

The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue:

- Theme Valley Winders
- 21st Century Mechanical Music
- A Workable Musical Seal
- The Saleroom Scene



The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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From the Editors' Desk

Oops – I did not intentionally set foot in a minefield with my reminiscences of London auctions in days long past – but we were pleased to receive a response from Laurence Fisher, helping to clarify the current picture!

This seems to have become a Technical Issue and we thank our contributors for their scholarship and for sharing their findings with us. (It is amazing what brings families together – I was wondering aloud about whether I was qualified to proof read Anthony's article on tooth harmonics when our son seized on it with joy and interpreted the results of the graphs with an ease that I envied! He was amazed by the skill of the musical comb makers and their ability to control harmonic levels without instruments! Thanks to Anthony, Don and Paul, Michael will now read the journal.)

There appear to be some interesting auctions coming up at Bonham's - wish we lived closer.

Winter is almost over. Spring is round the corner. Happy hunting!

Silent Auctions

Most of us will have noticed that some of the major auction houses do not seem to be as interested as they once were in selling musical boxes and other forms of mechanical music. Not only that, but the charges plus VAT seem to be crippling to both the buyer and the seller with something like 47% being deducted in total.

The committee have been discussing this and have asked me to adapt the Silent Auction plan that was used many years ago in the Morecambe meeting.

The idea is to find some sort of central ground that is both fair to both seller and buyer.

One idea is to suggest that anyone wishing to dispose of an item of mechanical music should fix a price around what he or she would get in an auction minus all the charges. That way the seller still obtains around the same amount of money they would eventually get from selling at auction. The bidder on the other hand would be able to buy at a lower price and not have to face any commission or other deductions. This is a win situation for all.

These auctions are not designed to compete with our main auction, which is held at the AGM, but rather as an added attraction to a regional meeting. They are indeed an additional path to buy or sell and should complement selling by our main auction or by using the free classified advertisement section in the journal.

The arrangement is a replacement for the "table top" sales we held in the past and is designed to help those attending the meeting and the Society. It is hoped that any auction would be an added attraction and an incentive to attend a regional meeting. The auctions will not take place immediately as a little more planning is necessary. This article is more in the nature of an advance notice to inform and to ask you for your views. Please respond either to me or the editors in the correspondence section if you feel that the idea is sound and/or you would use such auctions.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Cover Picture
Fine Gold Musical Seal
 see article on page 145

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Dates for your Diary

Teme Valley Winders
Saturday 22nd March 2008 –
1pm for 1.30 start.
Members are invited to bring
something along to demonstrate.
This meeting will be held at
Nicholas Simons
Please phone Nicholas –
01332 76 0576

Essex Meeting
Saturday 29th March 2008
Please phone Bruce Allen –
01702 23 2040

Spring Meeting 2008
Brentford
Friday 11th April – Sunday 13th

Chanctonbury Ring
Sunday 18th May - 2008
10.30 coffee for an 11am start
Lunch provided
Please phone Ted Brown -
01403 82 3533

Annual General Meeting
& Society Auction
Saturday 7th June 2008
Roade Village Hall
Near Northampton

10.30a.m. followed by
a buffet lunch

Society Auction 2p.m.

President's Message No.7

I am very pleased to see that the "Letters to the Editors" section of the journal is being used much more now. Do continue to use this section to express a view or to share an idea. Already there has been much useful information made available. A lively correspondence section in any journal is an indication of a healthy society with interests running high.

Members will have noticed that the last journal ran to 36 pages. Our editors must be congratulated on putting so much effort into producing such a journal. The best way to show your appreciation of course is to write an article or find useful information for publication so that they can continue the good work.

There has been much discussion since the last AGM on taking the Society forward so with this in mind I asked the committee to move forward at an increased speed. They have responded magnificently and at our committee meeting at Coventry several important decisions were taken. The first of these was to approve and organise the publication of the next Tune Sheet Supplement. These will be available soon.

John Farmer, Paul Bellamy and Ted Brown are starting on the task of producing a list of restorers along with good restoring guidelines with a view to making this an annual directory. At this stage many people are being asked for their views before any written work is created.

The committee decided to go ahead with the idea of putting our journals on to DVDs. A sum of money was allocated for the production of 500 items. Bob Ducat-Brown is the project manager leading a small team to organise all this. The committee also decided that the project would be dedicated to the memory of the late John Powell who devoted so

much time and effort into producing the journal index. Indexing the last few volumes of the journal will be difficult task as unfortunately this has not been kept up to date for the last few volumes. Whilst on this matter, do we have anyone who would be willing to produce an index for our journals in the future? We really do need help.

Following on from the fact that certain auction houses will no longer have anything to do with mechanical music, the committee agreed that the society could help to plug a gap by offering a selling service for members at our regional meetings as well as at our annual auction. I agreed to devise a method of selling based on the "silent auction" which was held so successfully at the Morecambe meeting many years ago. By doing this we would establish three ways of enabling members to buy or sell items which would be beneficial to all in that very high commissions and other charges could be substantially reduced. The three methods are: a) selling free of charge in our journal Sales and Wants section. b) Entering items in our annual auction at the AGM and c) Selling by the silent auction method at selected regional meetings.

In the past there has been a tendency for members to expect items sold at the AGM and at our auctions to bring low prices. This I find strange when the same members are quite willing to pay high prices at an auction room but expect to get a similar item for almost nothing at our events! I believe that this attitude should change and at our meetings we should expect to see a fair price to both the buyer and seller with reasonable and realistic reserves being set.

Elsewhere in this journal will be an outline of the proposed rules and guidelines for conducting "silent auctions" at regional meetings. Once

a registration table and a selling table have been set up these auctions should almost run them unaided without being too demanding on anyone's time. At the end of proceedings, there will have to be someone to oversee the final results, but I hope the job will not be too demanding. I hope all this will come to fruition before too long.

Finding new venues to hold Society meetings is always difficult. It is unwise to continue returning to the same venue time and time again, so it is vital we find new places to visit where there is a background of mechanical music. At the same time it is good to visit different areas of the country thus giving local members a chance to attend a nearby meeting. Ever increasing costs are a dilemma and the problem of London costings mean that meetings held there will be prohibitive in the coming years. If you have any ideas on how and where meetings should go in the future, please contact Daphne Ladell our Meetings Secretary and share your ideas. I believe that we should try to car share as much as possible or see if cheap coach travel is available. Something to do with a carbon footprint or the like!

