12 airs, 2-per turn on 128 teeth. But instead of playing its 12 tunes, it only plays the first eight and then repeats 7 and 8 twice. That can only mean that the two top steps of the snail cam have been cut down level with tunes 7 and 8.

The tune sheet is undoubtedly the original type for the box, but its sinister side emerges on first reading. There are spelling mistakes, rare for Nicole. Worse, there is that little untidy note bracketing tunes 7 and 8 which explains that you are going to hear them for the third time before getting back to tune one. Even worse, the Gamme number does not match the number of tunes - unheard of with Nicole. But it is a genuine Nicole 8-air tune sheet... so how could it have happened? Perhaps some calamity damaged the

pinning of tunes 9 to 12, and the box was set aside for decision about a new cylinder. So there, in a dark corner, rested a classy box playing eight airs very nicely. All it needed was a personalised tune sheet, and then it was worth quite enough hard cash from a back street dealer to coax an illicit sale.

But wait a minute... suppose it just had a "run" which damaged the last four tunes, and the owner decided to sell it. He thought a perfect 8-air box would look better than a damaged 12-air. So he got a blank replica tune sheet (Nancy Fratti no. 12), copied the original as best he could, and even added the gamme number... not knowing that our Registrar was able and willing to supply the complete tune list. I think that is a more rational explanation of serial 32966's racy life. Besides, the book-keeper would not have rested until he got the sales document - and the cash payment.

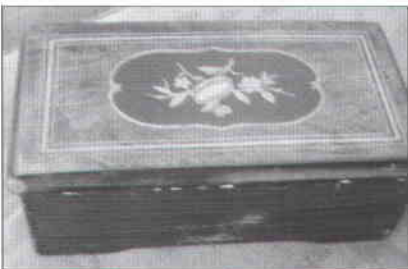
Fig 14 is overleaf - Ed



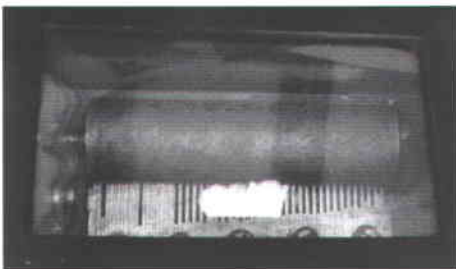
Fig. 14. Nicole 32966 gamme 1316, in black on blue, similar to nos. 66 and 229 in the series. The writing compares very unfavourably with most Nicole tune sheets, and mis-spelling of Britannia, Llangollen and "repeat twice", coupled with the absence of composer credits, make the sheet look bogus even before the gamme no. mismatch.
Thanks to John Goyvaerts for Fig. 14 and data.

Musical Horrors!

Observed by Kevin McElhone



Nice enough case...

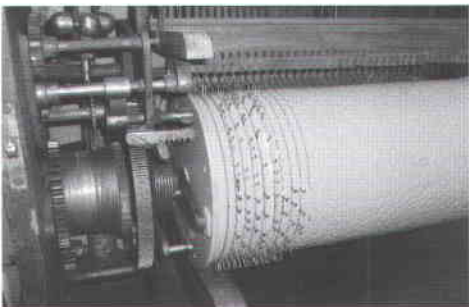


Ah - a rare movement! I've read about Alternating Tips somewhere! (Left)



Some good tunes...

A novel approach to barrel arranging for a piano orchestrion... seems to be covered in some type of textured plastic! (Right) 26



News from Other Societies

from John Farmer

Het Pierement – October 2006 (Reviewed by Peter Whitehead)

The Franco-Prussian war meant that, as a consequence of the siege of Paris between October 1870 and February 1871, nothing and nobody could enter or leave the city, except by means of an hot air balloon. As a result, Hans van Oost says, in his second article on the history of Gavioli, the firm lost contact with foreign, especially English, clients and ended up dismissing the staff and closing the factory. It appears the story in the family of a move to Alsace during this time hasn't been confirmed. Immediately after the lifting of the siege, a workers' revolt set up the Commune of Paris, which was only removed by the French authorities after three months and considerable violence.

The site of the new factory, started in 1872 in Avenue de Taillebourg, was owned by and shared for a few years with a clockmaker. The call for a newer sound, the saxophone, having been invented meanwhile by Belgian Adolphe Sax, led to the development of saxophone pipes and, due to noisier steam machines at fairgrounds, the frein harmonique was patented (though not invented) by Gavioli to produce a fuller, more strident sound with more volume.

At about this time Gavioli's first foreign agent, who had possibly learned a fair amount at Gavioli in Paris, Chiappa & Son, manufacturers of street pianos, were active in London and were to last until quite recently. An agency was also established in Manchester.

