

The *Music Box*

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue:

- AGM Minutes
- In the Workshop - 3
- Patek - Philippe Museum
- Sale Report - Bonhams

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain



»Lady Photographer, c. 1890«
Musical automata with surprising procedure,
by Louis Marie Renou, Paris!
One of the most fascinating doll
automatons ever!



»Columbia Graphophone Modell BS, 1898«
Rare coin-operated phonograph
in excellent condition!



Swiss Orchestral
Musical Box by »B.A. Bremond,
Geneve, c. 1875«
With reed organ and 9 bells. 12 tunes. Very
elegant collector's item in top condition!



»Swiss Bear Musical
Bench, c. 1880«
Very rare!



Excellent Cylinder Musical Box
»The Victoria, c. 1890
By Barnett Henry Abrahams, Ste. Croix.

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All instruments in this ad were subjects of our 9 June 2007 sale.

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France: Pierre J. Bickart, Tel (01) 43 33 86 71, AuctionTeamKoln@aol.com

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Grandfather Clock
»Polyphon No. 63,
c. 1900«
With original Black
Forest clock by
Lenzkirch.
Excellent condition!!



Floor
Gramophone
»Klingsor
with Dancing Dolls«
Very rare!!!



»Nickelodeon Pianola Orchestration, c. 1920«
Coin-operated, extraordinarily entertaining
and in perfect playing condition!!



»Symphonion: Fallstaff
Original machine for 30cm
(11 7/8 in.) discs. A fantastic
authentic figure remake.
- The only one known
worldwide! -



Symphonion Mod. H25
GS »Gambrinus«
For 11 7/8 in. metal discs.
A fantastic replica.
The superb eye-catching
exhibition piece in any
major collection.



»Savoyard, c. 1890«
Legendary »Polyphon Musi-
cal Box« for 39,8cm (15 5/8
in.) discs. Original machine
with 100% authentic figure
remake with movable hand!
- Spectacular museum
piece!! -



»Polyhymnia, 1895«
For 56cm (22 in.) discs.
ONLY 3x known
worldwide!!



»Polyphon No. 54:
Mikado, 1890«
For 62,5cm (24 1/2 in.)
discs. Extremely rare in
this top condition!



»Lochmann-Orchestrion:
Original-Tanzautomat No.
100, c. 1900«
With original Swiss town
scenery window, for 65,5cm
(25 3/4 in.), 40 tune piano,
tambourine, cymbal, triangle,
drum, carillon. Weight powered.



»Girl Playing with Toys, c. 1890«
Charming musical automaton by Léopold
Lambert, Paris. Extremely rare!!



»Monopol Excelsior, c. 1900«
Excellent playing rare musical box
for 21 1/2 in. (55,3 cm) metal discs.



»Polyphon No. 6G, c. 1900«
With 16 bells, for 22 in. discs! Rare!



From the Editors' Desk

We were disappointed (but not surprised) that two London auction houses have officially pulled out of the collectors' market. It had been noticeable for some years that the number and, in many cases, the quality of items in each sale had been declining. When we first started seriously collecting, Christie's, for instance, had a sale devoted to mechanical music every two months. They had the benefit of an enthusiastic, energetic, personable young man as specialist and auctioneer (he is not unknown to MBSGB members!). Sotheby's were at Belgravia with the young Hilary Kay and Jon Baddeley, also with memorable sales. Phillips and Bonhams were also having regular specialist sales – London became a Mecca for musical box collectors. It was a pity that the era had to pass. The sales had dwindled to two a year and were lumped in with other collectibles. Phillips (now Bonhams) at Knowle carries on the tradition of friendly collector-based sales and we are grateful for their continued support of the Society via their advertising and saleroom reports.

This is the passing of a 'golden age' when every antique shop in every town could boast something of interest – an early barrel organ discovered under a pile of old papers, or the superb musical box found in Salisbury without its endstone—a valuable jewel that was sold separately! Now societies are playing an increasingly valuable role. The best thing about the London sales (apart from the dream of a bargain) was the social aspect. A chance to catch up with friends and have a natter over coffee. If all your mates were not there at least you could get news of them! We may have thought that the social aspect was the most important, but in fact we were so fortunate in that

we were able to experience the whole range of mechanical music. The good, the bad and the ugly were all there. You got to listen to hundreds of boxes and quickly learned the importance of good arranging and bright combs. Over-restoration was not a feature in the early days of our collecting!

The Internet is playing an increasingly important role in all of our lives. It is how we can edit the magazine from another continent. What it cannot replace is the actual sound, sight, feel (and smell in some cases) of the real instrument in front of us. It will be a sad day for mankind when all our experiences are via a keyboard and screen. Which is not to say that we should not embrace technology, but as social people our best chance of hearing a range of instruments will be at a local meeting of fellow MBSGB enthusiasts. As well as keeping an eye on smaller auction houses...

In this issue we are delighted to bring you the Patek Philippe museum in Geneva with its wonderful and historic horological and musical exhibits. Workshop notes reaches part 3. In the next issue we learn how to make new barrels. Anthony Bulleid continues to challenge us to expand our knowledge and understanding of our collections.

In a small paragraph on page 78 we report the sad loss of the 1903 Marengi fair organ 'Lady Hamilton'. It seems there is now a trend toward stealing valuable fairground organs. A highly valuable item parked outside in a truck ready to drive away? Probably no burglar alarm on the truck even? A thief's paradise. It would seem that there are unscrupulous people now in our field of collecting who are prepared to have items stolen to order for their own gratification. It is not confined to antiquities any more.

Contents

Society News	63-67
From the President	63
AGM Minutes	64
Chanctonbury Ring report	66
Temple Valley Winders report	66
Register News	68
In the Workshop - 3	70
Patek - Philippe Museum - colour centre-fold	75
Sale Report - Bonhams	79
Musical Box Oddments 114	81
News from Other Societies	86
Letters to the Editor	88
Classified Ads	92

Cover Picture:
Front cover illustration:
Le Grand Vase
see the Patek-Philippe Museum
article in colour 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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OFFICERS OF THE M.B.S.G.B. AND THEIR DUTIES

President: **Arthur Cunliffe**
MBSGB, PO Box 373, AL6 0WY
E-mail: adcunliffe@btinternet.com

Joint Vice President: **Coulson Conn**
432 Old Forge Road, Media, Pennsylvania PA 1906 USA
Tel: 610 459 067

Joint Vice President: **Paul Bellamy**
46 Longfield Avenue, High Halstow, Nr. Rochester. Kent ME3 8TA
Tel: 01634 252079 E-mail: bellamypaul6@aol.com

Subscriptions Secretary & Treasurer: **Richard Kerridge**
32 Queens Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4BA
Tel: 0118 957 7453 E-mail: edwinsmith@btinternet.com
To whom all subscriptions and subscription enquiries should be addressed.

Membership Secretary: **Kevin McElhone**
MBSGB, POBox 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01536 726759 E-mail: kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com
To whom all applications and queries relating to new membership should be addressed

Correspondence Secretary: **Robert Ducat-Brown**
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01438 712585 E-mail: mail@mbsgb.org.uk
To whom all general correspondence should be sent.

Meetings Secretary: **Daphne Ladell**
The Hollies, Box Hill Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 7LA
Tel: 01737 843644 E-mail: daphne.ladell@btinternet.com

Recording Secretary: **Hugh Morgan**
27 Middleton Street, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 OAE
Tel: 01953 603462

Editors: **David & Lesley Evans**
P O Box 3088 Revelstoke BC, V0E 2S0, Canada.
Tel/Fax: 001 250 837 5250 E-mail: mechmusicmuseum@aol.com

Archivist: **John Farmer**
8 The Lea, Kidderminster, Worcester DY11 6JY
Tel: 01562 741108 E-mail: john@musicanic.com

Auction Organiser: **David Walch**
Tel: 0117 9684701

Advertising Secretary: **Ted Brown**
The Old School, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Horsham, West Sussex
RH12 3JP Tel: 01403 823533

Committee members:
Nicholas Simons Tel: 01332 760576 E-mail: njas@btinternet.com

David Worrall. M.B.E.
Tel: 01962 882269 E-mail: worrall@ercall87.freemove.co.uk

John Ward Tel: 01438 743 7980 E-mail: wardjohnlawrence@aol.com

Website: www.mbsgb.org.uk E-mail: mail@mbsgb.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

**Don't forget to book for our
Autumn Meeting
Coventry
Friday 19th October –
Sunday 21st October
Phone John Ward – 01438 743 7980**

**Chanctonbury Ring
Saturday 14th July – Open Day
Sunday 23rd September
Saturday 24th November –
Christmas Meeting
Phone Ted Brown - 01403 82 3533**

**Teme Valley Winders
Saturday 22nd September
1.30 – prompt

Saturday 1st December –
Christmas Meeting
12 noon with Buffet Lunch
and Mince Pies
Phone John Phillips 01584 781 118**

**Essex Meeting
Saturday 15th September
Phone Bruce Allen - 01702 23 2040**

**Overseas Tour
Longiano - Italy
Wednesday 5th September -
Monday 10th
Phone Daphne Ladell -
01737 84 3644**

**Spring Meeting 2008
Brentford
Friday 11th April – Sunday 13th
Details in next journal**

President's Message No.5

The society AGM was another very successful occasion with more members than ever attending the event. It was especially pleasing to welcome four members who had never previously attended an AGM.

I am sad that Roy Ison has decided to retire from the committee. He has worked for many years for the Society both as a committee member and as Meetings Organiser. Many will remember with gratitude the outstanding meetings Kevin organised. After serving for many years in this post, Roy would ask time and time again at committee meetings if there was anyone willing to take over the job so that he could have a rest, only to be greeted with a stony silence. There never seemed to be anyone willing to take on the job so Roy carried on as he would never let the society down. Thank you Roy for all your efforts, and thank you too Mary for assisting and being such a tower of strength.

In the last journal, the importance of recording the work of present day manufacturers of musical boxes was mentioned. Musical boxes are still being made today in many countries and it is imperative that as much information as possible is written down about present day manufacturers for posterity. If only more people had written about, or recorded their recollections of the musical box world of the 19th century, how much easier our research work would have been today! It is human nature to think that we all know about modern musical items and how they work and that nothing needs to be done. It is also surprising how quickly such knowledge is lost and forgotten. In a hundred years from now none of us will be around to answer questions and unless we have left written material and photographs, those struggling to do research will be faced with a serious lack of

information about the 20th century.

Our article about Reuge in our last journal will be an invaluable piece of information to a future historian, so we really must record everything about the present world of mechanical music before we forget. Neither must we overlook the small number of people who have produced limited numbers of modern musical boxes and automata. Many of these modern day makers of things mechanical and musical are very gifted individuals. Their work must be remembered and written about. Some indeed have been featured or advertised in our journals already but are no longer available.

That brings me to the matter of past copies of the journal. If you have joined the society within the last few years, there are some wonderful articles, pictures and writings in our past journals that are fascinating and informative. I know that much information can be gained from the world of the computer and the internet. The society must consider very seriously how to use these modern tools to our best advantage and I am pleased to say that the committee are discussing this very topic at the moment. However, we must remember that, provided future generations have been taught to read, it is easy to reach for a book on a shelf and they will be just as valuable as they are today. Now for the thinly disguised marketing tactic! It is still possible to purchase most of our journals and store them in our specially made binders. A library of your own!

One part of the Register is to record the theft of any box. Originally that was not the main idea behind the register, but it evolved as being potentially useful. Recently, a box that was stolen many years ago turned up again and thanks to the

Register entry the matter has been successfully resolved. To the present day, the register has helped in the recovery of a number of stolen boxes so it may be of interest to note some aspects of what has happened. Since 1975, there have been 49 boxes recorded in the Register as having been stolen. These belonged in total to 10 individuals or institutions. The greatest number of items to be stolen in any one incident was 16. It is not private individuals who suffer most, but shops or museums where the presence of such items is well known. On three occasions, the stolen boxes belonged to non society members who had the misfortune to suffer a "chance" burglary. They were noted on the Register as stolen as a gesture of good will to try to help the unfortunate individuals. Out of these three, one has been recovered. All these non members have expressed their gratitude for the help they received, but sad to say none went so far as to actually join the society!

One can readily see that over the past 32 years, very few private members in the society have suffered a theft. The actual number is four and so statistically, providing sensible precautions are taken, the chance of having any of your collection stolen is very low. I believe however, that careless talk or boasting about a collection can significantly increase these odds. None of us should ever openly discuss a collection or mention an owner in public especially if it not you. In the last war there was a slogan saying, "Careless talk costs lives." Change the last word to "collections" and the slogan is still very apt. I do believe that putting your boxes on the register and marking the register number on the item puts another layer of security in your armoury.

My best wishes to you all.
Arthur Cunliffe.

Minutes of the AGM Musical Box Society of Great Britain

Held at the Village Hall, Roade on the 2nd June 2007

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 2 members.

Confirmation of the last A.G.M. held in 2006

These minutes were accepted by the meeting and there were no matters arising.

Officers' Reports

President

Arthur Cunliffe outlined the progress of the Society over the last year. He was pleased that our meetings were very successful and enjoyable. In his view our Society was the best in the country.

Subscription Secretary

Richard Kerridge reported that at the end of 2006 we had 474 paid up members of whom 49 were joint members. By May of this year, our membership stood at 372 members including 55 joint members. 81 members had not

renewed their subscriptions at this time.

Membership Secretary

Kevin McElhone told the meeting that so far this year 20 new members had joined the Society. The number of new members joining was declining year on year and he feared that if this trend continued the Society would cease to exist within the next 10 years or so. He asked all members to work hard to enrol new members. The new coloured joining leaflet and pack had proved to be helpful.

Correspondence Secretary

Bob Ducat-Brown told members that most enquiries were coming via the internet and that very few letters were coming by post. The web site was constantly being improved and now that members had to use a password and user name, much less unsuitable material was getting through. He told members that the index of "The Music Box" was now available on the web site.