In conclusion, if you have not yet renewed your subscription to the Society please do so right away. We are managing to hold our own at the moment and the society is moving with the times, but we do always need support both financially and practically. Try to come to our regional and local meetings so that you can meet others that enjoy all forms of mechanical music. We in turn will do our best to keep ever rising costs to a minimum and provide meetings that are full of good will and enjoyment to counteract the increasing gloom and doom of modern life.

Happy collecting
Arthur Cunliffe.

Teme Valley Winders

1st December 2007 – Eastham Grange

John and Hilda Phillips welcomed a larger than usual group to Eastham Grange for the 2007 Christmas meeting and a substantial Christmas buffet lunch was provided by Hilda and helpers. After all were replete the meeting proper started with Silent Night played on the Triola by John Farmer, followed by a novelty musical snow-boarding polar bear. Doug Pell followed up with a few appropriate tunes on an 8-inch lever wound Polyphon, an early (pressure) Gem roller organ and a Christmas tree stand with two cylinder movements.

A second, somewhat more elaborate, Christmas tree stand was presented by David Worrall, this one containing a small disc movement (thought to be Polyphon, but could be Kalliope – JF). David then played an 8-air “sacred” cylinder box, possibly by L’eepe, which included “O come all ye faithful”. He then introduced Chris Moose, the singing reindeer, and a pair of singing bears. David’s final instrument was a Nicole Frere overture box which he had purchased at auction having only listened to it in a rather noisy room (instead of the recommended quiet room), and felt it wasn’t quite up to scratch. However, the consensus was that it was indeed a very nice box despite David’s misgivings.

Alan Godier showed a Nicole Frere box No. 50280, Gamme 5032 with 10 airs. This box had a brass inlaid lid and a Brun type coloured tune sheet. John Moorhouse took us a little further in his quest to produce a singing bird egg by explaining, with examples, his method of making the bird bodies. He also showed two new booklets from the BHI on Servicing Clocks and Watches, and Practical Lubrication, both of which could be relevant to musical boxes etc. Availability of



David Worrall

these booklets, or relevant extracts, is being investigated.

John Phillips demonstrated a singing bird box in a blue enamelled, engine-turned case, which he has now re-assembled after it’s rather haphazard dismantlement by the auction house. John has also discovered, in a clock book, an item with an almost identical monogram “GR”, as that on the bird box, and the book attributes it to “a member of the upper house”!! – (more research required, I think – JF). John Harrold then entertained us with his newly acquired 40 note automatic accordion. This has a much more mellow tone than the smaller Concertinas, with a good strong base. The memory card (2GB) can store up to 600 tunes. These instruments, by Theuringer Musikantenschmied, can also use radio links to play together. Doug Pell demonstrated the smaller Concertina instrument.

Kath Turner played a few seasonal tunes on her 14 note American OrguINETTE, which prompted a discussion on how clever the arrangers were to create tunes from just 14 notes. Chris Rodwell demonstrated a very nice Troubadour disc box, followed by a 6-air cylinder box which had been rather rough when purchased, but had cleaned up nicely, and played well. It is probably by Mermod. Chris finished with a few tunes on his Pathé gramophone, which uses the “Hill and Dale” type track, and

plays from the inside out.

Richard Manning demonstrated a 19 5/8” table top Polyphon, with a very nice case, and Mr Grace explained how he came to arrange some Greek Orthodox tunes for his 20 note “Pling-Plong” Sankyo movement. He also provided members with the music and words to one of the tunes (but no sing-song ensued!). David Shankland played a 4-air overture box, very similar to that shown earlier by David Worrall (coincidence or what!).

This concluded the demonstrations by visitors, so John Phillips invited us all to join him in his newly decorated lounge where he demonstrated a number of instruments, large and small. These included a Symphonion 27 1/2” disc box with bells, an 1860’s Imhoff and Mukle 50 key barrel organ, another large barrel organ but with a completely different sound, an Imhoff parlour barrel piano, and a much more brash street barrel piano, a Bremond “Harpe Aeolienne” cylinder box, a Nightingale box, a 4 air David LeCoultré Piano Forte box, a large interchangeable cylinder box (6 tunes per cylinder), and a 48 note Racca Piano Melodico (the last two being recent acquisitions). David Shankland thanked John and Hilda on everyone’s behalf for a very interesting and enjoyable Christmas event.

For the next meeting the Teme Valley Winders go “on location” to Derby, where Nicholas Simons has kindly offered to host the meeting. This will be held on Saturday 22nd March 2008 at 1:00 p.m. for a 1:30 p.m. start. Those wishing to attend should contact Nicholas, on 01332 760576, well in advance to book a place.

Chanctonbury Ring Meetings

Meeting 23rd September 2007

By Alan K Clark

Thirty members and guests attended the latest Chanctonbury Ring meeting hosted by Ted and Kay Brown at the Old School Bucks Green. The date for the first C R meeting in 2008 was discussed, and set as Sunday 17th February. Following the reading of a few extracts from "Amateur Work" of 1876, including, making moving models driven by air and water, making animal glue, and building a huge multi-pipe organ, the programme got under way with a treat for all our opera loving members. Ted had arranged for us to hear and compare the music played by three Grand Format boxes by Nicole Freres. These boxes really were the culmination of years of design and tune arranging perfection, made at the peak of the firm's capability. Your reporter asked what features differentiated between Grand Format, and normal Overture boxes. The size difference was obvious and the difference in their musical arranging was then ably demonstrated, as the next box was an Overture box and the music played on that was still excellent, but simpler and much clearer.

Following the eating of our packed lunches, and the consumption of most of Ted and Kay's hot puddings, the afternoon session started. Following the playing of a modern disc on the 15 ½ inch Regina, and one or two on the Polyphon, we came to the excellent well researched talk by Paul Baker on phonograph cylinders. This talk was the second part of that given 2 ½ years ago, so a little background was included. The main part of the talk was based on the history and demonstration of far more sizes and types of phonograph cylinders than even most of us old collectors had ever seen before. The full range from

cradle to grave were included, and the improvements in volume and quality of recording ably demonstrated. The large range of subjects recorded by the various companies was shown in a reproduction tune catalogue, which was passed around.

Daphne then revealed a unique item from her collection of automata. This was a large modern, prize winning model comprising a conductor facing three musical movements mounted on small wooden chairs. When set in motion the conductor conducted the music, but at first one of the musical movements played out of time so they were stopped by the conductor tapping on his music stand. The conductor's second attempt was no better, with one movement still playing out of time with its companions, and again they were stopped. Only when the conductor gave up conducting did all three movements play correctly.