Larger, up to 84 key, cylinder organs were replaced by fully pneumatic organs from 1892 (Anselme Gavioli had purchased

the patent for a pneumatic keyboard from piano maker Fournier in 1885) and Charles Marengi was Gavioli's foreman at that time.

Anselme's brother, Claude, had started up his own business in 1865 manufacturing reed organs, both hand-played and automatic, and had obtained a patent for a small reed organ played via the card book system by 1890. He sold a licence to manufacture on this patent to Thibouville-Lamy, who, after some improvement, produced the Coelophone.

Dating of Gavioli organs is, on an individual basis, imprecise, as order books from Gavioli haven't survived but, as Andrew Pilmer wrote in his article in 1984, windchests and bellows often reveal old order papers and newspapers, stuck on as a sealant. Repertoire lists and adaptation of various dated patents in the making of an organ can sometimes help in the dating process. The series on Gavioli is to continue.

This edition's composer of the moment is Oscar Fétras, alias Oscar Faster, born in Hamburg in 1854. His compositions, particularly 'Mondnacht auf der Alster' appear occasionally in organ music. Celebration of 30 years of existence of Fredy's Mechanische Musicsalon in Lichtensteig took place in July.

Under 'CD discussions' there is a glowing description of the new, second CD celebrating 100 years of the 'Grote Gavioli' owned by Nigel Myers. Andrew Pilmer's website, www.acpilmer.com, incidentally, gives a good description of this organ, together with details of the first of the two recent CDs. Both CDs are available through the Fair Organ Preservation Society, www.fops.org

Mechanical Music, Vol 52, No.6, Nov/Dec, 2006

In this issued, Anthony Bulleid's frequent report on the Tune Sheet Project (this time Nos 361 – 370), is followed by a brief letter and photos from Don Wright about his Mermod Freres Ideal Piccolo interchangeable musical box, which has a "Tune Book" – the three tune sheets for the three cylinders have been bound in book form!

Robin Biggins describes a most unusually large Bruguier singing bird box which measures 180mm. long by 135mm. deep by 125mm. high, around double the dimensions of a normal box. The bird is fully articulated and lies in a contoured depression under the lid, rather than disappearing through an aperture. The box plays 5 different tunes, lasting 27 seconds.

On restoration matters, Joseph E Roesch discovers that baker's parchment paper appears to provide an adequate replacement for the skins on musical box drums, whilst G Wayne Finger writes about cleaning rust damaged musical combs. This latter article is a detailed study of the problem and includes the use of Evapo-Rust, the non-toxic rust remover tested by Craig Smith in the May/June issue. Mr. Finger concludes that Evapo-Rust also works well on combs, and produces less damage and de-tuning than physical cleaning. Restorers needing veneers are advised by Thaddeus Kochanny to try US companies Timeless Timber and Bacon Veneer Company.

Other items include Larry Karp's unintentional involvement with a stolen music box and an unscrupulous antique dealer, minutes of various meetings, and

a report by Annie Tyvand of the 57th Annual Meeting aka "The Coffee Klatch".

The Key Frame (Issue KF3-06)

Events reviewed in this issue are the Southern Counties Rally in June (by Alan Roberts), and the West of England Steam Engine Society's rally in August (by Dave Smith). Andrea Stadler writes the third and final part of her history of the Limonaire brothers (which was originally published in the AAIMM journal *Musique Mecanique Vivante*) and Andy Hinds reaches part three of his 35 Years of Memories. Dave Smith recounts his visit to Wisconsin, particularly the Circus World Museum, and Andy Hinds writes a potted history of the composer Daniel Auber (1782 – 1871), who composed, in particular, "Masaniello" and "The Bronze Horse", tunes which Andy recommends. The Society also records its concern about the export of a 100-key Gavioli, which was given an export licence, with little or no reference to the organ preservation community in general.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXV, No.3, 2006

The unusual miniature Magnus electrically-blown chord organ is described by Thomas Harr, who then goes on to describe the restoration of a "Basket Case" S.D. & H.W. Smith Melodeon from 1857. Peter Padmore's article gives a very detailed account of the restoration of a Dominion Organ bought for £20 at a farm auction. Mark Jefford explains the start of his collection, which has now reached 4 Harmoniums, 8 Reed Organs and 10 sloping stools!

Organ Grinders News, No. 59, Winter 2006

The majority of this issue covers the BOGA annual gathering which was held at Snibston Discovery Park on 30th September 2006. The meeting resulted in a new chairman, Eric Dilks, who replaces Geoff Todd, chairman for the previous 14 years. Brian Cornelius reviews the 2006 Berlin International Organ Festival, and John Smith reviews the year for Amateur Organ Builders.