Meetings Secretary

Daphne Ladell spoke about the Society meetings. The Oxford meeting had been particularly successful with a record number of members attending. Thirty six Society members will visit Italy in September to take part in the International Organ Festival of Music. Members will fly to Longiano where they will be made welcome by Franco Severi. The autumn meeting will be held in Coventry. John Ward has organised a full and varied programme of events which will include concerts and performances on a Compton theatre organ. The

programme should be one of the most interesting ever.

At this stage in the meeting Christopher Proudfoot proposed and Jack Henley seconded that these reports be accepted. This was carried.

Hon. Treasurer Report

Richard Kerridge presented the accounts for the year ending 2006. There had been a deficit of £1,643.66 for the year. Subscription levels had almost stayed the same and income from meetings had shown a small surplus. A donation of £1,000 had been made to the Brentford Museum. Printing costs had increased. All this has left the Society with clear funds of £31,580 plus another £11,000 in the contingency fund. A total of £42,580.74.

Hon. Editors Report

Arthur Cunliffe read the report received from David and Lesley Evans in which they said that they had enjoyed editing the journal for just over two years. They expressed their thanks to all who had contributed to the journal in any way. They also thanked Joe at Floprint for helping in the journal production. They asked members to continue sending in articles for publication so that the journal could be continually improved and enlarged.

Hon. Archivist Report

John Farmer told the meeting that more books had been added to the archives and cataloguing was ongoing. Tune lists originally produced by Kevin McElhone were now on the Society web site on the Archives page. He

**Back numbers of
Music Box are
still available
from:**

**Roy Ison
5 East Bight
Lincoln
LN2 1QH**



New Life Member Richard Kerridge is presented with his certificate by President Arthur Cunliffe whilst Vice President Paul Bellamy looks on.

reminded all who have unwanted written material to donate it to the archives.

Auction Organiser Report

David Walch reported that the auction last year had fewer lots to sell but in spite of this a reasonable sum had been made for Society funds. He thanked Christopher Proudfoot for conducting the auction. He also thanked all who had helped in any way with the auction.

At this point in proceedings, Bob Ducat-Brown proposed and John Farmer seconded that these reports be accepted. This was carried.

To consider propositions submitted by members

There were no such propositions.

Election of Officers

Paul Bellamy took the chair and asked members to re-elect

Arthur Cunliffe as President. Arthur was duly re-elected as President/Chairman.

Arthur Cunliffe then informed the meeting that Roy Ison wished to retire from the committee. Roy and Mary were thanked for their hard work over the years and members showed their appreciation.

Ted Brown proposed and Paul Bellamy seconded that David Worrall be elected to the committee. David was introduced to the membership and subsequently elected.

Ken Dickens proposed and Maurice Adams seconded that the remaining officers be re-elected en-bloc. This was carried.

Subscriptions

The Treasurer asked that all subscriptions remain the same for the coming year. This was agreed.

Venue for forthcoming AGM meetings

It was decided that the AGM for 2008 and for the year 2009 should continue to be held at the Village Hall at Roade.

A.O.B.

The President announced the award of Life Membership to Richard Kerridge in recognition of his hard work for the Society over many years. Richard was then presented with a framed certificate. Members showed their appreciation by applauding warmly.

There followed some useful discussions on the topic of using the Society web site for promoting society publications. The members were informed that the committee was already looking into this matter and a small sub group was being set up to formulate policy.

Paul Bellamy gave the latest news on society publications. In particular the Organette book and the Nicole books are selling well. A new supplement to the Tune Sheet book would be available soon.

There was then some discussion on the topic of transferring back issues of our journal on to CD ROM. At the request of Alison Biden, the committee agreed that this matter would be studied and a report would be made to members when a decision had been reached.

Four new members who were attending a meeting for the first time were introduced and made welcome.

There being no further matters to discuss, the meeting closed at 11.55.

Chanctonbury Ring Meeting 20th May 2007

By Alan K Clark

Ted and Kay Brown had a full house for the latest Chanctonbury Ring meeting. The topics covered in the meeting ranged from the attempted identification of unknown tunes on several cylinder boxes, hymn tunes, unusual organettes and tune arranging for paper roll organettes.

The next Chanctonbury Ring meeting was arranged for 23rd September, the topics to be explored were Nicole boxes, all sizes and types, and phonograph cylinders. Packed lunches would probably be required, but a notice with details would be inserted elsewhere in the journal.

The tune identification started fairly successfully, with ten out of twenty tunes being identified on the first box. Next we were treated to the sounds of a selection of the smaller organettes. The 16 note Organina, examples of which could play rolls, or paper strips was played by Ted, and this was followed by Brian playing a much larger and earlier Cabinette Organina, which despite its greater size, also only played 16 notes. We then heard Euphonia and Little Dot 16 note organettes followed by a Gem 14 note. An interesting comparison was drawn between the Dulcine German made 16 note machine, and a Coquette apparently French made machine, as they were identical apart from the names, both of which were stamped into the front of the case in the same manner. Next we were shown an English Gem 14 note organette, by

Maxfield, which would only play endless bands.

The next item was a very interesting talk by Roger Booty on arranging music to play on organettes. The secrets were to make a table listing the scale of notes played by the organette, and to add lines to this table increasing each note by a semitone for each line. Thus the organ scale was transposed to match the scale of the music which one wished to make into the organette roll. Mention was also made of the need to possibly shorten some note lengths to accentuate the rhythm. Methods of marking out the roll for cutting were explained.

Following an excellent ploughman's lunch and selection of puddings, all supplied by Ted, Kay and their helpers, we heard a hymn tune played on Ted's 1765 barrel organ. This was followed by some hymns played on a Concert Roller Organ. Then came an Ariston Grosse model, a Hermann, Draper's Orchestral Organette, Aerial and Cabinetto organettes.

The afternoon was completed with Paul Baker playing two tunes on Ted's pianola, and Kevin playing a rather unusual hymn tune which actually had variations in the arrangements of the verses, on the Aeolian Orchestrelle.

All of the attendees had a very enjoyable and educational day. Ted, Kay, and their helpers are to be congratulated.

Teme Valley Winders

by John Farmer

A meeting with a difference was held on 14th April, 2007, at Peter Bill's home in Rock, Worcestershire. Peter explained that the large, oak framed room in which the meeting was held, was originally a 14th Century Great Hall which would have had a central fireplace and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke, the building then being a central focus of the local Manorial Court. Most of the rest of the current house was built around 1542. However, when Peter and his wife bought the property in 1970, all but two rooms of the house was almost derelict. Since then they have restored the whole house as close as possible to its original form and structure.

Having explained the history of the house, Peter then introduced us to his unusual collection of keyboard instruments, aided by a handout listing the collection. This includes a 1791 English Square Piano, an 1820 Broadwood grand piano (wooden framed), an 1840 Broadwood upright, and a Stewards Royal Patent Euphonic (1848). The latter was an innovative piano having a large vertical cast iron external frame for the strings, and a keyboard in front operating hammers mounted low down in the case. Instead of the normal soundboard, the instrument has sound "boxes", similar in principle to the guitar or violin, mounted in the lower part of the frame. Peter and Jason Fisher, both accomplished "keyboardists", demonstrated most of the instruments, but the Euphonic remained silent because its keyboard had been removed for restoration. The collection also includes more recent instruments such as a 1960's Morley's Harpsichord and Clavichord, a Sheffield's Chamber

Organ and a Hammond tonewheel organ. Tim Ralph, who maintains most of the instruments for Peter, gave a brief talk on the problems of maintaining the older instruments, particularly balancing the need for reliability with the desire to maintain originality.

Returning to "Mechanical" music, Kath Turner started us off with her recently purchased Lecoultre cylinder box from around 1860, which attracted Kath with its 8 Scottish tunes. Doug Pell followed up with a Mr. Christmas disc playing "piano" disc box (somewhat smaller than the main attractions !!), and a 20th century bird in cage, probably by Griesbaum. John Phillips also played his latest Birthday card – fitted with a modern manivelle mechanism.

John Moorhouse showed the bird in cage mechanism he has been restoring for Peter Bill, the song now working well, and the bird moving properly, although in need of new plumage. John has also been developing ways of moulding replacement rubber bellows for modern bird mechanisms and showed the results made from dental silicone, which seem to work quite well. He then moved on to his pet project, which is to build a singing bird in an egg. He has created the silver egg (and two spares) by metal spinning techniques, and now plans to use engine turning to engrave a pattern, before enamelling. The internal mechanism is also assembled with blank cams, and, as yet, no bird.

John Phillips showed a small singing bird box which he had recently repaired for Peter Bill. Previously the bird and lid would only open half way. John Harrold followed up with a 4 tune Lecoultre box dated (from a Bellini tune played by the box) around 1832, thus probably by David Lecoultre. Finally, Peter Bill demonstrated his large, probably Bremond, cylinder

The Amersham Fair Organ Museum

Unit 1, 28 Plantation Road
Amersham. BUCKS, HP6 6HJ
Tel: 01494 433948

Open Day Dates: Winter 2007-2008

Sunday 4th November 2007.

Sunday 9th December 2007.

Sunday 6th January 2008.

Sunday 3rd February 2008.

Sunday 2nd March 2008.

The collection comprises two 89 key Gaviolis, an 89 key sleighbell Marengi, a 49 key Marengi, a 72 key Decap, a 70 key Hooghuis and the ex Graham Whitehead Weber Unika piano orchestrion. All instruments are maintained in excellent playing order.

Admission by donation.

Refreshments Available

Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Peter Bill addresses the meeting

box having bells, drum, castanet, and reed organ. Unlike many such boxes, the bells and reed organ did seem to complement the main tune (although this could only be appreciated with the castanet switched off – personal opinion – JF). Peter then invited all present (15, I think), to tea and cake (including Death by Chocolate, from Celine Weekes !!). Finally, the group were treated to an impromptu concert by Jason Fisher and Martin Phillips (John Phillips' son), who is an accomplished organist.

The next meeting is planned for 23rd June, 1:30 prompt, at Eastham Grange, with the usual arrangements.

John Farmer

Register News No. 56

I know that all of us have opened the lid of a musical box to find that the tune card was missing with only four pins to indicate that the box once had a card attached to it. Imagine my surprise when the process was reversed the other day and an original tune card turned up without a box or movement. Somewhere out there just might be a movement that relates to this tune card and if so it is imperative that the two come together again. Do any of you have a 6 air Ducommun-Girod box with the serial number 4301? If so, I have the original tune card with the distinctive "sunburst" trade mark of Ducommun-Girod. What is interesting is that 5 of the 8 tunes have been written by a person with a distinctive writing style whilst the other 3 have been written by another person with an equally, but different, distinctive style. A second point of interest on the tune card is to be found at the bottom where an agent has stuck quite a large paper label in the lower margin. It is obviously original as the foxing on the card has spread to the agent's label. The agent was, "Hawkes and Co. "Musical Progress", 33 Soho Square, London W." Please do not ask for the card if you do not have the box. I feel that if the original movement cannot be found, then the card would be better kept in the Register records for all to see.

In the Tune Sheet book, illustration number 213 shows a tune card that has not yet been linked to any maker. It is the "lyre and spray of leaves" design printed on flimsy paper and often found on key wind boxes. One has recently come to light and it has two interesting items of information that may be of some help. The movement has a smooth



Fig 1. Ducommun-Girod 6-air hidden bell & drum box.

brass bedplate with the letters "LM" stamped on the bedplate underneath the comb where they cannot be seen easily. The comb has the letter "G" stamped on top. The case is a traditional key wind with a drop flap designed for the 31 cm cylinder movement. On the bottom of the tune card is the dealer stamp: "L. Sloan & Sons. Music Warehouse. 1, Old Bond Street. Bath." Does anyone know who "LM" was or the significance of the letter G on the comb?

In the early days of collecting musical boxes, there were always plenty about to choose from. Nearly every town in the country had at least one antique shop and more often than not there was a musical box or possibly two in each and every one of these shops. How times have changed. Today there hardly ever seems to be an antique shop in any town let alone a musical box. I well remember entering one establishment and there behind the door was a pile of boxes stacked up on top of each other. There were 2 piles with 8 boxes in each pile. On a neighbouring shelf were one or two better quality boxes that had been spared such an ignoble fate. No packing separated any of the boxes so goodness only knows what damage was being done to the lids! On asking if I could view

the boxes with a view to possibly buying one or two of them, I was refused. A shipper would collect them later in the week and send them to America where he would get a better price for them and that was that!

I am old enough to remember the days when the black slate mantle clocks were used as door stops and I once saw a badly damaged 8 air cylinder box used for the same purpose. My final offer of £2.50 for the box was accepted, but for the life of me I cannot remember what became of it after that. Small 30 odd tooth movements were so common in those days that one was used in a society meeting for demonstration purposes. A well known founder member of the Society fully wound the box up and then released the governor. This was done to show members the effect of a run! Afterwards the box was sold for spares. Today, anybody causing such a deliberate run would generate much anger and deservedly so. Surely the thousands of boxes that were around in those days have not all gone abroad, so what has happened to them?

Returning to the present day, I am pleased to say that the total number of boxes now on the Register is exactly 7,320 with at least a couple of hundred still to be entered. It takes about half an hour to make card index copies and insert the new record into the database file, so there is still much work to be done. The Nicole listing as sent out with the Nicole Factor book is now a little out of date, but not noticeably so. Please do continue sending in details of boxes you come across and mark the Register number on the box as soon as it has been allocated.

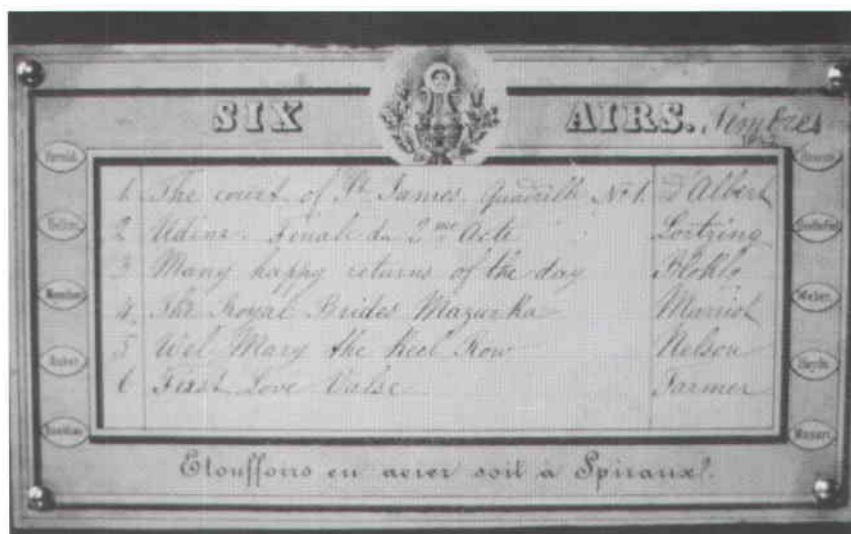


Fig 2. Tune sheet of Ducommun-Girod box.