Some boxes were then played for tune identification before afternoon tea. Yet again Ted and his helpers, and all those who brought items along for demonstration, are to be applauded for producing such an entertaining day.

Christmas Meeting 24th November 2007

By Alan K Clark

Ted and Kay's Christmas meetings are always very popular, and this one was no exception with 51 members and guests attending the event held at the Old School Bucks Green. The Christmas lights were twinkling as we started the activities with a few musical boxes that needed their tunes identified. We were then treated to two tunes on a sublime harmony box by PVF. A Nicole 33,000 series with a bird inlay on the lid

then provided us a good rendition of part of the Messiah.

In mentioning that the Society would be producing a Directory of Members next year he showed a very much earlier society Directory and commented on some of the characters who then belonged to the society. The Christmas music continued with various 15 ½ inch discs played on the Polyphon, and Regina machines. The last tune which was from La Sonnambula was then repeated with great contrast on the street piano.

Some years ago our Chanctonbury Ring member, Anthony Bullied had expressed a wish that when he came to sell some of his musical boxes, he would like to offer them to fellow Chanctonbury Ring members. Some had been sold in this manner in the past, and now we had the chance to see, and buy five more. Ted demonstrated these by playing two tunes on each, (at the end of the day following examination, and written bidding, four of the five boxes were carried away to four member's collections).

It was then organette time, with the playing on the Cabinetto of the greater part of a 110 foot long roll, hand cut by Kevin, playing a selection from My Fair Lady. The Christmas spirit was not forgotten long with Silent Night, and other carols played on some 14 note organettes.

We then had our delicious hot lunches and hot puddings, kindly provided by our hosts. Following this, not to mention much happy chatting about our joint hobby, we continued the musical entertainment. Ted played two tunes on the larger of his pipe barrel organs, and was then requested to play two more on the smaller organ. Ted's Faventia modern small street piano was an

unusual model with spiral pinning on the barrel and played three carols. Kevin then played one of his paper strip playing musical movements. Paul played two early descriptive gramophone records, and then played the second tune again, but on the Pianola. Kevin played a Christmas Fantasy on the Orchestrelle, and then we moved on to the Christmas novelties, some of which were described as "seriously silly" by their owner. We had two teddies, reindeer, duet of two snowmen, etc, before getting to Ted's bell striking figures, and his five piece band with conductor.

Thus our festive season was started off in what to us Chanctonbury Ring members has become a time honoured, and eagerly awaited manner. Ted thanked us for attending, and taking our contributions, and a member of the group thanked Ted, Kay, and all those who helped to make the day such a great success.

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.

Teme Valley Winders

23rd June 2007 – Eastham Grange

The meeting of 23rd June, at the regular venue, Eastham Grange, saw 21 attendees including two new faces, namely Terry Baron and "Izzy" Irzykowsky, both clock men, but perhaps now with a musical bent. Both took away membership forms for MBSGB.

Following the usual format, John Harrold started off with a compact 24 key street barrel organ. It is of German manufacture, around 1900, maker unknown. By this time the Germans had all but saturated the home market, so they began exporting to South America, and they did this by making organs with only one European tune pinned, and the rest blank for the importer to have pinned with Spanish (or was it Portugese) tunes. These organs were mainly used to support communal dancing. John had carried out extensive restoration, but the organ now sounded very good with its, mostly unknown, South American tunes.

Jason Fisher had brought along a Gramophone, which the in-house experts eventually agreed was a Victor Junior Monarch from around 1902. This 3 spring model gave surprisingly good quality and volume. There followed a further discussion on early sound recording methods. Maurice Adams followed up with a very nice Cabinetto organette with a roll entitled Salvation Army number 1. In his attempts to find out more about the use of this roll, he had been invited to play at a Salvation Army meeting, and everyone stood up and sang when the instrument began to play, much to Maurice's surprise (but the Winders weren't as polite this time round!).

Izzy presented a 15 1/2" long bedplate Regina disc box, unusually in a painted case, believed to be originally for the US home market. The box was in very good condition, and had several original discs which looked like new. He played several tunes to demonstrate the box. The box came with an MBSI certificate confirming its manufacture on 7th January, 1897, and a brochure containing a reprint of the history of Regina by M. Kosiarski (see

The Music Box Vol. 7 Nos 2&3). Izzy has been asked to sell the box for a friend. Doug Pell showed 2 cylinder boxes, the first a small 2 air in a wooden "snuff" sized box, and the second a Ducommun Girod, No. 34066, key wind with 6 tunes. The latter had tunes from Donizetti, Verdi and Fahrback, and the tune sheet appeared to indicate a price of £4 14s 6d.

After a break for tea and cakes (this time provided by various lady winders, since Hilda had injured her wrist), John Phillips demonstrated his recently acquired 1860's Imhoff and Mukle 50 key barrel organ (which came with a large number of barrels, yet to be catalogued), followed by a quick knees-up from his barrel piano, maker unknown. Richard Manning then showed a small movement he had acquired many years ago, as a student, when he obviously had a good eye – the movement has 63 teeth in groups of 3, probably hand cut, and from 1805 – 1810, the early days of cylinder box manufacture.

John Moorhouse then gave an update on his "Singing Bird Egg" project, and handed round a few of the components. The egg parts have now been engine turned ready for enamelling, and the mechanism, designed to present 2 singing birds, is now well developed. John has even made his own endless, a challenge in itself. To round off, Alan Pratt briefly described his plans to re-build his original John Smith 20 note organ, which led to a lengthy discussion on organ pipe design, home built organs, etc. etc.

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Winders will be held on Saturday 22nd September, 2007, 1:30 p.m. prompt at Eastham Grange. Then the "Christmas" meeting will be on Saturday 1st December, 2007, starting earlier at 12:00 noon, with a buffet lunch and mince pies provided. Those wishing to attend either meeting should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to get directions, if required, and to book their place.

John Farmer

Essex Meeting

31st March 2007

The second meeting of the Essex group was held on Saturday 31st March in Rayleigh. Although labelled an Essex meeting, members came from Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Norfolk, Croydon, and Leytonstone.

The proceedings got underway with Ted Brown giving a talk on small disc boxes. During his talk he was able to compare the playing qualities of two Stella boxes using the same disc on each machine. Another comparison between two boxes was demonstrated by Ted playing his 8-inch single comb Helvetia and a similar box recently acquired by Bruce Allen. The difference was quite noticeable with Bruce's box giving a stronger sound even with two teeth missing!