The 2007 Annual/Spring Gathering will be 5th – 13th May at Avoncroft Museum of Buildings in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, and later in the year it will be "Return to Milestones" at Milestones Living History Museum, Basingstoke, Hampshire 4th – 12th August. Organ Festivals noted are Little Downham on 31st March and Downham Market on 1st June.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 180, September, 2006

Salomons and its Welte roll-playing Organ is dealt with in some depth by Julian Dyer, who starts with a brief history of the people, i.e. David Salomons who purchase the property, then known as Broomhill in 1829, and his nephew and heir David Lionel Salomons. It was the latter's interest in science and technology that resulted in the eventual installation of the organ, which was the largest that Welte built. It was installed in 1914 but became unused after the family gave the house to Kent County Council in 1937, after which it slowly deteriorated. Eventually, a slow restoration was begun in 1994 with part of the organ able to function by 1996. Then a lottery grant was awarded in 1998 but it took another 8 years for the

organ to be in full working order. For more information, see the web sites www.salomonscentre.org.uk, www.mander-organs.com, www.acpilmer.com, and www.maesto.com.

Jeremy Nicholas's article, previously published in *International Piano*, gives a potted history of English piano manufacturers showing how the names Rogers, Marshall and Rose, Bentley, Collard & Collard and Chappell, through various take-overs or mergers, resulted in just two companies, Kemble and the British Piano Manufacturing Company. The latter was not formed until 2001 but went into liquidation in 2003.

Christine Robinson tells how player pianos were taken on polar expeditions to the North pole with Lieutenant Peary and to the South pole with Scott and with Shackleton. On technical matters, Julian returns with a comprehensive treatise on springs, covering spring theory, springs in the Player Piano and how to select, or make, replacement springs.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 181, December, 2006

Piano rolls provide the central theme for several articles in this issue, starting with Julian Dyer's update on the Gower's Review of Intellectual Property which, whilst primarily aimed at recording copyright, could ultimately affect re-cutting of piano rolls. Fortunately, the review so far recommends no extension to the current 50 year copyright for recordings. Next is Terry Smythe who reminds us that the main purpose of roll scanning is to preserve the inherent data so that, when the rolls disintegrate, they can be re-created in some form. A by-product of the process is the production of MIDI files which, with the help of "e-valves" plumbed in to a conventional

player, allows the player to play from MIDI files, thus broadening its repertoire without the expense or space requirements of paper rolls.

Another article by Julian looks at the various "educational" rolls which were produced, mostly in the 1920s. Aeolian and Gulbransen produced practice rolls to instruct owners how to play their instruments and QRS made similar rolls for Cable-Nelson machines. Aeolian's Audiographic series also included a series for use in schools for Ear Training and Rhythmic Movements; both they and QRS produced rolls to teach actual piano playing.

To finish off the rolls theme, Julian describes some of the trials and tribulations of the last three years to bring the "Steve Cox" perforator system up to date and working. The current results can be reviewed on www.pianorolls.co.uk. George Fleming breaks from the roll theme by giving an interesting and useful description of methods for punching out valve facings; the problem being how to cut both the seat and its central hole simultaneously or at least concentrically.

The Musical Museum and Friends Magazine, issue 39, Autumn 2006

It is nice to see that The Friends are still managing to do things other than move the Museum!! Earlier in the year they made a visit to the Horniman Museum and Gardens at Forest Hill, SE London, where they found the Music Gallery, housing several hundreds of instruments from around the world. It was unfortunate that on the day, the water supply was cut off; so they couldn't have a cup of tea at a Museum financed by tea! In another diversion from the

Museum, Mike Messenger tells the story of the Car that Never Was, wherein William Steinway of piano fame, signed a contract with Gottlieb Daimler, in 1888, giving him the US patent rights to Daimler's vehicles and engines, but he never actually pursued the opportunity himself.

Back to the Museum move, there are various updates including Bob Bean's detailed account of much of the actual moving operation, which was carried out entirely by the Friends. In the first week they moved 46 upright pianos, 12 grands, 7 orchestrions and 3 Orchestrelles in addition to many smaller items. It was noted during the move of one very large piece that the total age of its three "escorts" was in excess of 200 years! Stop Press noted that completion was seriously being hampered by a delay in fitting the lift, thus preventing movement of heavy items between floors. This could delay the intended opening of the new museum in February 2007. I for one, hope they meet their target since the effort put in by this group of enthusiasts is truly magnificent and I look forward to visiting the museum in its new home.

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Other Non-English journals

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 4th Quarter, 2006

Highlights:-

The Mills Novelty Violin
A musical box with a simplified gear train. (Part 2)
The XIIth Festival in Les Gets
The Birth of the Phonograph

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument (Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente), December 2006

Highlights:-

The Golden Years of the Mechanical Organ
Edwin Welte's Light-Tone Organ
Automata of Roulet and Decamps
The Salzburg Stier – The Moral Dilemma of Conservation
The Salzburg Stier – The Problems of Restoration.