Another box made by Ducommun-Girod provides the content and pictures for the conclusion of this RegisterNews. It also is an example of an entry that gives a valuable clue as to dating a particular box and therefore proving a “fix” in a dating chart. This is because the first tune is from Undine, an unsuccessful opera written by Lortzing in 1845.

The serial number of this early lever wind 6 air 8 hidden bell box is 1842. The bells are stacked and the 8 teeth to operate them are at the left hand end of the one piece comb. The strikers are soldered

directly on to the leads on the teeth. Everything at first points directly to the conclusion that this box must have been made by Ducommun-Girod, except the fact that nowhere on it is the name Ducommun. Anthony Bulleid



Fig 3. The movement.

says that he has never seen a Ducommun without a name being stamped somewhere, so is this the first one? It has the correct tune card and the attributes of that maker. The Register lists other hidden bell boxes by Ducommun with serial numbers not too far off. The word “Timbres” written in the top margin of the tune card was something that this manufacturer was prone to do from time to time.

I believe that this box could have been made by another maker who used a Ducommun tune card or it could have had a replacement winding lever fitted at sometime during its life or it is a genuine Ducommun that missed the name stamping process during manufacture. It’s make your mind up time? Have a good look at the photos and let us have your thoughts and views in letters to the editor!

Arthur Cunliffe, Registrar.

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In The Workshop, Part 3: Small Musical Movements - The Three R's - more repairs and some replacements, By "Odd Job"

Parts 1 and 2 dealt with repair and restoration of some of the component parts of small movements such as the base, spring case, spring winding arbor and the spring itself. Part three is concerned with the various gears that are used and how they can be made with little more than a small lathe, patience and a little ingenuity plus some tips on cylinder repair. Part 4 shows how to replicate a musical programme and make a replacement cylinder.

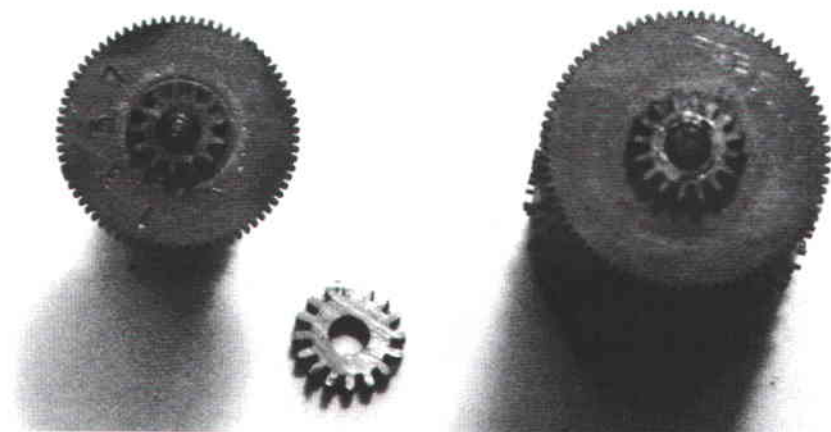


Fig 1: Two typical sizes of great wheel with smaller concentric drive pinion. The middle pinion gear is a fabrication made from a cutter ground to the profile of the original (right) and shown in bar form (Fig 3).

Gear Cutting:

This is the one task likely to put-off the amateur. If one reads the technical books on gear cutting, let alone understands all the technical complexities and terms about tooth shape, pressure angles, diametral pitch, gear cutting tool sizes etc., then you will remain put-off forever. So, forget about all these complexities and look for a simple solution that works. The main thing to remember is that most of the gears run slowly and thus tooth profile is not of paramount importance in gear performance.

Although gears need to be made as accurately as possible, it is surprising how well a gear made with crude tools will operate when fitted to one of these small movements.

Fig. 1 shows two typical sizes of a cylinder's 'great wheel'. A small pinion gear is concentric with the great wheel and rotates the cylinder. The pinion engages with the spring-driven crown wheel and also comes in two typical sizes. For

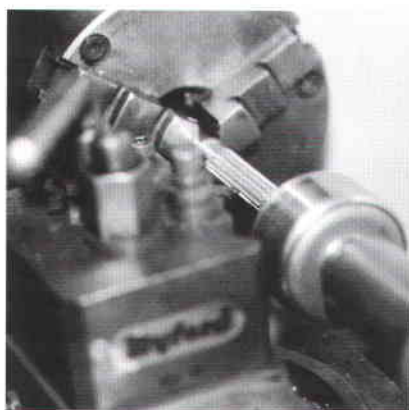


Fig. 2: Shaping a tooth by 'ploughing' lengthwise using the lathe saddle's hand wheel. The chuck is locked in position.

each of the two main sizes of great wheel, pinion and crown wheel, they are usually interchangeable between makers. The great wheel engages directly with the governor assembly. Governors come in two basic sizes, larger ones for the 22 and 28/30-note movements, smaller for the 18-note ones.

Fig. 2 gives the clue as to how replica gears can be made. A piece of brass bar has been turned to the required diameter. It is mounted in the 3-jaw chuck that is locked by means of a dividing mechanism (more about this later). The tooth is being cut by a tool, hand ground to fit the profile of the required tooth, and clamped firmly in the tool post. The tip of the tooth is set exactly on the centre-line of the head and tailstock. Cuts are made in the bar by hand-winding the lathe's saddle along the lathe bed. Very light cuts are taken, about 0.001 – 0.002ins. Use the mini-drill with cutting disc to slice gears from the bar. A saw will damage the teeth.

Sometimes it is easier to part-machine the gear blank using the dividing mechanism and a slitting saw to remove the bulk of the metal. The slot should be to the exact depth of the gear and no wider than the root gap between teeth to be copied. The tooth can then be profiled as in fig. 2 or by hand. The hand method is quite satisfactory. Use an old wood

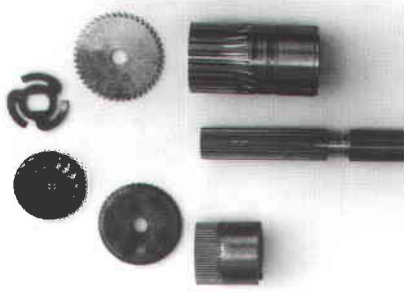


Fig 3: Examples of gear blanks (left), crown wheel gear (centre top before pressing to shape and bottom after shaping), 18-note crown wheel and ratchet spring (left).

chisel and grind its tip to the tooth profile. Draw the chisel along each tooth in turn until the chisel reaches the bottom of the groove. Fig 3 shows (top right) a gear blank that has been slotted prior to hand profiling. Fig 4 shows the same gear after it has been hand profiled. This gear blank is for a different type of crown wheel that is sometimes found on small movements where the teeth crudely engage at right angles!

Fig. 3 also shows (middle and bottom right) two other size of gear blanks cut in the lathe, the middle one being for a drive pinion and the bottom for the great wheel of a Victorian photograph album's movement. It has 63 teeth, much finer than small crown wheels for 20/30-note types of movement. The teeth are only 0.003ins. deep. The cylinders of these album movements usually have two or more tunes. The cylinder slides along its drive shaft spindle to which the great wheel is fixed. The great wheel transmits rotation by means of a peg that engages with a slot in the end of the cylinder. The cylinder was removed from its spindle. With the spindle clamped in the 3-jaw lathe chuck, all the teeth on the great wheel were machined off. The 63-toothed bar was then recessed to match the diameter of the machined great wheel and the recessed portion then sliced off the bar using the mini-drill and disc cutter. The gear was then soldered onto the great wheel. Fig. 5 shows the final result.

Gear cutters are made from any suitable piece of steel such as a broken drill shank or silver steel ground by eye to fit the profile of good teeth (remember to harden and temper it after grinding to shape). The profile is ground flat on one side to half the diameter to give a clean cutting edge. The cutter is then mounted firmly in the cross slide of the lathe with the tip at centre height and the flat part of the cutter facing the headstock of the lathe, (Fig. 2). Use a 'centre' in the tailstock to support the blank when cutting teeth. Larger diameter gears can be cut without the 'centre', the amount projecting from the chuck being about 1/2". For very small diameter gears, even steel ones (use free cutting steel, it is so much easier to cut), a 'steady' bracket on the opposite side of, and firmly in contact with, the bar so that it travels with the cutter, preventing deflection of the bar. Use a piece of hardwood or brass as the steady and apply thread-cutting lubricant when cutting steel.

A dividing head for a lathe can be expensive. Fig 6 shows a homemade one made up from scraps of angle iron and steel

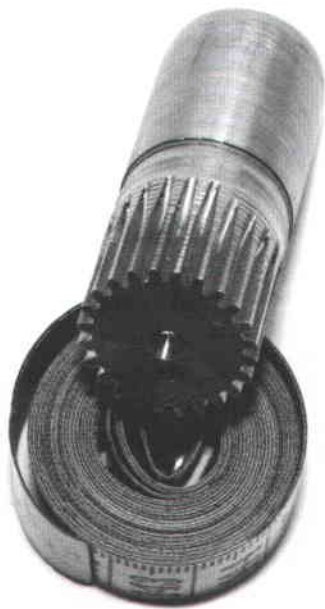


Fig. 4: Gear blank, as shown in fig. 3 top right, profiled after slitting.

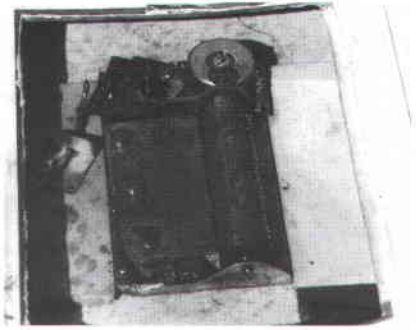


Fig. 5: Photograph album movement with replaced great wheel (see blank at bottom right of fig. 3).

plate with a 40-toothed worm wheel and worm found in an old gearbox. If your lathe does not have a dividing head, *The Amateur's Lathe* by L. H. Spary (Argus Specialist publications Ltd, Hemel Hempstead, Herts., and still available 'at all good book stores') is a useful book to have. It will explain how standard lathe gears can be used as a dividing head. Standard lathe gears may not cover the entire range of divisions required.

There is another way of making a dividing head. You need a device to clamp the lathe spindle. The homemade device in Fig. 6 has a sleeve that fits into the rear of the headstock-spindle. The sleeve is slotted and locked tight by means of long bolt with cone-shaped nut that sits inside the sleeve. As the bolt is tightened, the cone-shaped nut spreads to expand the sleeve and lock it onto the headstock spindle. This provides an extension shaft on which the worm wheel is mounted. The extension is then locked by a clamp, seen to the right of the dividing worm in fig 6. Now imagine the worm wheel to be replaced by a steel disc about 1/8th inches thick. Stick a piece of paper on the disc and mark the divisions using a compass. You now have a crude but effective dividing head. This is the difference between the sophisticated workshop with expensive tools, and the hobbyist who has to 'make do'.

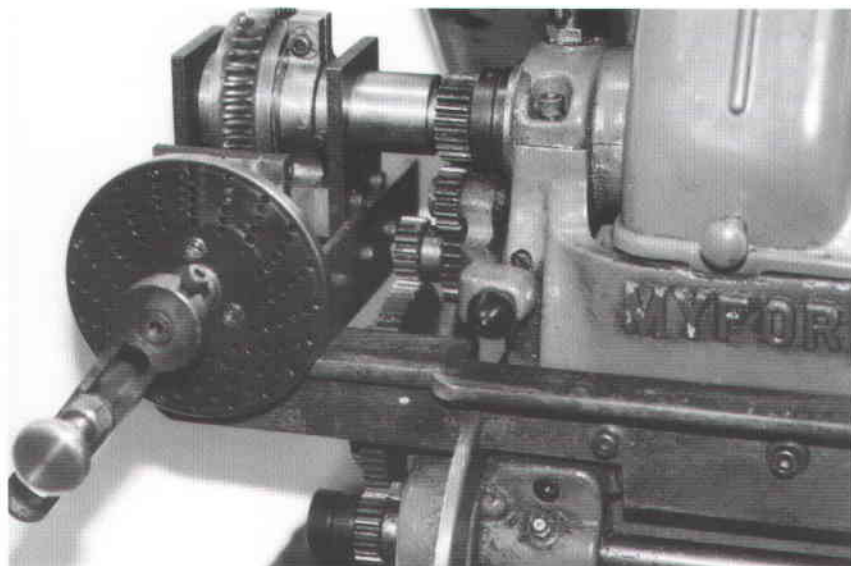


Fig. 6: A home made dividing head. A much simpler version based on this design is described in the text.

For the 63-toothed gear, it is practicable to replace it by one with 64 teeth, a division that can be obtained from most standard lathe gear trains. In theory, the diameter of the 64-toothed blank should be slightly larger. The following calculation for a 0.5inch diameter gear shows that the effect of the extra tooth is almost negligible. If the original outside diameter of the 63-toothed gear is $\frac{1}{2}$ "', its circumference is $3.143 \times 0.5 = 1.572$ ins. Now divide this by 63 to give 0.025ins. The new circumference is, for practical purposes now $1.572 + 0.025 = 1.597$. Divide this by 3.142 to give the new diameter for a 64-toothed gear as 0.508ins. There is little difference between the two; just 0.008ins. The effect on the movement's gearing will be negligible.