Kevin McElhone followed with a talk on small organettes. Kevin demonstrated two very interesting and different organettes. The first of these was a Clariophon. An organette with a unique method of using a rolled flat plate with dimples (very similar to a printer's plate) as the music carrier. A unique solution to overcoming Patent Rights I suspect. The machine gave a very good account of its self when played. The second machine was an open framed pressure fed Gem, as opposed to the normal vacuum operated Gem organette. Later in his talk Kevin played Bruce's Ariosa organette, an instrument which had very recently been purchased in quite poor condition but was complete with its original transit box. The bellows had now been replaced and was playable, however something was not quite right when Kevin played it. The wise sages in the room soon came to the conclusion that reeds three and four were transposed! An interesting situation as none of the reeds had been touched during the renewal of the bellows. It makes one

wonder how many years these reeds had been in the wrong place.

Don Busby followed Kevin giving an illustrated talk on the progress he is making with his 125-tooth musical box comb. After several false starts he has now produced a very creditable comb. Work on the comb continues with drilling the damper holes, the next stage to be the centre of Don's focus of experimentation. The talk was illustrated with mock-ups of his jigs and machining facilities. A fascinating talk which is probably the first of many in a long line of talks, which hopefully will culminate in a finished playing musical box.

After the lunch break Robert Ducat-Brown gave a very informative talk on the art of cylinder re-pinning. Again, yet another fascinating talk during which he was ably assisted by constructive interjections from Alan Godier and Ted Brown. His talk was illustrated with a cylinder that was currently under restoration.

Robert was followed by Paul Bellamy who described in detail the restoration of a Hicks table piano (harp?) His easy delivery belied the technical problems that he had encountered during the restoration of this instrument. It certainly played as well as it looked. Included in his talk was a short illustrated history of Old Christie the organ grinder. Paul also brought along his recently acquired Taylor's of Bristol table organ. The organ dates back to around 1810-1830 and is probably one of the most travelled organs, having started its life in England before going to America from where Paul purchased it and brought it back again to England.

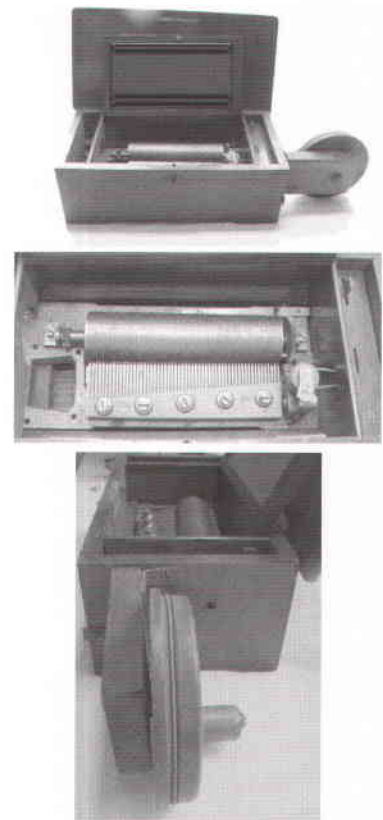
The final speaker was Alan Clark who kept everyone interested with his talk on musical novelties. He had the equivalent of a magician's hat from

which he continued to produce all forms of these collectable novelties. Again, yet another fascinating talk, which illustrated that the collecting of musical boxes does not have to be expensive.

After the talks, David Pilgrim demonstrated his very interesting LeCoultre Frères Mourning Box. David said that the box had originally been purchased in memory of a child who had died. The tune sheet was surrounded by a black border. It played beautifully, an interesting and quite rare box. The other box was a Bremond (?), which had been brought along by Jonathon Ling, who had recently purchased it at auction.

A very big thank-you to everyone who helped make this meeting a success.

Polly Phon



Rare 'Manivelle', discovered by Kevin McElhone on eBay

Essex Meeting

15th September 2007 from Don Busby

The third meeting of the Essex Group was held in the Parish Rooms of Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh. Fifteen members attended together with two non-members.

Don Busby started the day by describing work done on three major steps in producing a musical box comb. Since he is a newcomer to this field and there is not a 'recipe' for this operation, he needs to experiment at each stage before progressing. He has now finalised tooth design by graduating tooth width, narrowing between bass and treble, drilled all damper holes and hardened and tempered all sub-combs. The next step is to add leads before dampering and tuning.

Ted Brown took the stage next, starting by playing an organette which he had repaired. He also read out some advertising pamphlets for an Ariel of 1901, which suggested that parents could keep children at home by purchasing one! The main theme of Ted's talk, however, was automated music with bells and drums. He showed a variety of bell boxes, with and without drums. As well as playing tunes on each instrument Ted described various repairs he had effected.

Ted was followed by Roger Booty, showing slides, some with musical accompaniment, of a wide range of large and small organs. Our attention was held by views of old organs in churches throughout Essex, plus some as far afield as Yorkshire. A carillon at Great Waltham church, dating from 1770, includes a seated figure striking a bell; it also contains the oldest known church bell from 1336. We were also shown views of fairground organs, a street barrel organist in Düsseldorf and other motorised attractions.

Bruce Allen ended the morning



Paul Bellamy with 'The Robojazz Five'

showing a 9 3/8" Symphonion disc musical box, Serial No. 2414, which he had purchased with twenty six discs from a dealer in Belgium. Bruce is seeking guidance on how to renew dampering.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Paul Bellamy who described repairs that he has carried out on a Hicks street type piano and played its standard Scottish reel to us. Paul next brought out a delightful automaton of a jazz group built up from toy parts. It had a number of instrumental players, with miniature speakers, flashing lights and glittering decoration. The model is set up to play Bill Hayley tunes and we heard "Rock Around the Clock" from an I-pod recording as the group went through its motions.

Finally Paul described how he is making a small barrel piano from scratch, designed and keyed specifically to suit Scott Joplin arrangements. The barrel will be spirally pinned for six turns, requiring forty-five winding turns per revolution.