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Barrel Piano Rescue

(Details supplied by Paul Baker)

Paul describes one of those rare 'take it or leave it moments' when a 'phone call required a quick decision at a time one would rather not. The call, from a friend, meant that an entire stock of barrel piano parts had to be removed immediately in its entirety or risk the probability of being dumped. Fortunately, his friend had the means of transport and some old outhouses to make a temporary store. Thus he decided to rescue the parts, not quite knowing what he had let himself in for or if he would ultimately have to dump them himself. Here is the story:

The renowned Canon A. O. Wintle, a Canon of the Church, helped beggars, old soldiers and itinerants to earn a living as street musicians playing barrel pianos. He used to remove original maker's names and place his own upon the instruments, often re-pinning barrels to suite modern tunes of the day. The parts were the result of years of acquisition. Wintle died in 1959 and it is thought that an auction had taken place at the time to disperse his effects, a large part of which passed to the Reverend Edwin 'Teddy' Boston, Rector of Cadeby in Leicestershire. Teddy was well known for his love of steam engines

and vintage vehicles, among many other things. Railway preservation 'buffs' will remember him well, including his two foot gauge working railway in the grounds of the Rectory. This remained open until 2005 when it was closed to the public by his widow. The figure of Teddy was the inspiration of The Fat Controller, in the famous children's book 'Thomas the Tank Engine', now a regular feature on TV, video and DVD but written originally by another Reverend, Wilbert Awdry. Rev. Awdry was Teddy's great friend. They had many a 'railway holiday' together but he passed away in 1986.

Apparently, all the barrel piano parts were at some point purchased by Madam Tussauds, well known for their waxworks museum but also a great entertainments empire. Tussauds own Warwick Castle, thought to be the finest in England and have large collections of historic fairground artefacts and memorabilia. The collection soon parted company again with much going to Hampshire collector and mechanical music enthusiast, Ray Tombs. He died in 2006 at an advanced age. His house, a former Rectory with about eleven acres of grounds was sold for development.

Ray's collection of musical boxes, phonographs and the better barrel pianos went to auction but it left a problem as to what to do with the rest? This comprised some 25 barrel pianos, player pianos, organs and a vast assortment of parts, carts, spares and sundries, much of which had belonged to Canon Wintle.

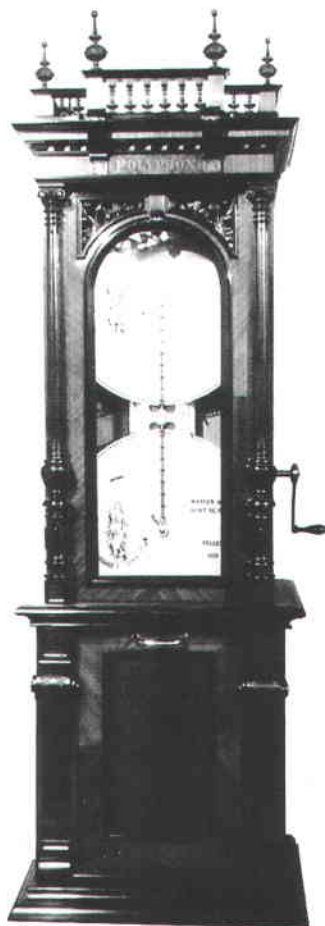
Thus, the rescuer now faces the same dilemma: What to do with 15 barrel pianos in varying condition and a pile of parts. There are penny-in-the-slot pianos, a Spanish example with bells, a rare pigmy-sized 29-note barrel piano, around 60-70 case panels, parts of carts and wheels, about 50 key-frames (a few with tremolo action), carved piano tops with tune card frames, orphaned barrels, barrel cradles, spring motors for coin-operated pianos, dozens of soundboard bridges. Also, about eight boxes containing literally thousands of unused barrel pins!

Paul's friend now has the problem of space. If you have an interest, you may also be able to find use for some of these parts and help rescue part of this heritage. If so, contact Paul at phonopaul@aol.com or Tel: 02392 522582.



Keith Harding
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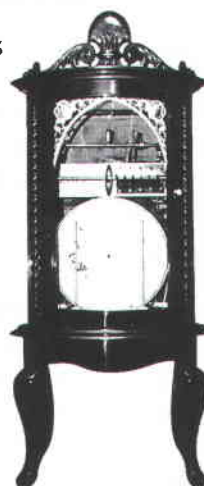
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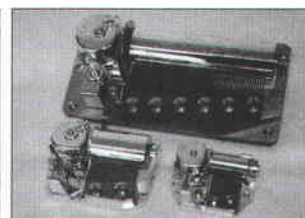
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