Fig. 3 (centre top) shows a crown gear cut from a blank (not shown) and before it is formed into shape. Below is a crown wheel after it has been formed. Top and bottom left show a typical 18-note crown wheel and its ratchet spring. A die for forming a crown wheel is shown in Fig. 7. It is similar to that made for the spring case described in Part 2 of this article. The outside diameter of a typical 20/30-note wheel, when pressed,

is 0.9ins. The outside diameter of the blank is 1.50ins. There is a slight problem in that the tooth profile, after pressing to shape, is different to that of the initial form. To get the right profile, use the 18-note crown wheel and squeeze it flat in the vice. Shape the cutter to the profile of the teeth, just a little wider at the top to cater for the larger diameter of the replacement crown wheel.

The new crown wheel now needs the ratchet spring grooves. There are usually 18 divisions. These are cut in a similar way to the teeth as shown in fig. 1. First, grind a piece of tool steel to the profile of the 18-note version and set it to the centre height of the lathe, the flat part of the cutter facing down. Solder the crown blank to a piece of brass turned



Fig. 7: A press for final shaping of a crown wheel. The male part has a fixed spigot to hold the blank central to the die.

to fit its inside diameter. The arrangement is shown in fig. 8. Note the spigot used to centralise the crown wheel. Set the cross slide to drive the tool inwards by hand about 0.050ins. to cut a 'step' of about 0.010-0.015ins. deep. Each cut needs to be about 0.002 - 0.003ins. The result is sufficient to engage the 'nose' of the flat ratchet spring's arms.

Cylinder Repair:

Damaged pins on small movements are much easier to repair than for the larger ones. The worst-case scenario is to completely re-pin the cylinder. Cylinders come in two basic types, those with end caps at both ends and those that are deep-drawn 'thimbles' such as made by Reuge. Removing the non-drive end cap for the former can often be achieved without removing the entire cylinder from its shaft. Insert a thin blade into the junction between cap and cylinder body, tap the blade gently to separate the two parts, working around the periphery until the two are parted. If the cylinder cap cannot be removed in this way, the entire cylinder must be driven off its spindle. Before doing this, measure and record the gap between great wheel and end cap at the drive end. Deep-drawn cylinders have to be removed anyway. To do this, place two pieces of steel into the gap between great wheel and end cap, (the gap is typically just less than 1/10th ins.) and rest the strips over the jaws of the vice. Drive the remote end down against the plates with a piece of steel rod of diameter slightly less than that of the spindle. Be careful! Some non-drive-end cylinder bearings are parallel and work in a cylindrical brass bush. Others have a cone-shaped recess at the non-drive end that acts as the bearing surface on a cone-shaped adjusting screw. With the cylinder now off its spindle, all that remains are to insert a thin rod at one end to tap loose the cover at the other end.

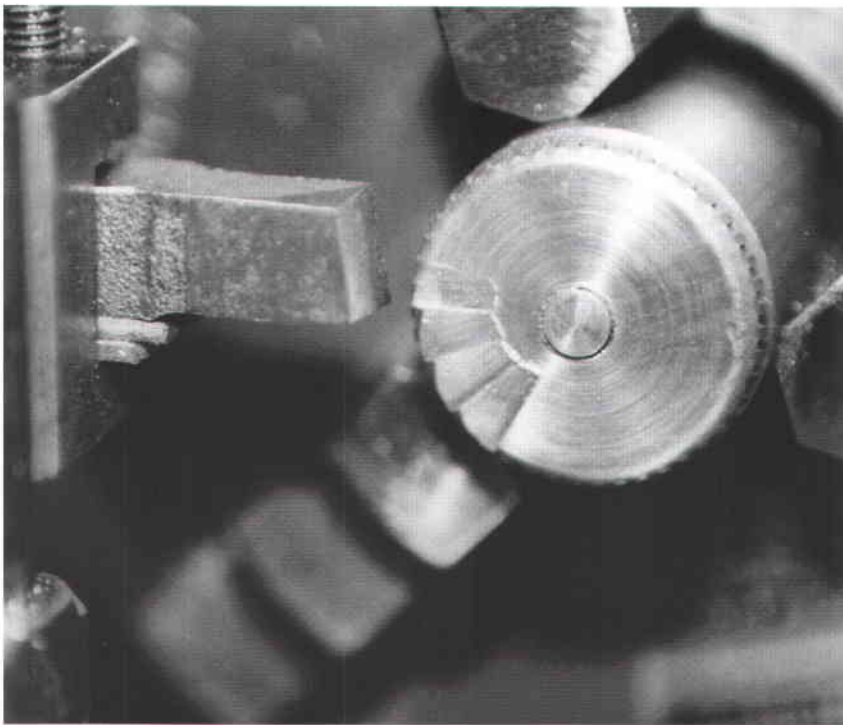


Fig. 8: Cutting the ratchet grooves on the crown wheel of a 20/30-note movement. The smaller 18-note ratchet spring is used as replacement for an original.

Having melted out and saved the cement (a hair dryer or the cool flame of a gas torch does the trick), clean out the remainder with a paint stripper, such as Nitromors, and an old toothbrush. Wash well with detergent, rinse and dry. Pull out the pins or push out from the inside with any piece of round metal that will do the job. Acid is not needed to dissolve the pins, as is the case for the larger instruments. Pins are usually about

0.016ins. diameter. Wire can be found from a number of sources. A piano-parts stockist, such as H. J. Fletcher Newman Ltd. will sell bundles of music wire but far more than is required. Members who carry out restoration work will often oblige by supplying the short length of wire required for the job. Another source is the local music shop and steel guitar strings. Even if not exactly the right diameter, the wire may be suitable.

Piano stockists quote wire diameters in MWG, a gauge that ranges from 00 to 30. The gauge range for the small movements will be within 1 to 6 and this equates to 1/1000 ins. increments (0.010 to 0.016). Metric equivalents with standard wire gauge (SWG) are given as follows: 0.254mm (33SWG), 0.279 (32), 0.305 (31), 0.330 (30), 0.356 (29), 0.406 (28). A tight fit is better than a loose one. If too tight, that mini-drill with a bit of the pinning wire ground to a point, can be used to ream out the existing holes. If slightly slack, use nail varnish. A coating on the inside of the cylinder or on the wire should be enough to hold pins in position until the cement is in place. Even if the pins are 'all over the place', they can easily be re-aligned later.

Original pins stand proud of the cylinder by between 0.025-0.030ins. They are usually tapered and barely penetrate through the wall of the cylinder. Such wire, pre-tapered and of the right diameter can be purchased but it will be expensive and far in excess of the quantity required. With piano wire, or similar, re-pinning does not have to be as accurate as for the larger cylinders. Cut the wire into short lengths, say ¼" and push in with a simple punch. A nail or piece of steel drilled to about

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0.020ins diameter and ½” deep will be quite adequate. Grind the tip to about ¼” diameter and flatten on one side so that the punch fits between the cylinder’s pins. It is sometimes possible to push the wire in with a pair of wire cutters and to crop randomly to length.

When all wires are in place and penetrating about 1/16th – 1/8th ins., crush and replace the cement, adding a little more than before so that the ends pins will be well covered. Additional cement can be made from a little crushed violin rosin available from a musical instrument shop. Shellac is another material that seems to work just as well as an additive to the original cement. Also, a little pumice powder or any very fine powder such as silver sand, even brick dust, can be added as a bulking agent. (Mylands Ltd. for shellac, resin, pumice etc. Head Office: 80 Norwood High Street, West Norwood, London SE27 9NW, Tel 0181 6709161).

Replace the end cap and fit the cylinder onto its spindle to the previously measured position. The rest of the process is the same as for larger cylinders in that the cylinder is spun at moderate speed whilst applying low heat. Use a cool, blue flame of a gas torch or apply heat with a hair dryer until a tell-tale of cement is thrown out. Quench immediately with coolant and carry on spinning for a minute or so but with the cylinder still warm. Stop the lathe and quickly straighten the pins with tweezers or hypodermic needle (see those text books again for the needle method) so that they are perpendicular to the cylinder surface. If the cement is too hard, warm up the cylinder again and carry on with pin straightening until the job is complete.

With all pins now straight, re-spin and re-heat as before to ensure the cement is evenly distributed

inside the cylinder. Now use the wire cutters to cut the pins down to around, say, 0.040-0.050ins. Clamp a medium grit grindstone in the cross slide of the lathe and grind down to size by taking very fine cuts. Use paper kitchen towel dampened with cutting oil or similar to ensure grit does not get onto lathe parts.

Sometimes it is difficult to clamp the cylinder spindle because there is too little of it exposed. Wrap two or three turns of electrical insulation or masking tape around the great wheel and very gently close the self-centering jaws of the 3-jaw chuck. Hardly ideal, but ‘needs must’ as they say. Provided the grip is light but firm and the cuts are about one thou. ins at a time, the grinding operation is simply a matter of time. Ten to fifteen minutes at most. It is preferable to leave the finished pin height a little more than the original, say 0.035-0.040ins. There is usually plenty of adjustment in the comb setting to allow for the greater pin length and it makes pin adjustment much easier.

Finally, set the re-pinned cylinder close to the comb but not in contact with the teeth. Adjust pins to ensure they are central to the teeth. Check that chords notes lift and drop simultaneously. For ‘runs’ of notes, ensure that the pins are bent forwards or backwards to give the correct timing. Sometimes it pays to give one final re-grind after setting the pins to ensure all are at the same height.

Re-pinning, as described above, is the worst-case scenario. Pins that are depressed can sometimes be lifted using wire cutters as pliers. Alternatively, try pushing them down using a pin-punch fitted with a short length of flat-ended pinning wire to push the pin right through. (Use that mini grinder again). Sometimes,

after pushing the pin flat to the cylinder surface, it is possible to pull it though from the inside with using long nosed pincers. For the odd one that will not budge, consider drilling a hole just behind the existing pin’s hole. The new pin will have to be raked forward to get back to the right timing. Always spin and reheat the cement after doing this. Extra crushed rosin, fed through the small hole in the end cap, helps to bulk-up the original contents.

Drilling holes in the cylinder can be achieved by making one’s own drill from a piece of the pinning wire and using that mini-drill with a drop of pure turpentine as a lubricant. One way of doing this is to grind three flats so as to form a point. This should be sufficient to produce a hole. An easier but more expensive method is to buy the drills through mail order. (E.g. Drill Service, Horely, Ltd., 23 Albert Rd, Horley, Surrey RH6 7HR, Tel 01293 774911). With care, each drill should drill 100+ holes. If the tip breaks or becomes blunt, it can be reground with the mini-drill and grinding disc. (Wear goggles for safety). This is a bit hit-and-miss unless you have very good eyesight and some luck in getting the angles right. Even the plain shaft of a broken drill can be re-used (either those three flats again or ground to half thickness with a V-shaped tip).

This just about finishes the tips about restoring these little movements. The last article in this series, part 4, explores the last hurdle, which is how to replicate a tune so as to re-programme a movement. All the tips on repining apply to the making of a replica cylinder.

Le Grand Vase

Our thanks to the management of the Patek Philippe Museum of Geneva for permission to produce this feature article. For those wishing to contact the museum, details are at the foot of this article.

Many musical box collectors often have an interest in horology. Not surprising when one considers that the former was a derivative of the latter! Even those whose interest is primarily engaged with the musical box will acknowledge and admire the superb skill of the gilder, enameller, engraver and other craft trades, notwithstanding those of the mathematician and astronomer that went into the creation the artefacts displayed at the Patek Philippe Museum in the heart of Geneva. Some pieces involve the participation of twenty different craft skills.

A small group of MBSGB members had a private tour of this museum and were amply rewarded. So much so that they returned the following day, which fortuitously was the only day of the year when it opens for free to the general public. Even with these two visits, there is so much more of interest awaiting a future occasion.

The museum is a dedication to the art of Swiss watch-making and rightly claims to be the finest in the world! The period encompassed by the collection dates from the 16th century to the present day. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1989. It is housed in a building that was once the old Patek Philippe workshops on the rue des Vieux Grenadiers. The conversion of the building from workshop to museum, including the addition of a new wing, is quite extraordinary. The display cases are filled on all floors with wonderful examples of watches, timepieces, automata, tabatières and miniatures made by Patek Philippe and other makers.

Several large TV screens adjacent to the displays tell the story of many items in fine detail. Both the beautifully produced brochures and the superb film DVD are a 'must' for the collector's library. This article cannot do justice to even a fraction of the collection.

The grandson of the founder is the museum's President, Philippe Stern. His passion for Geneva horology, as well as for French and Swiss enamelwork, coupled with the enthusiasm of Alan Banbury, a horology enthusiast, were the driving forces in its creation. The displays include some extremely rare pieces such as the South German Montre-tambour, constructed entirely of iron and dated circa 1540, the cross-shaped watch by Abraham Cusin of Nevers, circa 1635 and the square-shaped watch by Auguste Bretonneau of Paris, circa 1660, amongst many other examples. (Not illustrated here.)

For the musical box enthusiast, though, there is one supreme example of all the aforementioned skills. It is in the form of a large vase, le Grand Vase. This extraordinary artefact combines watch, singing bird automata and a musical movement by one of the early masters of the Geneva musical box makers, Françoise Nicole, into an extraordinary and beautiful artefact, (see cover picture). The vase has two watch faces so that it can be viewed in a central place. The principal face has hours to the left and minutes to the right, with a central aperture for viewing the escapement and carries the legend: Brevet d'Invention 1832. The

obverse face is more conventional with concentric hours and minutes dial. The clock movement has a constant force escapement and compensated balance, signed Pierre Frédéric Ingold (1787-1878). The base of the clock is inscribed Ingold, Horologer Mécanicien, Paris Royal Number 177, À Paris, 1834.

The choir of singing birds led by the maestro conductor is not only humorous to see but exquisite to hear. The conductor faces his choir of singing birds and orchestrates their song. This unique combination of automata is attributed to Freres Rochat (circa 1800 – 1835). The musical movement precedes the choir of eight singing birds, which is then activated. The choir master then raises his crest and the first choir bird on his right stretches its neck before the choir renders its song. The choir master then proceeds to conduct the chorus. Both the music and the choir can also be activated on demand by control levers situated at the base of the vase. The functions are as follows: stop/start the singing birds; change the air; set the music in motion/stop the music; set the clock hands to initiate the motions. The mechanisms can also be set to silence.