Kevin McElhone started his talk by playing a commercially available comb player operated by cardboard strips. Kevin entertained us with a selection of tunes played on several paper roll organettes. One of these, a 25-note "Musical Cabinetto", is unusual in having two winding handles instead of only one; this allows playing reels "top-to-top" which prevents damage to the

rolls by flexing of the paper. He played "Legend of the Bells" on the Cabinetto. A very rare "Mignon" double-reeded 22-note organette was demonstrated. Unusually this Mignon is suction-operated as opposed to being pressure driven. Cob organs were Kevin's closing topic: both small and large cob organs were wound by Kevin to give a selection of tunes. He pointed out that some cobs are pinned in a spiral form to provide three tunes. This involves cranking the handle 240 times, a tiring exercise.

Alan Clark rounded off the formal presentations with a demonstration of how he replaces projections missing from musical box discs.

There then followed discussion and viewing of the day's exhibits, with help and guidance available for any problems raised. Rodney Timson played his Bremond musical box. It is a nice looking box in walnut with inlaid trim. Of its eight airs he could only recognise three, the tune sheet being missing.

The meeting closed at 4 p.m. with an announcement by Bruce Allen that the Parish Rooms have been booked for the next meeting on 29th March 2008.

We were pleased to have Bruce's wife Margaret with us for the day. She kindly helped to provide welcome refreshment throughout. Bruce is to be commended for his efforts in bringing us together every six months. Please support by coming to the gatherings if you can.

The programme for the next meeting will include an item when members can present and play some of their favourite musical boxes. Please bring along a couple of your own instruments.

MBSGB In Coventry

Society Members Autumn Meeting - 19th, 20th & 21st October 2007

On Friday 19th October members of the Music Box Society of Great Britain gathered at the Coventry Hill Hotel for the 2007 Autumn Meeting. Although only 40 or so were resident other members joined on a daily basis for the organized events, swelling our numbers to around 50 for the weekend.

The Meeting opened formally with a private dinner before which the President asked those present to stand in silent tribute to the memory of John Powell, a well-respected & much missed member of our Society who had so recently passed away. A full tribute to John is contained in the Obituary on page 163 of this issue

Dinner was followed by a presentation by The Coventry Watch Museum. To many of us, Cathedrals and Lady Godiva apart, Coventry is historically associated with electrical & heavy engineering and, particularly, the road transport industry, the city having been the home of several British makes of road vehicle. What is less known, perhaps, or often forgotten, is that Coventry had other fields of employment of note, such as lace making and, of particular interest for our meeting, a thriving Clock & Watch Industry. So, we were reminded of this by a speaker from the Museum in a most interesting talk about Clock & Watch Making in Coventry.

Dressed in his apron & billy-cock hat the speaker looked the part as he went over the history of this industry in Coventry, from its early beginnings in the 17th century through years of prosperity to its eventual decline and end in the 1970's. He described the working conditions and showed interesting photographs of the properties specially built or adapted to



Kevin McElhone with an assortment of disc boxes

provide the workers with the best lighting conditions of the day for their fine and exacting work. The Museum now has possession of the last remaining examples of these behind Spon Street and is actively working to establish that site as its base & Museum where its collection of timepieces made in Coventry over the years will be displayed & open to the public. Examples of these together with a selection of watchmakers' instruments & tools were on display and members took a keen interest in examining them after the talk.

During the talk, reference was made to the Coventry industry establishing and investing in two centres of production in Switzerland in the earlier part of the 20th century. Mention of Switzerland, the home of the clock & watch making industry from which Musical Boxes were developed, it is interesting, perhaps, to ponder as to why the same industry in Coventry did not take a similar course, particularly as Great Britain provided not only a growing market for Musical Boxes but was also the source of some of the steel used for many of the combs. Was a move into Musical Boxes considered by the Coventry Watch

Makers and rejected? If so, why? If not, why not?

On Saturday morning, we were treated to three presentations. First, Kevin MacElhone talked about Disc Musical Boxes and some of the interesting varieties and variations that were coming to light as part of his research into his next book on this subject. On display and playing were two motor driven disc musical boxes, a 10 1/2" Fortuna and 15 5/8" Regina, but the main theme of the presentation was large, exchangeable Manivelles. On show and playing for us were a 5 3/4" Symphonion, a 7 5/8" Symphonion & an 8" Regina. The 5 3/4" Symphonion seemed hardly fit for purpose, ie if Manivelles were for the nursery – the positioning of the disc was so complicated and precise that damage to manivelle and/or disc seemed inevitable in the hands of youngsters. None the less, some had survived with their discs in playable condition as was demonstrated to us by Kevin. The largest Manivelle to come to light to-date as part of his researches was a 10 1/2" Symphonion, but he was unable to bring this to the meeting.

Without wishing to steal too much

from his forthcoming book, Kevin told us that his research to-date has identified just over 1,500 different factory designated models of Disc Music Box. Between them, these played music from just over 350 different sizes of card book music & disc.

At this point, the programme was interrupted for a proxi-presentation. During the recent Music Box Society International Meeting in the USA the winner of the "Q David Bowers Literary Award" for 2007 had been announced. This had been awarded to our own member, Antony Bulleid, for his "Outstanding Literary Contributions to the Field of Automatic Music". As he was not present, a Society representative attending the American meeting had received the award on his behalf. As Antony was unable to attend our meeting as well, Ted Brown received the award on his behalf from our President, Arthur Cunliffe, who expressed the feelings of everyone present when he said that it was a prestigious award and very well deserved.

Following this we had a most interesting and amusing presentation from Bob Essex and his guest extraordinaire, Angus Turragh. Angus, who came wearing kilt, sporran, tam o'shanter, three drones and a six-note chanter, is a "Mechanical" Bagpipe. Bob described what went into the making of Angus who is, in reality, only a bagpipe simulator, using free reeds tuned to bagpipe pitch. Notwithstanding that disclaimer, Angus gave a very commendable performance, playing for us an entertaining selection of appropriate Scottish Airs.

Bob went on to say that he was developing Bagpipes Mark 2, named McLOUD. He has a full set of Great Highland Bagpipes with traditional beating reeds & mechanically operated fingers that play the chanter, requires a wind

pressure of about 35 inches Water Gauge, or some 1.3 p.s.i. Bob believes that McLOUD, who is very much LOUDER and is going to be an outdoor instrument, is only the second such in the world, the first having been built experimentally at Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania.