The decoration of the vase is mainly gilded bronze with Brazilian rosewood, feathers and silk. It is 139cm high (55 inches). The musical movement has three airs that are released sequentially at the passing of each hour. Unfortunately, although the airs

(concluded on Page 78...)



Fig. 1: Sentimental Duel: One of a pair of automata scent sprays with watch. This enamel, gold and seed-pearl encrusted flintlock pistol was created by Moulinie, Bautre & Cie. of Geneva, circa 1805. When the trigger is pulled, a 'flower' springs out of the barrel and ejects a fine perfume spray.



Figs. 3A (above), B (left): Le Milon: This pendant contains a watch and automaton harpist, again by Piguet & Capt circa 1810.



Fig. 2 (rt): La Mandoline: Two views of this pendant mandolin, made by Piguet & Capt of Geneva, circa 1810. When opened, it reveals a watch and automaton harpist.



Fig 4 (left): *Le Carquois*: This is a fruit knife with watch, magnifying glass and music. It was made in Geneva but the maker is unknown, circa 1815-1820.

Figs. 5A (right), B (below): *Les Coeurs*: A beautiful, heartshaped watch made for the Chinese market. It opens to reveal the watch and automata mechanisms, which performs on the hour or can be triggered by hand. Made by Pignet & Mylan, Geneva with enamel work attributed to Jean- Abraham Lissignol of Geneva, circa 1820.

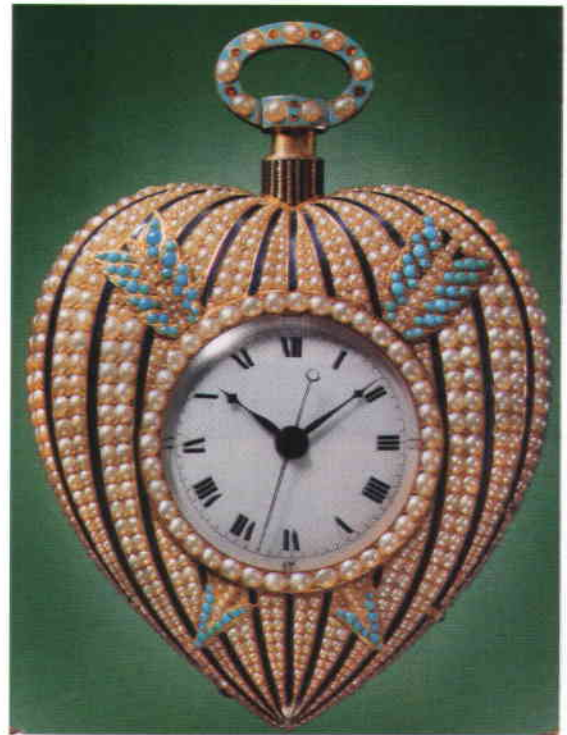


Fig 6: *Pistolet à Oiseaux Chantant*: This exquisite, double-barrelled flintlock singing bird pistol was made by Rochat of Geneva, circa 1810. (Left) Figs 6a, b & c show the various layers of the complex mechanism, illustrating the hidden beauty of the watchmaker's art.

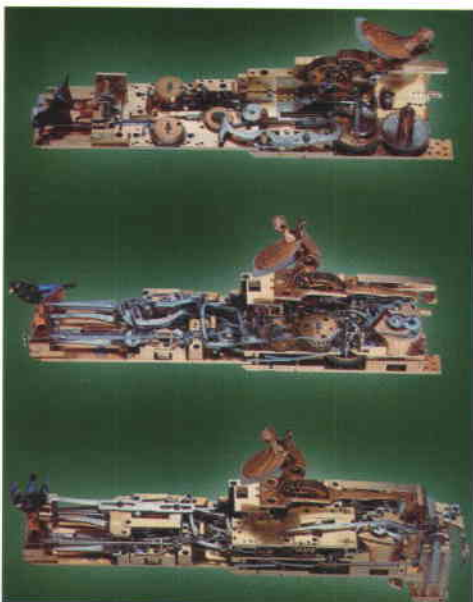


Fig. 7: *Moses*: This is a fine quarterrepeating watch with automaton. The maker is unknown but it originates from le Locle, circa 1815 – 1820. The bottom cartouche has hammer-striking Putti, winged mythological cherubs. Moses stands above, striking the rock from which water flows.

Le Grand Vase -

concluded from Page 75

sound familiar, none could give a name and they remain a mystery. Typical of Françoise Nicole is the fact that there are no serial or gamme numbers. Thus, we hope that someone with a musical ear will positively identify the airs, contact the Registrar, (MBSGB member Arthur Cunliffe who hosts the International Register of musical movements and boxes) so that this missing piece of information can be recorded for posterity and advised to the Patek Philippe museum.

The provenance of the vase is also interesting. It has travelled the world before returning to its rightful home, Geneva. It has been recorded in the Collection Dugast of Paris, The Rockford Museum of Illinois, USA, (the Time Museum inventory No. 734), Sotheby's of New York (reference The Masterpieces from the Time Museum, part 2 of June 19. 2002, lot 215). It has also been recorded by Alfred Chapuis & Edouard Gelis (Le Monde des

Automats, Paris, 1928, Volume 1 pages 127 – 129, figure 404), by Guiseppe Brusa in The Art dell Orologeria in Europa (Bramante Editrice, 1978, number 781-782 and CXXVI), and by Seth G. Atwood & William Andrews (the Time Museum, an introduction, Rockford, Illinois, page 19, 1983). The musical movement has also passed through the hands of English restorer Alan Godier, many moons ago.

There are other interesting aspects of the collection such as the prolific number of watches and tabatières, many made exclusively for the Chinese and Turkish markets. There are also a number of items with automata. These may also be of interest to members because we often forget that MBSGB includes non-musical automata within its constitutional remit but the museum also has musical automata as well. Some examples are as follows, illustrated in the colour centrefold.

The Museum details are:

Patek Philippe, rue des Vieux Grenadiers, CH – 1205, Geneve.
Telephone: +41 (0)22 807 09 10.

Also
WWW.PATEKMUSEUM.COM.

Open Monday to Friday. 1400 – 17.00 but closed on public holidays.

Nicole Musical Box Serial Number 43151

Do you own this box?

If so, please get in touch
with Arthur Cunliffe
at his email address
(see Officers Panel on Page 62).

STOLEN FAIR ORGAN

As we go to press news has come in that the famous 1903 Marengi fair organ 'Lady Hamilton' has been stolen, complete with its Bedford truck. Formerly in the collection of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, the organ is now the property of Mike Priestner of Cheshire. Should you see it anywhere, please inform the police. It may well be in Europe by now.



Saleroom Report - Bonham's Auctions May 2007

Bonhams Auctioneers held two sales of mechanical music during May. The first, in London, opened with an attractive tortoiseshell snuff box with silver inlay and sectional comb which made £990, followed by an Henri Capt movement in an unusual tinplate case. The fine 100-tooth comb seemed somehow out of place in such a mundane box but its playing qualities were recognised and it made £3450.

A fine Nicole Freres Grand Format box with engraved silver tune sheet realised £6000, and a Style 5 Orchestral Regina, with integral disc bin, from 1898 was sold for £14,750.

The highlights of this sale were undoubtedly lots 11-14. The first of these was a singing bird box by Charles Bruguier in a silver case with an enamelled panel to the lid of a bouquet of flowers. This sold for £25,800. Another singing bird box, this time by Rochat in a four coloured case with engine turned and chased leaf decoration made £61,500. A gold and enamel case automaton snuff box attributed to Piguet & Meylan with shutters that open to reveal a scene of putti working in Cupids forge also made £61,500.

However, it was a fine gold and enamel snuff box, attributed to John Rich, which attracted most attention. (Fig.1) The fusee-wound movement plays with adjustable hammers on six stacked bells. The movement of this box is heavily engraved and shows outstanding workmanship, whilst the case, probably by Guidon, Remond and Gide, has an enamelled cover scene of two lovers with sides of blue guilloche panels within scallop shell borders. (Fig.2) This excellent piece made £73,800.



Fig 1. A fine gold and enamel fusee snuff box by John Rich

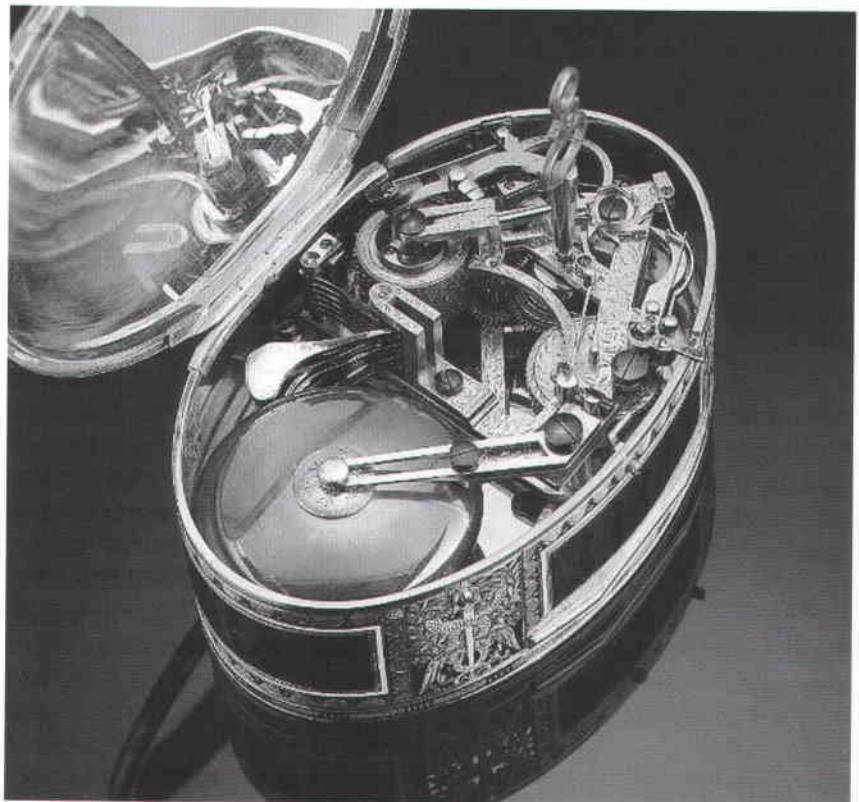


Fig 2. The movement of the John Rich snuff box.



Fig 3. Edison phonograph - not the Home model though!

On May 9th the second sale of mechanical music took place at Bonhams Knowle salerooms in the West Midlands. Around 75 lots were on offer with an Edison Home phonograph realising £790. (Fig.3) An EMG Mark 9 gramophone with the usual papier mache horn was in demand at £2,150.

Among the cylinder boxes, a bells-in-sight eight air box with mandarin strikers made £1,780, while an musical snuff box Paillard & Cie in a burr walnut case made £615. A 12-air box by PVF with bells, drum and castanettes in sight realised £1970. An ever-popular Polyphon style 45 playing 19 3/4" discs on duplex combs made £2000, and a Symphonion mantel clock with 4.5" movement was good value at £860. (Fig.4) Two Crown Devon musical jugs made £125 and £150 respectively.

A bisque head Marrote was in demand and finally realised £270, while a Griesbaum bird-in-cage made £540.

Bonhams next sales of mechanical music will be:
 London November 20th 2007
 Knowle October 16th 2007
 Further details may be found at www.bonhams.com



Fig 4. Symphonion mantel clock.

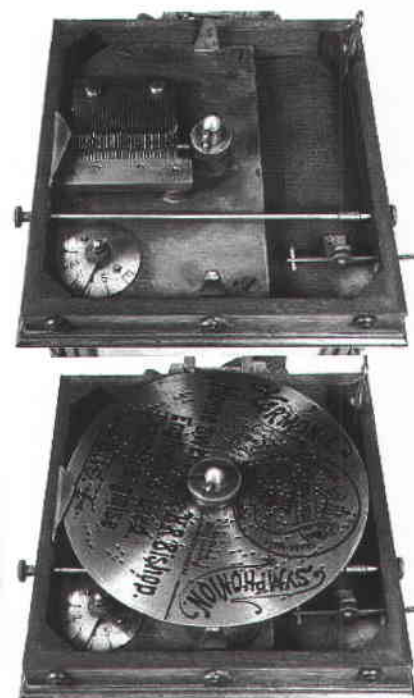
FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR MEMBERS!

Space permitting, all members who wish to do so may place a FREE advertisement of up to 27 words in the classified section of The Music Box. This is for a limited period and does not include traders or non-members, for whom normal rates apply.

If you are interested in this offer, please contact Ted Brown, advertising secretary, tel: 01403 823533.

Beware Artzsche!

If you are considering ordering attractive-sounding DVDs on mechanical music from an Internet site called www.artzsche.com, think again! Contributors to the Mechanical Music Digest have experienced problems obtaining anything at all from this site. Paying up front can be a risky business sometimes, and readers are advised to wait and see if the operators of this firm are simply experiencing problems or if it is a complete scam.



Musical Box Oddments No. 114

by H. A. V. Bulleid.

Henri Lecoultre.

This Geneva maker, correctly styled Lecoultre-Duperrut after his marriage in 1841, was justly famed for his "Expressif" boxes, made in the 1845 - 1851 period, - the type now called "forte piano." His boxes applied the effect to all the comb teeth by the use of long and short pins in the cylinder. The resulting music quality could be and usually was finer than on later forte piano boxes because every note on the comb could be played loud or soft as noted by the tune arranger. That allowed more subtle effects than possible with fewer piano teeth in a separate, smaller comb.

Henri Lecoultre boxes were described in Oddments 99, Vol 21 page 125, but a not-to-be-missed chance to extend the story has come with the appearance, in healthy condition, of his serial 4674. This one is mandolin expressif (= mandolin forte piano) and it plays four airs with 13" (33cm) cylinder and 188 comb teeth.