In addition to Angus, Bob had brought along his Fairground Organ, "King Solomon". As "His Majesty" was holding court in his trailer on the hotel car park the meeting repaired there to listen to his performance. "King Solomon" is a MIDI [Musical Instrument Digital Interface] controlled instrument with the equivalent of 200 keys in conventional terms, 155 pipes, 20 trumpets, Accordion, Glockenspiel, & a very full percussion section comprising Bass Drum, a Snare Drum with four beaters for rapid drum rolls, Wood Blocks, Triangle, Crash Cymbal, Ride Cymbal, Tambourine, Maracas, Sleigh-bells and Castanets. It is fully chromatic from bass F (MIDI 41) right up to top-top F (MIDI 101) - 5 full octaves. The 7 pipe ranks are:

- 19 Bass and accompaniment open flues tuned cello with roller bridges,
- a melody rank of 32 stopped double bourdons, tuned celeste
- a melody rank of 32 open clarabellas
- a piccolo rank of 20 notes
- a counter melody rank of 20 stopped pipes
- a 49 note accordion spanning most of the chromatic range of the bass, accompaniment and main melody
- a 25 note rise-and-fall glockenspiel covering most of the range of the main melody.

The organ plays music in MIDI files on seven simultaneous MIDI channels. The main pipe ranks play at 10" water gauge. The Bass pipes play at 13" water gauge.

Bob began building "King Solomon"

in 2001 and has continually expanded and rearranged him since then. He is in his second trailer and has now grown as large and heavy as that will permit. His Majesty has a huge repertoire of music arranged for him by Bob, with some 150 tunes presently on the playing list, out of the 300 so far arranged.

Returning from "King Solomon's Court", we had a most interesting presentation by John Farmer who talked about and showed some of the techniques and materials he uses in the restoration of organs and organettes, but many of which apply to musical box restoration. In particular, how to overcome the ravages of the woodworm beetle was given some attention. Examples of before and after treatment were passed around for members to see and examine.

Lunch followed & then, with "King Solomon" playing us off, we went by coach to the other side of the West Midland Conurbation, to the Wolverhampton Civic Hall. Here we were to join the public audience for a Piano and Theatre Organ recital, given by David Gray a young organist from Scotland, winner of the 2005 American Theatre Organ Trusts annual competition for organists under 22 years of age. Still only 17 years of age, he treated us to an impressive display of skills on both instruments, playing around 24 items of music, all from memory. On the organ, we heard Kitten on the Keys, an Irving Berlin selection, 76 Trombones, Temptation Rag, Sweet Georgia Brown, Twinkle Toes, a Cole Porter selection, Moon River and more, whilst on the Steinway Piano he played Chopin's Polonaise in A, Hungarian Rhapsody and other pieces from the classical repertoire.

The Wolverhampton Organ is a 1934 built Compton instrument, overhauled in 1938 and then, in 2002, completely rebuilt and

re-positioned into the roof space above the stage. It has 6420 pipes and is now played from the stage floor by the magnificent 4 Manual console formerly in the Empress Ballroom at Blackpool. The concert was one of a series organized on a monthly basis by Steve Tovey, the Wolverhampton City Organist.

Following the recital, we should have been given a tour of the organ & the console but, unfortunately, two of the 21st century bogies, Health and Safety Rules and Fear of Litigation, were in attendance to deny us that opportunity.

So after this musical feast, we left for Hazelslade on the edge of Cannock Chase where, in a rented outhouse of a Residential Home, a lovely surprise awaited us. Here Steve Tovey and his small band of helpers had re-created a 1930's Cinema, complete with furnishings and fittings from a variety of long closed or refurbished theatres & cinemas around the country. It was all very Art Deco and created a nostalgic ambience for the central artefact, a 1930's Compton Cinema Organ. Originally built and installed in the Picture House, Douglas on the Isle of Man, it was moved in the 1960's to a church in Salford, and then in 1990 to Hazelslade. It has 3 Manuals, 9 Ranks, including Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Percussion, 2nd Touch Facility, Melody & Counter melody, giving a total of around 900 Pipes. A 10th Rank, Kimura or small reed, is planned for the near future that will increase the pipe count to around 1000.

However, we were not there just to stand and admire. We were treated to afternoon tea, theatre style whilst being entertained to a recital on the organ given by one of the helpers. Then, a further step back into the past, for this was a working museum. We settled back in our seats, the lights were dimmed, the screen flickered, several times, and then "The



Ted Brown (right), standing in for Anthony Bulleid, receives the Q David Bowers Literary Award from President Arthur Cunliffe

Wedding", a silent comedy film from the early 1920's. For this item it was Steve Tovey's turn to demonstrate his skills at the organ as he accompanied and interpreted the ever-changing scenes and moods of the story portrayed in the film. We wanted more!

However, a tight time schedule meant we had to return to the hotel for our Society Banquet complete with a full evenings entertainment, both during and after dinner, by The British Magical Society. This is the oldest society of magicians in Europe, having been established in the early days of the 20th century before The Magic Circle was formed! During dinner, their members came to each table and practised their deftness and skills with a number of well-executed tricks. It was following some of these sessions that several of our members, including our President, appeared wearing ridiculous headwear fashioned from stick balloons by one of the magicians. The dinner was followed by a Cabaret presented by The Magical Society in which several of our members were enlisted to help

with the proceedings, including the apparent removal of ladies underwear, & chopping off fingers as well as the wearing of even more ridiculous hats fashioned from kitchen equipment, all to facilitate the magic would you please!! It was fun, relaxing and most of all, entertaining & enjoyable.

Sunday morning was meant to be a free time in Coventry to visit some of the attractions in the City Centre. Unfortunately, most of these appeared closed or in use for Sunday Services. However, it was sunny and members enjoyed relaxing by walking around or taking a leisurely coffee, albeit that we had to share the City Centre with the Coventry Half-Marathon runners and spectators.

Returning to the hotel, we were treated to a Sunday roast lunch before saying our farewells to one another and departing, either for home or to those of two members who had offered Open House with a chance to view & hear the private collections housed there.

And so ended another Society Week-end. Our thanks and appreciation to the Coventry Watch Museum, our member speakers, Kevin McElhone and John Farmer, to Bob Essex and his creations, Angus Turragh & King Solomon, to Steve Tovey and his band of helpers, to David Gray, to the Magical Society &, of course, our own members for their sporting contributions in support of the latter. To Daphne, our meetings organizer, a very big thank you for arranging this week-end and for coping so well with the never ending stream of unwanted issues that seem to be an inevitable part of such events. Our very grateful thanks on this occasion must go to our host, John Ward who, in spite of insuperable difficulties that came his way, managed to provide us with a programme that was original, stimulating, entertaining and most enjoyable.