Naturally, it has all the Henri Lecoultre characteristics including the weighted governor to reduce speed fluctuations when there is a big change in the ratio of short to long pins in play. That is shown in Fig. 1, which also shows the two pairs of teeth which were added to the comb at the treble end. The Lecoultres made all their own combs and I think the most likely explanation for these added teeth is that long pieces of the special comb steel were scarce in the 1840s. The comb base was the full length. Similar added teeth are recorded on other H. Lecoultre boxes.

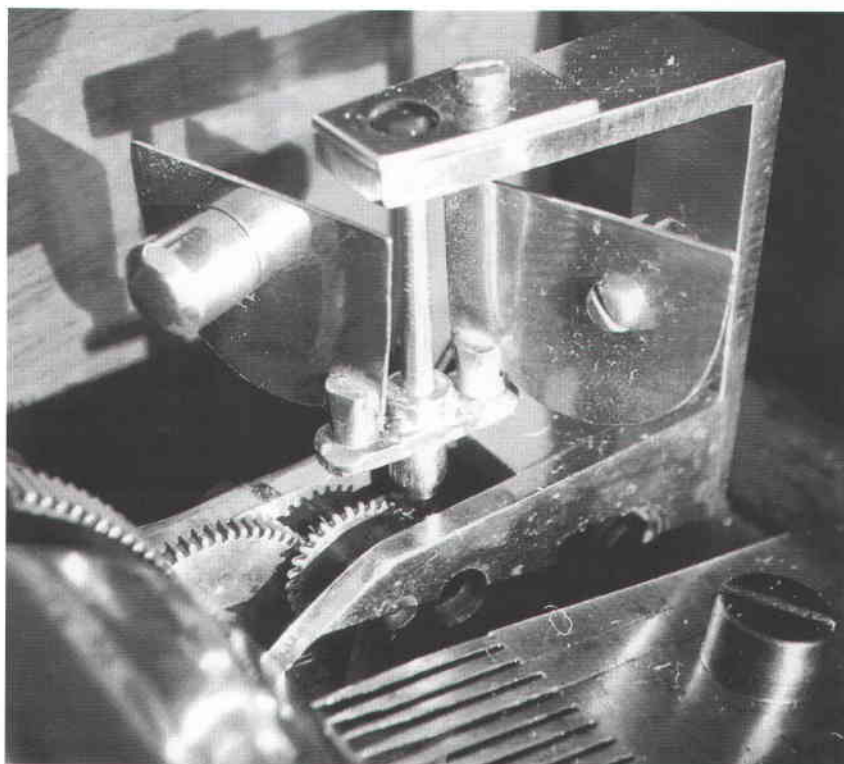


Fig. 1. A brass weight screwed to each wing of the governor, giving it a store of momentum like a flywheel. And the two pairs of added treble teeth, serial 4674.

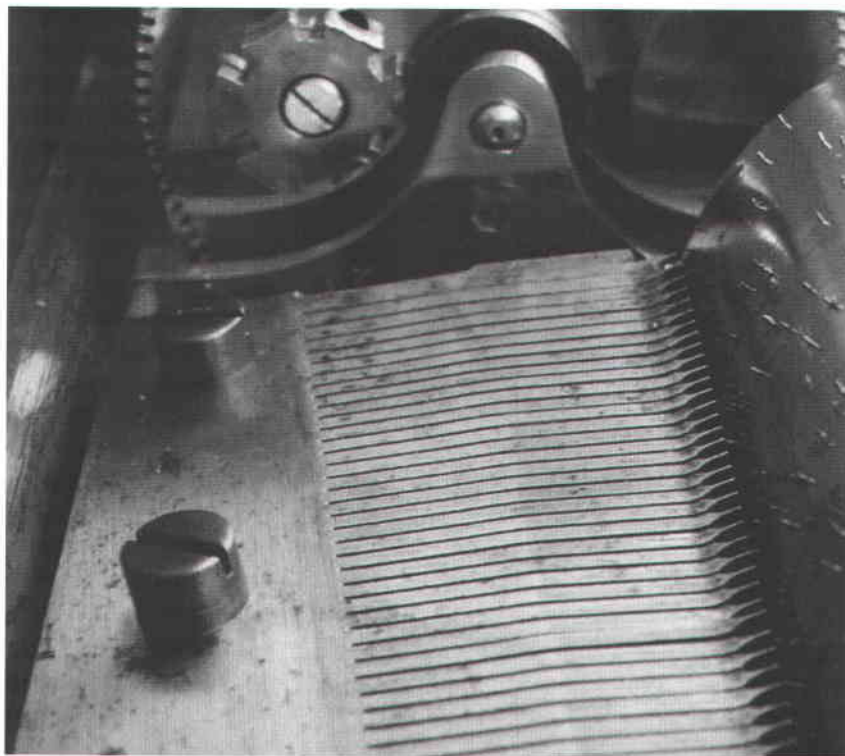


Fig. 2. Henri Lecoultre's style of double-bent hooked bass teeth - upwards near the tips and downwards just behind the leads. Comb screws as usual - without washers.

Another classic quality feature devised by H. Lecoultre was bending the tips of the bass teeth upwards to give further help to the dampers. To restore the tips to their normal position relative to the cylinder, the teeth were bent downwards as shown in Fig. 2.

It is nice to be able to add a "human touch" to all these technical details, and here it comes courtesy of the cylinder pricker or possibly the tune arranger; a long 5-pin trill in tune 3 has its fifty notes all the same pitch whereas seventeen should be one pitch higher. The pins wrongly placed were snapped off (without cancellation marks!) and the new set correctly fitted. But no medals for a tidy clean-up, see Fig. 3.

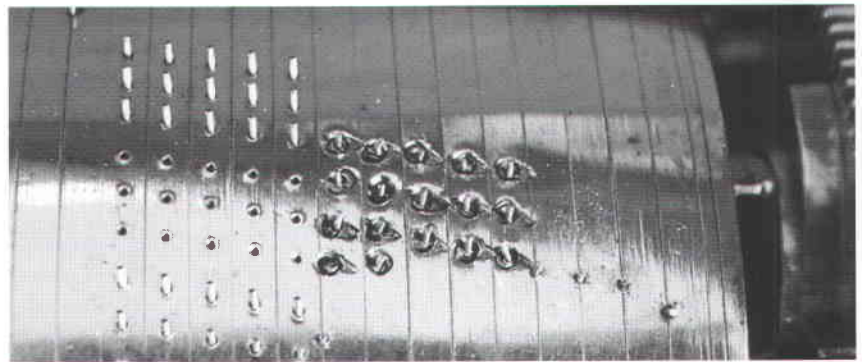


Fig. 3. A clumsy-looking correction of a sizeable pricking error at the treble end of the cylinder, but the playing is now unquestionably correct.

Figs. 1,2 and 3 thanks to Patrick McCrossan.

Forte piano quality.

Despite all the extra work involved, Henri Lecoultre persevered with his method and it was obviously held in high esteem - for example, the agent Malignon in Geneva certainly endorsed them and handled many

sales, as recorded by Olin Tillotson. But I have not yet heard convincing answers to the two main questions when comparing his method with the two-separate-combs method: (1) was the quality superior due to all notes available, loud or soft? And (2) was the volume contrast, loud

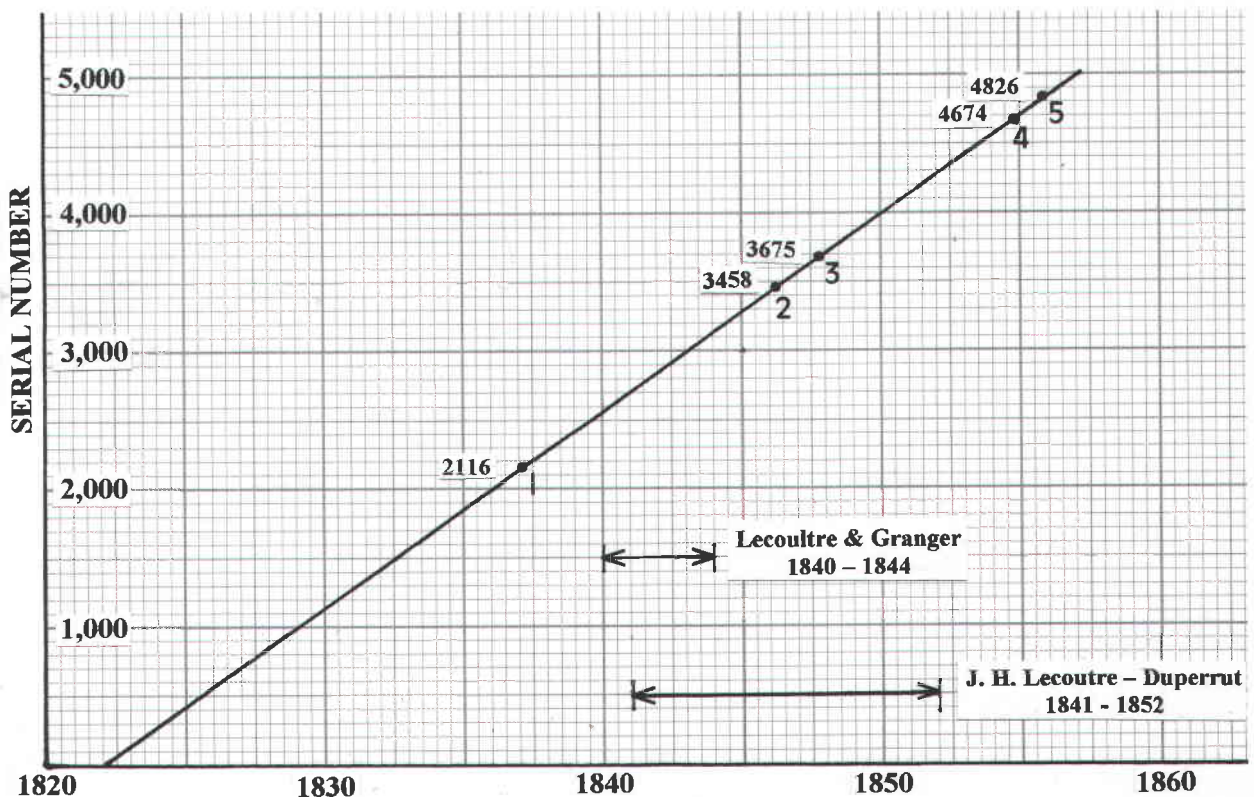


FIG. 4 HENRI LECOULTRE ~ 1822 to 1852

Fig. 4. Separate dating chart for boxes made by Henri Joseph Lecoultre. They were sold under his own name, or Lecoultre & Granger, or J. Lecoultre-Duperrut, or by agents sometimes with no Lecoultre name. Boxes noted on the date line are:- 1 - 2116, 1839. H. Lecoultre. 2 - 3458, 1842. Lecoultre & Granger. 3 - 3675, 1844. Sold by Mahgnon. 4 - 4674, 1850. Described above. (Odds 114). 5 - 4826, 1851. See Vol. 21 p. 125 (Odds. 99).

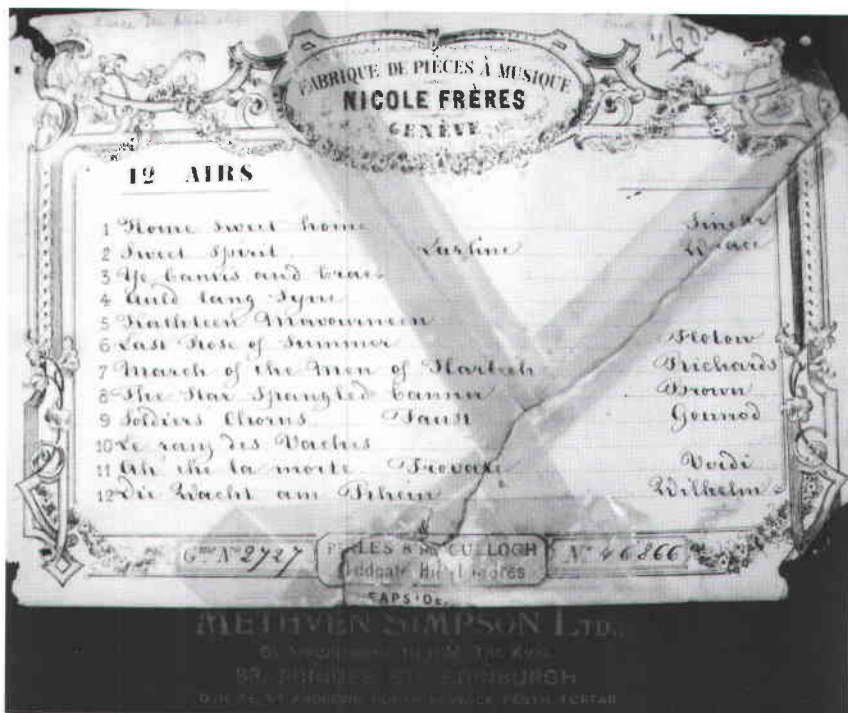


Fig. 5. Nicole 46866 tune sheet, the same design as no. 265. The lower part of the W and M sticker with their 56 Cheapside address may have overlapped the bottom margin of the tune sheet. Gamme 2727 was first used at about serial 42,000. This also introduces agent or retailer Methven Simpson with premises in six Scottish towns.

compared with soft, equally good?

The 2-comb alternative.

For the tune arranger's opinion I consulted our expert member Robin Timms. He said any tune arranger would undoubtedly prefer the ability to play every note loud or soft.

For a general opinion on whether the tune arrangers really got better results, Ted Brown arranged to get the Chanctonbury Ring vote, using the Henri Lecoultre Mandoline Expressif box described above, - kindly lent by Bill Sergeant. At the (packed - House Full) meeting on Feb 18, 2007, the unanimous opinion, after three repetitions of the selected tune 2 of serial 4674, was that the Henri Lecoultre was demonstrably superior on all counts. Its loss after about 1850 was greatly regretted; but the drawbacks of complicated combs, additional costs, and inability to repin were realized.