Register News No. 58

In reply to the letter from Mr. East in the last journal, I have been able to do some further research and have discovered that some restorers who have worked on similar boxes that were un-named thought that they could have been made by Ducommun and had given them that attribution. More investigative work to be done! I do not have Mr East's particular Ducommun box noted in the Register so I would ask him to contact me with all the details about his box as soon as he is able.

Looking back the other day at some catalogues from the major auction houses, it was a surprise to see that ordinary 3 bell boxes turned up on a regular basis. In past times the serious collector gave only a passing glance to such boxes and would never consider playing one. Not surprising then that they were relatively unnoticed and I presume there will still be those who will not give a second glance to such boxes. This I feel is not really fair as after all they were part of the musical box scene.

These boxes were made for the mass market as more and more people had a little cash to spare at the end of the Victorian era. They were often fitted into larger than necessary cases designed to make a good initial impression. They had some sort of embellishment to the front and lid. The better quality did have properly produced inlays, but the majority had transfer decoration to the lid and front. Many also had transfer banding to the lid edges. The sides of the cases were scumbled to represent rosewood. Hinges and locks were the cheapest available at the time.

It is always difficult to attribute a maker to these boxes as they were made by a number of manufacturers in their thousands to a specification that was largely the same. There was a small cylinder, usually 15cm long that played a minimum of 8 airs. Better still if 10 or 12 could be pinned. Combs had around 36 teeth of which 3 were used to play 3 un-tuned bells. Butterfly or insect strikers were used to beat the bells. Add a zither, tune indicator and a brightly coloured tune card

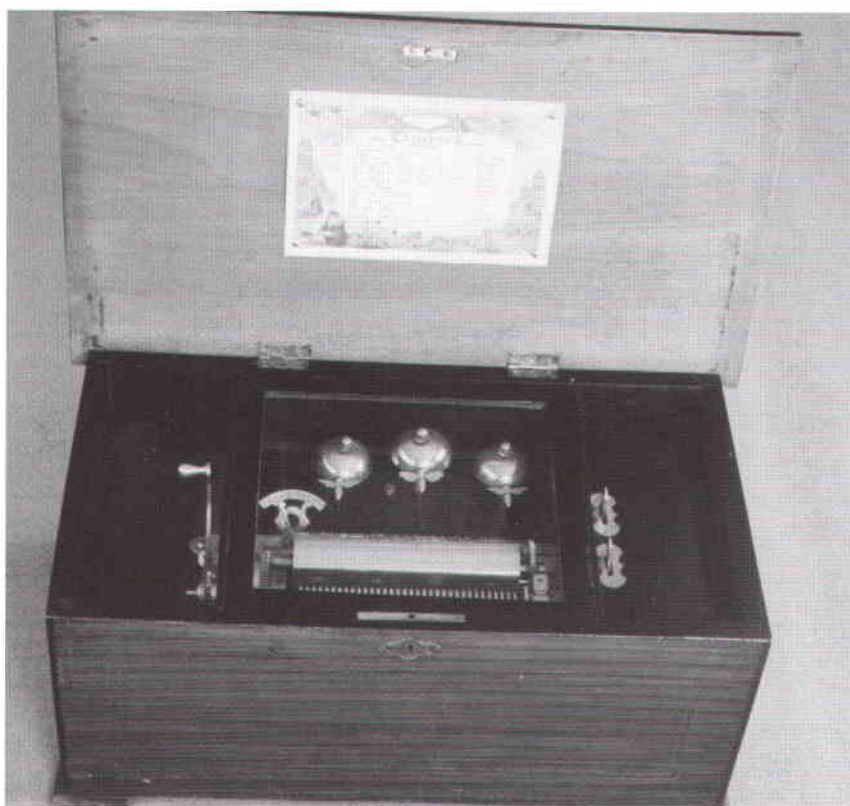


proclaiming the favourite tunes of the day and you have the classic 3 bell box known to all but unloved by many. Some makers also added a drum to the equation and when these boxes play it is impossible to ignore them!

In a strange way these boxes can still perform the same function as they once did. Play a 3 bell box to someone who has never seen or heard an antique musical box

in their life and note the look of surprise and wonder that is shown. Similar surely to those first listening to the box one hundred and fifteen years ago when it was new.

The Register shows that a number of these boxes have survived to this day with no less than 155 being recorded on file. The true number is many more of course especially when taking into account the fact that auction houses often did not



mention a serial number in their catalogue thus making it impossible to record any information in the Register. In spite of these shortcomings, it has become obvious that Abrahams, Junod Cuendet and Ullmann were heavily involved in making this type of musical box. Popular airs of the day were most commonly used. Due to the lack of teeth in the comb and the short playing duration, often only the basic chorus is played. This is exactly what the public wanted as these were the tunes they knew and loved.

Looking at the photographic records in the Register it is noticeable that hardly anyone has bothered to take a photo of the humble 3 air boxes. I have managed to find just two of a suitable quality and they do illustrate some of the points made above. The first photo is of a transfer or decal on the lid of an Ullmann box. This is typical and illustrates how easily transfers are damaged. This is one of the better ones!

The second photograph is a general view of a Cuendet box. It illustrates very well the usual scumble, or grained finish, so often found on these cases. Note also the case is larger than necessary and the cheapness of the case hinges and lock escutcheon. However we must not denigrate these boxes as they were part of the history of mechanical music and must be preserved for posterity.