Meanwhile, what were the thoughts of the other forte-piano makers with their two combs? The scant evidence I have seen is limited to Nicole and to Metert/Langdorff. Nicole as expected was generally liked but they tended to make their piano combs too soft. For example, on serial 29090 (1848) the forte teeth were about twice the stiffness of the piano; and on serial 40767 (1863) the forte were three times stiffer - probably an unusual extreme figure. Metert must have done experiments with a greater proportion of piano teeth. His serial 1422, made in 1844, had combs of 65 and 50 teeth with stiffness ratio 1.8 to 1. The lowest 13 teeth of the 65 tooth forte comb were all below any piano teeth, so the arranger had choice of loud or soft for all but two of the 50 teeth. Perhaps their

tune arranger failed to realize the full potential. So they seem to have generally settled for the 86 forte and 40 piano proportion, as on serial 6622 (1852) with the stiffness ratio 1.7 to 1. The main exceptions seem to have been on larger boxes and on mandolin boxes with up to three times as many forte as piano teeth, - as on Langdorff 11258 in 1858. The above are mainly facts. Here are a few conjectures....

It must have occurred to someone in the business that adding "piano-forte" to a device with limited output volume was a bit silly; surely they wanted "forte plus super-forte." That would simply mean having two combs both covering the scale required and with the highest acceptable tooth stiffness. "Good idea" said some alert person in Ste. Croix, and he got out a patent for it, covered by a lengthy Patent-Office-type claim which, quite frankly, means sweet almost nothing. But it got a nice name, "Sublime Harmonic," and took over forte-piano after about 1875.

The strange thing about that Charles Paillard patent, applied for in 1874 and granted in 1875, is that its drawing shows three sublime harmonic combs. Strange, because that type is exceedingly rare. Yet Paillard clearly claimed that he could get "the different shades of musical expression" by letting "one or more combs play together, according to the effect I wish to introduce." And he certainly proved it, with serial 2699 made in 1874, having three 54-tooth combs, as described in my second book page 119-122.

But it just was not followed up, probably simply because the limited version proved almost as

attractive and far cheaper than the Real Thing. Yes, you will fairly often see a Three Comb Sublime Harmonic box, but the third comb, either at the centre or the treble end, is merely a tremolo or similar accompaniment. In fact, just another 2-comb alternative.

Henri Lecoulrre Dating Chart.

I think this new addition to the list of H.Lecoultrre boxes justifies a separate new dating chart. It only has to cover the 5000 boxes he made from 1822 until 1852, but could usefully show the period of his connection with Granger and his company name-change when he married Aline Duperrut in 1841. I offer it in Fig. 4.

The last days of “two-per-turn.”

Quality 2-per-turn boxes became very rare after about 1875, because by then their main source, Nicole Freres, was in decline and the method was being debased into cheap movements with up to four per turn.

Nicole 46866 is a very good example of top 2-per-turn quality. It is a powerful box with a standard comb of 128 teeth playing 12 airs with a fat cylinder 12 by 3.4 inches (30 by 8.5cms). It was made in 1876, or perhaps a bit earlier as Nicole had uncomfortably large unsold stocks in London at that time; and it has an exceptionally large and fine flower inlay on the lid.

Opening the lid reveals a battered Nicole tune sheet immediately above the large transfer of a Scottish agent, Methven Simpson of Edinburgh, - and five other offices including, of course, St. Andrews. They seem to have been the selling agent, so it is surprising to see two agents' stickers over



Fig. 6. Agent's label stuck under the case of serial 2233. Figs. 5 and 6 thanks to Tim Reed.

the bottom central cartouche - one from Wales & McCulloch stuck over and concealing the other.

There are several points of interest about the tune sheet, shown in Fig. 5. It has remnants of pencil notes at top right giving operating instructions, and at top left saying “Don't use the first stop.” That meant the instant stop,

then still unnecessarily fitted only by Nicole and perceived by others as redundant.

The one annoyance about owning a 2-per-turn box is that you can never repeat a favourite tune without having to listen to its mate. This snag must have been noticed for gamme 2727 because the tunes in its wide range are



Fig. 7. The L'Épée factory at Ste. Suzanne is near the Swiss border at Basel.



Fig. 8. The Prince of Wurtemberg's castle at Montbeliard, near Ste. Suzanne.

paired by types. But this could sometimes emphasize the snag as, for example, a dedicated Welsh supporter of the Men of Harlech being interrupted by tune 8 - for a full minute, thanks to fat cylinder!

Advanced Publicity.

A good musical box serial 2223, with standard 13" cylinder and standard 94-tooth comb playing eight sacred airs, came up for auction. The tune sheet is like no. 38 but without P. V.F in the cartouche. So it could be by any Ste. Croix maker who used the PVF agency in London. Probably made about 1870, and headed Expressive above the tune list, - which meant nothing at that date.

The auction blurb soared away into fiction, wrongly naming the maker as Paillard-Vaucher, describing its standard cylinder

as a "large diameter cylinder;" and claiming it to be even more rare because the tunes included two from Mendelssohn's oratorio

Elijah. Certainly rare, but not a value enhancer.

However it does us a good turn by introducing Thomas Martin, in Fig. 6.

L'Epee.

General adverts of the Bremond type by L'Epee seem to be very rare. Fig. 7 shows an elegant example, in a wood frame. He claims to be the only maker in France; so it must be after about 1860 when maker A. Soualle of Paris closed down.

A L'Epee tune sheet, often seen in France but rare in the UK and USA, is at no. 223 in the series. Its complex design in colour includes banners of composers and two oval pictures. Now, thanks to Emile Wey, we can see the originals of these pictures. Fig. 8 shows the castle and Fig 9 is the lower part of the hillside in the other picture, showing the water supply to the factory.

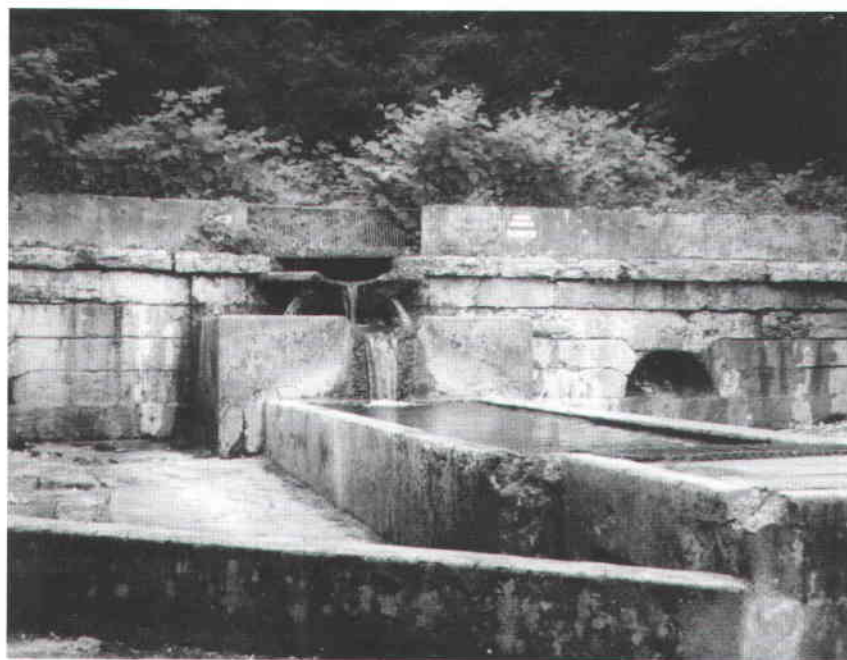


Fig. 9. Culvert feeding spring water from the hillside into the L'Epee factory. Figs. 7, 8, and 9 thanks to Emile Ley.

News from Other Societies from John Farmer

Het Pierement – April 2007

Prior to World War 2, street organ licence holders in 's-Hertogenbosch (otherwise known as Den Bosch) were obliged to attend an examination, presumably of both themselves and the organ, at the police station on a regular basis. There is a delightful photo of two examiners busily appraising an organ being played, they themselves being supervised by the constabulary in the background (beats traffic duties). In contrast with Amsterdam and Rotterdam, most street organs in Den Bosch, were carried by horse and cart.

The 50 year celebration of existence of the Utrecht museum, het Nationaal Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement, is well mentioned in this edition of HP. There is some disquiet over the recent restoration of the Dubbele Ruth, in which, it seems, the Carl Frei modification of 1933 consisting of violin pipes, has been put back into the organ, despite having been removed during a previous restoration by the museum several years ago. This brings up the old restoration debate on whether a modification is ever acceptable, even if it was carried many years ago (and if it is acceptable, just how many years ago does it have to have been done?). An explanatory article by the museum conservator, Bob van Wely, appears as justification for the decision on three grounds. Firstly of the original Carl Frei modification having been done to improve the sound quality, secondly, the 'original' violin pipes were still in the museum and thirdly there exists a large music repertoire, based on the 1933 modification. By means of a simple switch, this Carl Frei music can be played, or the original Ruth books can be used. Due to thoughtful restoration work this time, the violin pipes could, at any time in the future, be removed again.

There is some doubt over the emphasis of interest in items in the museum – some prefer the musical boxes, etc., and some the fair organs.

Mechanical Music, Vol 53, No.3, May/June 2007

Arion disc Musical Boxes are Bill Wineburgh's subject, and he compares his two with those of Coulson Conn. Although they all play the same 5-inch discs, the drive can be edge or off-centre hole, and the size and design of the movements are different. There are, so far, 3 distinct models, but the actual maker remains unknown. Joseph E Roesch continues Shop Notes with part one of "Mainspring Arbor Repair", and Hendrik Strengers looks at the history and adverts for the Ideal Triumph Piano-Player of Kastner & Co. (also known in the UK for the Triumph Autopiano).

Q David Bowers' lavishly illustrated 22 page article on the Yale Wonder Clock and the Automatic Cashier and Discount Machine covers the history of the company and the clock, patent details, evolutions of the mechanisms and their gambling possibilities, aspects of collecting, a list of known examples with descriptions of some, a chronology of the clock, details of the people involved, and information on Regina movements used in the clocks. This is a very comprehensive discourse on these most complicated, and now fairly rare, "gambling" machines.

The Key Frame – Summary of missed issues.

Issues KF2-06 and KF 4-06 went astray somewhere, but FOPS have now kindly supplied copies. Just to bring you up to date on the main items:-

KF2-06

Part 2 of Les Frères Limonaire – a History, by Andreas Stadler (including some interesting photos and engravings of people and places).

Manchester's Little Italy – Anthony Rea's story of how 19th century Italian immigrants settled in Manchester's Ancoats area. He identifies some of the main characters, with period photographs.

35 Years of Memories – Part 2 from Andy Hinds.

Reviews of the 2006 AGM, and the 2006 Organ Availability Register.

KF4-06

Hooghuys – The history of the Family and Company – Part 1, by Björn Isebaert & Marc Hooghuys, with modern and period photos.

35 Years of Memories – Part 4 from Andy Hinds.

It's in the Shed – Mark Jefford's description of Don Robinson's 3 manual, 8 rank Wurlitzer Theatre Organ.

The Teddy Bear's Picnic – A tune's centenary. Andy Hind writes about this popular tune, written in 1907 by John Walter Bratton.

Vox Humana – Winter/Spring 2006/7

Peter Craig reports on the welcome appearance of two new arrangers for mechanical organs, namely Jeroen van Baden and Marco Hage. Jeroen started arranging at 17 years old, and Marco at 14 ! Austin Burgess looks at the life of Austrian composer Nico Dostal whose music was seldom heard in England until noteur Jan Kees de Ruijter was asked to arrange the Dostal overture to "Clivia" for Tony Overington's 84-key Leach & Overington concert organ, in 2006.

Tours and events covered in this issue are Boz Oram's trip with his organ Shahrazad to its birthplace,

Geraardsbergen, the 20th Cotton Organ Festival, Mark Jefford's trip to Les Gets, and Margaret Cook's involvement in a special birthday event for Sir William McAlpine. Peter Craig explains in some detail how a MOOS tour is put together.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Season Year, Vol XXVI, No.1

This issue celebrates 25 years of the ROS by printing Vol.1, No.1, which was only a single sheet, on the front page. Inside is a copy of the letter which started the Society off, and Jim Tyler identifies some ROS highlights from past issues of the journal.

Russell Tedder tells how he got involved in recording an album of hymns, and Mark Jefford writes part 3 of his series, this time covering his Debain and Bridgeport organs, both single manual. Coleman Kimbrell describes the rebuilding of an 1861 Smith Piano-cased Melodeon, which had no pedal mechanism or lyre and was missing several other pieces. Fortunately, replacements were found and this unusual instrument was successfully restored. The centre spread sheet music in this issue "Home Sweet Home" (with variations), by Walter Hewitt.

Organ Grinders News, No. 61, Summer 2007

Reports on the Annual Gathering in May, 2007, occupy most of this issue. Despite the less than ideal weather, around 70 people attended the main meeting on 12th May, and some 43 organs were on show during the week. The next big meeting is 4-12 August 2007, at Milestones museum, Basingstoke.

John Smith tells how his renovation of Arthur Butcher's Harmonette driven Busker organ resulted in John's granddaughter Gemma overcoming her dislike of organs, and this organ eventually being customised for her, and being named the "Gemmaphone". It

seems Arthur Butcher (one of the first amateur organ builders, who sadly died suddenly a few years ago), also inspired Mark Malpass of Crewe to build a 65 pipe John Smith Universal organ, and become a dedicated member of BOGA.

Also in this issue are details of the proposed coach tour to Walldkirch in 2008, and the 2007 member's telephone list.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 182, April 2007

Adam Ramet gives a brief biography of the Spanish composer Manuel Blancafort (1897 – 1987). Manuel's main introduction to music and thence composition, was working for his father's "Victoria" piano roll factory, where he helped with roll notation. He subsequently made friends with the composer Frederico Mompou, who influenced Manuel's early style. By 1924 Manuel earned international recognition, and in 1929 began to create a specifically Catalan symphonic style. Adam suggests there are some CDs of Blancafort's music on the "Naxos" label, but he does not mention any piano rolls.

Adam continues with a series of articles from Time magazine of 1943 (available on www.time.com), which give a history of QRS (piano rolls), and two of their best known artists, Thomas Wright ("Fats") Waller, and James P (Jimmie) Johnson. Rollographies for these two are included. Julian Dyer follows with "The Duo-Art recording process in brief", a description of Hofmann's Duo-Art dynamic recording system, and an update on his scheme to scan British Duo-Art rolls for preservation and re-cutting. He gives a list of rolls which need to be located and scanned to complete the project.

The Musical Museum and Friends Newsletter, issue 40, Spring 2007

"At Last the Lift is Being Installed!!"

is the opening comment for this issue, with the additional news that the Museum hopes to be fully open from 1st September 2007. It appears that the Museum has had to cope with a number of problems and failures with the various contractors, but they are now optimistic about the opening date, and have, in fact, been able to accommodate a number of coach parties since mid-March, albeit to limited facilities. St. George's church has now been handed back to the agents for the Church Commissioners, after being the home of the museum for 43 years – the end of an era, but the beginning of a new one?

Mike Messenger gives a brief biography of Zez Confrey, composer of "Stumbling" and other popular 20's pieces. Outings to Richmond Theatre and Tower Bridge are covered, the latter being a bit special since the museum were asked to provide some exhibits for the Tower Bridge Exhibition.

Other Non-English journals

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 2nd. Quarter, 2007

Highlights:-

Organ Players with Live Monkeys in the USA.

Singing Birds by Blaise Bontems
The Imhof & Mukle "Lucia" orchestron

A curious interchangeable cylinder musical box.

TO ACCESS THE MBSGB FORUM ON THE WEB SITE

In order to prevent large amounts of 'spam' being posted on our web site, you now need a user name and a password to access the forum. The password will change regularly. Currently it is:

User name: **musicalbox**

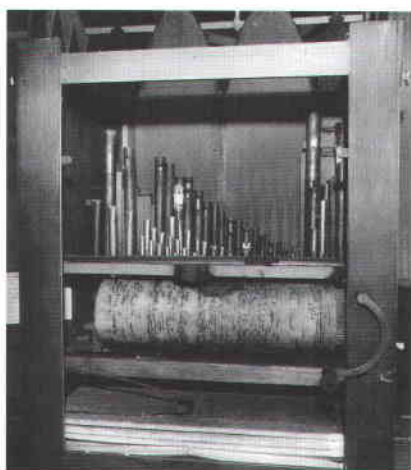
Password: **BABREMOND**

Research for New Book on Church Barrel Organs - information wanted

Maggie Kilbey & Marcel Glover are researching the history and repertoire of English parish church barrel organs and have now identified over 800 churches which formerly used, or in a very few cases still use, barrel organs. The purpose of the research is to produce a book describing and illustrating the barrel organs which are still in working order in English parish churches, together with a CD containing a representative sample of their tunes. By investigating other parish church barrel organs it has enabled us to find out more about barrel organ builders, identify which were the most popular tunes, and to see clear trends in patterns of usage.

If any members of the MBSGB own ex-Anglican church barrel organs we would be very interested to know of their provenance, builder, date of manufacture and/or use and the names of the tunes if known.

You can send email to: maggie.kilbey79@keble.net or contact them via the Editor.



H. Bryceson barrel organ at St Giles Church, Hampton Gay, Oxfordshire [photo: Marcel Glover]

Letters to the Editors

From: Ms Polly Phon

Sir,

As a new member of the society, I felt I should write to the magazine to seek information from some of the wise sages, regarding some recent observations I have made. Firstly, the corrosion of lead weights of music box combs, I have recently renovated an old French oak dresser which has leaded light windows in the cupboard doors, I noticed that the lead on the inside of the cupboard was in a corroded condition similar to that as seen in corroded musical box comb leads. The lead on the outside (which is obviously the same as that on the inside) was in very good condition. The age of the cabinet is circa 1900. It seems likely that when the cabinet was made, the oak would have been newly cut, and that some volatile active constituent of the young oak had caused the corrosion of the lead. I have tried to source details of the active constituents of oak, but have drawn a blank so far. Does anyone have any data regarding this and also the acid/volatile contents of fruitwood?

The second observation was regarding some very badly rusted Polyphon discs, which I recently purchased along with a 15 1/2" upright Polyphon. The discs were initially cleaned with a soft brass brush to remove the loose rust. The discs were then played, the resulting sounds were OK, but not brilliant. The discs were then treated with a rust removing product called JENOLITE. This should be easily obtained through your local car spares/accessories/paint shop. Jenolite is basically a diluted solution of Ortho Phosphoric Acid. The instructions were followed and eventually the majority of the rust was removed. On some of the discs treated, the original tune titles

became readable, but the treatment in this area was carefully monitored because the paint is slowly attacked by the Jenolite. When the disc were judged to be o.k., they were washed, dried and treated with an oil/white spirit spray.

The disc were then played again, the sound quality appeared to have improved significantly. Has anyone else noticed a similar improvement with discs which have been cleaned, and if so can they offer an explanation?

Having put my head above the parapet, please note that I am also waving a white flag!

Polly Phon
(name & address supplied - 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.

2985 Graham Rankin, Hampshire

2986 Johan Goyvaerts, Belgium

2987 Jim Weir, Scotland - re-joined.

2988 David Lloyd-Langston, Surrey

2989 Mrs.C.M.Mayson, Cheshire

2990 Christopher Lloyd,
Birmingham

2991 Mr.M.Goodwin, Leicestershire

2992 Mr.C.Rodney Timson, Norfolk

29 re-join on original number
Mr.John Entwistle,
Nottinghamshire

From Mr Arthur Cunliffe

Sir,

Following on from my letter about glues in the last journal, I am pleased that members have responded so well. It does seem as though Seccotine glue is still available after all and that a supply of Titebond hide glue in liquid form is available in this country.

Titebond, like all brown glues, can be used in situations where the article may have to be dismantled sometime in the future. All of these glues have increased in cost lately as they have become more and more specialised. Listed below is a summary of the latest information.

A small establishment in Berkhamstead is able to supply Seccotine in a 150g bottle for £7.00 and a 500g tub at £18. Postage will be extra. I believe this organisation is concerned with musical instruments. It is best to contact them by phone in the evening and do mention the Musical Box Society as the owner is aware of our existence. Contact:-

B. Osborn
Primrose Bungalow
Dunstable Road
Dagnall
Berkhamstead.
Herts.
HP4 1RQ
Tel: 01442 842752

A firm able to supply Titebond hide glue is John Boddy of Boroughbridge in North Yorks. I have made them aware of our existence so a mention will help when ordering. They can also supply various veneers and woodworking tools. They did not seem to keep Titebond hide glue in gel form in tins, but had the liquid form in bottles. The price quoted was £4.83 for the 4fl oz and £7.52 for the 8 fl oz. Check all of this by phone first. They also have a good web site.

John Boddy
Riverside Sawmills

Boroughbridge
N. Yorks
YO51 9LJ
Tel: 01423 322370.
www.john-boddy-timber.ltd.uk

Another supplier of Seccotine is Clockspares of Dereham in Norfolk. Again I found these people to be very helpful and they confirmed that the product was still available. Contact them by phone or by email mentioning the Musical Box society. The manager is called Richard and is most keen to help. This firm can also supply replacement parts for old clocks and make clock keys. Can cut wheel and pinions and supply cast brass etc.

Clockspares
The Yard
Wellington Road
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 2BP
Phone: 01362 694165.
Fax: 01362 695317
Email: info@clockspares.co.uk
Web: clockspares.co.uk

For those who have an account with Fletcher and Newman, they too can supply Titebond liquid hide glue in bottles at around £9.95 including postage. They are trade only.

For those who have access to the internet, there is a company in America that makes a brown glue that is claimed to have much improved qualities over the normal hot glue pot glue. Their web page is worth reading and can be found by typing Old Brown Glue in the search engine. Do remember to search the word wide web and not just the UK only otherwise the page will not be selected.

Finally, I have a tin of the gel type brown glue that was marketed by Craftsman Original. This was the firm that had a man seated at a workbench and working in wood as their trade mark. If anyone can find out if this firm is still going that would be most helpful. There may be a small craft shop about

somewhere that has some of their glue left on the shelf. If so, buy it immediately! The gel type glue is useful as its container can be stood in an outer container of hot water to bring the glue to a liquid form. The warmer you get the glue the runnier it becomes.

If you can add to this list of helpful people, please let me know or write your own letter to the editor! I am sure we can use these pages to be of help to each other. This next point has nothing to do with glues, but do any of you have key wind boxes that are short of winding keys? Clockspares may be able to help.

Arthur Cunliffe.

From Alison M Biden

Sir,

At the Society's AGM earlier this month, under 'Any Other Business', the possibility of putting the journals into some form of electronically retrievable format was raised with a question from the floor by one of the members. Quite a protracted discussion ensued, with comments ranging from being in favour to against, as well as suggestions as to how, if it were desirable, it might be achieved.

It occurred to me that, since at the meeting we were being urged to contribute more material to the journal, perhaps the journal itself could be used as a vehicle for further consideration of the matter?

One of the perennial issues the Society attempts to grapple with from time to time is how to attract younger members. I tend to lean towards the more general attracting of new members, rather than targetting any age group, but I think I can confidently say that a Society which does not embrace modern technology will find attracting younger members a lot harder. Love it or hate it, the internet is having

a huge impact on our lives and the way we do things these days, and I would urge the Society to get to grips with the opportunities it, and the whole computer universe, pose rather than resist their challenges. I would argue that only by doing so can we hope to convey a dynamic Society rather than one which is on the decline. By increasing our 'interactivity' we ought to be able to widen our scope for attracting more interest and new members.

If I followed the discussion accurately, it was not necessarily a question of putting the material on the internet, but also or alternatively, the possibility of recording it on readable CD. I cannot think anyone who has mastered the basic research techniques offered by computers would tolerate for very long having to use 'old' methods of searching through indexes, pages and volumes of printed periodicals. Sooner or later, the demand for the material in the journal to be available in 'hard' (i.e. paper) copy, will dwindle, as the ratio of computer-literate people, whether members of the Society or interested members of the public, increases.

I endorse the view that the journal as a printed magazine should not be scrapped. Books – or some form of hand-written or printed word - have been in existence for thousands of years, and we all know about the

20th century archives stored in a form by the US military which the latter no longer has the means of reading. But the two media need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, it may be that sometime in the future when the journal is printed it would be possible to have a CD made of it at the same time for a smaller incremental cost than taking each journal and producing it on CD as a separate exercise.

There were several strands to the discussion at the AGM. Another strand was the feasibility of the proposal. Who would do the work? At what cost?

It would seem to me to be totally unrealistic to expect any one individual to undertake the task voluntarily. Whilst I wouldn't rule out a team of dedicated individuals working on it, a far better option might be to invest in having it done professionally. People who do this work for a living can achieve it quickly and efficiently. I think it is very important that the end result should appear professional.

I have been a member for over 26 years during which time attitudes in society in general have changed, and we are used to more informal daily transactions in our lives. This has been reflected in the conduct of the Society over the years. However, I think it is important we do not

confuse attitudes with standards: if we wish to convey gravitas as a Society then we need to ensure the highest attainable standards in what it produces.

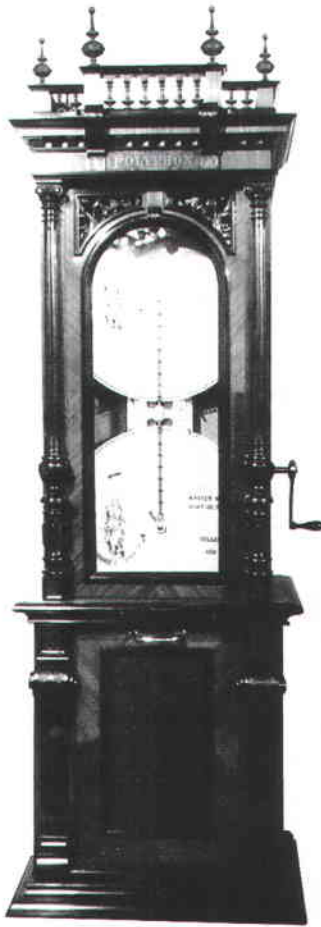
As for the cost of such a venture, I dare say it would not be cheap. But for the reasons I outlined above we should not resist or ignore the issue. Realistically we may not be able to afford to put all the back issues of the journal onto CD – certainly not in one go – but is there any reason not to consider how we might make a start with future issues? Might the venture become, at least partially, self-funding?

To conclude: there are obviously many aspects to the proposal/suggestion to put the journal into an electronically retrievable form and such a venture is a complex issue. Given the committee's normal workload it is probably unfair to expect it to explore this without considerable assistance, but it could facilitate such exploration by authorising willing society members to do so. I would urge members to engage in this discussion, and for those who could assist in researching it further to put themselves forward to do so.

Would it be too much to ask that by the next AGM there might be some concrete proposals to debate, rather than just batting the idea around in principle?



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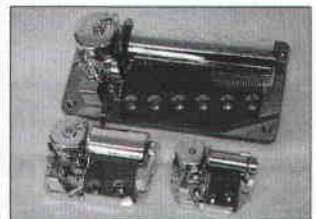
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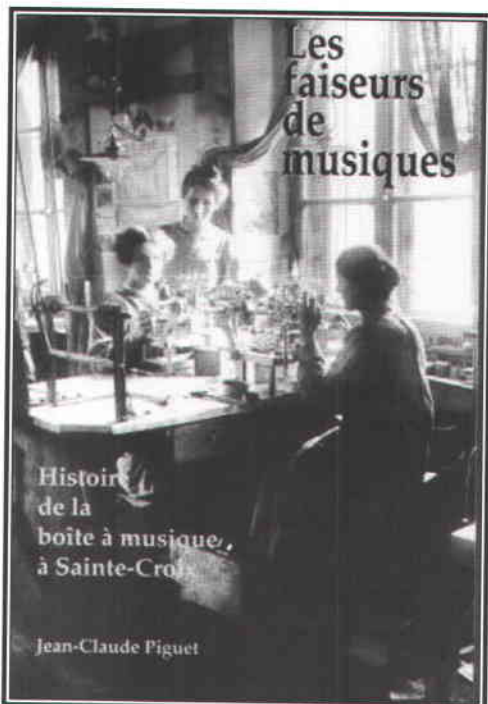
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