Arthur Cunliffe

The Amersham Fair Organ Museum

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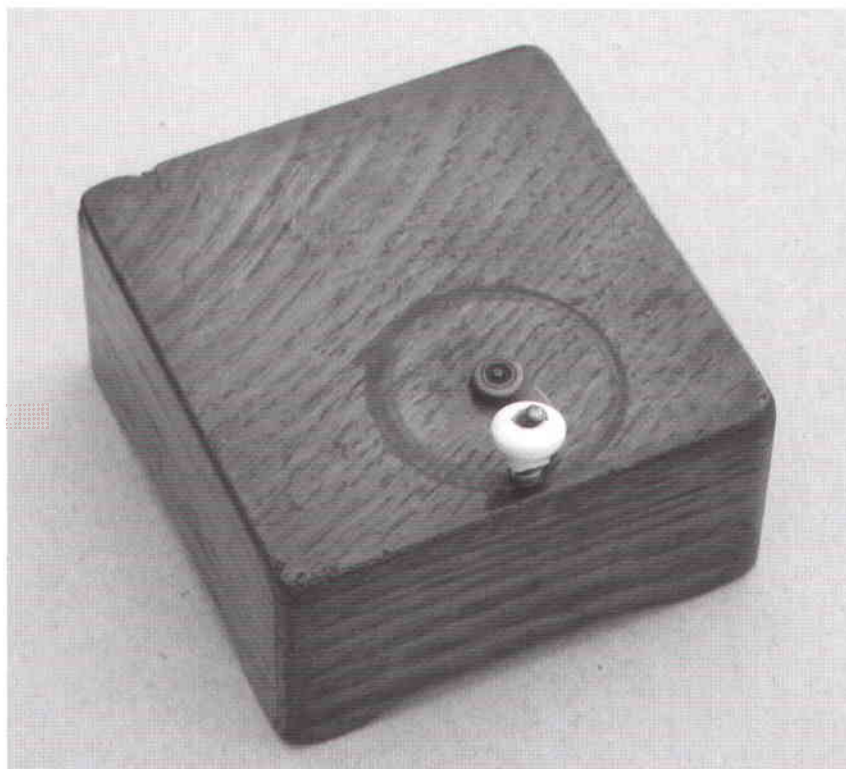
Typical turnaround time for cylinder repinning is less than 3 months.

This, That and T'Other No: 2

Those members who now fall into the category of being “silver surfers” or having to endure the indignity of someone announcing to all and sundry, “Isn’t he doing well considering,” will remember the days when it was possible to go along to your local newspaper office and place an advertisement in the “Wanted” section of the paper for musical boxes. Better still if one chose the County newspaper as one usually got a better response. After all, travelling was easier and less costly in those days so a journey of fifty miles or more was undertaken with impunity. On most occasions, there would be at least one decent reply among those offering you a trinket box with a dancing doll on top which of course, was always rare and very valuable. Again in those times there seemed to be few concerns about security and placing an advertisement which had your name, address and a telephone number caused no problems at all. The very brave went up market and placed their advertisements in that delightful paper known as Exchange and Mart.

On one occasion having advertised at County level, two replies came in from the Southport area. This was of course a noted district for older people who were normally referred to as “gentile” and had retired to the seaside for the rest of their life. Surely, quality stuff must be here. The first letter told me of an 8 air box that played Scottish airs and had originally come from a distant relative who lived in York. The second was written in a shaky hand telling me that he had a small musical box for sale and would I be interested in it? Of course I would!

A trip to Southport was planned



and eventually a small semi-detached house located. After knocking on the door and waiting a considerable time, the distinct sound of the shuffling of carpet slippers on a tiled floor was heard. The door opened and an old gentleman peered out in a timorous manner. He turned out to be a most charming person and most interesting in that he was able to recall his childhood days with the utmost clarity. He was also able to remember his working days as a guard on the railway. This was a position of great responsibility ranking far above that of a driver or a fireman. Cups of tea were made and conversations started. Some time elapsed before a small wooden manivelle was proudly produced. It was obvious that here was an item of great importance and value to the old man.

He had been given the box in 1908 when he was just 7 years old and it still invoked all the thrill and wonder of the day he received the gift.

“You see”, he informed me, “in those days you got just two presents a year, one at Christmas and the other on your birthday.”

The manivelle was a Christmas present and he well remembered taking it up to bed every night solemnly turning the handle until he went to sleep. Sometimes he took it under the bedclothes so that his mother would not hear him playing it. How the box escaped being damaged is a complete wonder. Maybe it had something to do with a loving mother who rescued it and placed it on the bedside table after the sleep fairy had arrived! On examination it was obvious that the box was made of oak and the legend underneath proclaimed it played “Ehren on the Rhine. Tune 436” The box surely must have been made by L’Epee and priced at a shilling or thereabouts when bought. The old man had already decided that £2 was all he wanted for it and all attempts to make him

21st Century Mechanical Music

By John Farmer



The computer now invades most areas of modern life, and our hobby is no exception. As I showed last time, the Internet can be a very useful resource providing information and communication for collectors. Moving on to computer software, there are a number of programs now available which Mechanical Music enthusiasts might find interesting. Many of them relate to the music itself, providing tools for musical composition and/or the production of music rolls or books for use on our instruments, and utilising the MIDI standard for conveying musical data, sometimes directly to the instruments themselves. The latter needs some understanding of MIDI, so I will leave that for a later date when I will try and give a simplified explanation of what MIDI is and how it works.

take more were resisted.

The old man fondly presented me with the box and asked if I would look after it and love it as he had done. I promised I would do, and to this day, I still have the box and treasure it greatly, but I must confess I have not played it under the bedclothes yet! The old man must be long gone by now, but to me the picture of him and his manivelle is still as vivid as ever in my mind conjuring up an image of a gentler age long since gone. That little box is just as valuable in my eyes as a magnificent overture box and equally as desirable. I hope that whoever gets this little box in the future will know the story that goes with it and will continue to treasure it in the way it should be. Yes, and to the right person two pounds will still be enough. By the way! I did buy the Scottish air box, but that is another story.

Arthur Cunliffe

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

**If you haven't paid
yours, it is overdue!**

**Please contact
the Subscriptions
Secretary/Treasurer,
Richard Kerridge,
details on the Officers'
panel on Page 131 of
this issue.**

For now I am going to deal with a few other computer programs which you might find interesting.

Piano Roll Database – is available through the American web site www.pianorollstuff.com at a cost of \$29.95 plus postage, about \$4, i.e. around £17 to the UK, which is not much in software terms.

This is a very comprehensive database for cataloguing your piano rolls, and could probably be used for other music rolls too. The “General Info” screen of the database stores the standard information such as Title, Composer, Performer, Roll number, Brand, Location (where you keep the roll), etc., a total of over 17 pieces of information, plus space for notes, all shown on one page for the selected roll.

The second screen is “Extended Info” which is mostly about the condition of the roll, its tab, leader, box, roll flanges, etc., plus Original Price, date purchased and price paid. (Continued on page 146...)

A Workable Musical Seal by Luuk Goldhoorn

After Favre's invention of the tuned steel tooth it took about six years before production of musical mechanisms started. Even when it was started, the musical work was of a different construction to that which Favre showed at the 'Société des Arts'. In the report it is clearly stated that he had made a musical work, playing two melodies and built into a snuff box of normal size. Such items were not produced before 1810.

Leschot, a watchmaker and goldsmith, successor of the late Jaquet Droz, was the first man who made a 'carillon without bells and hammers', based on Favre's principle but he miniaturised the prototype by using the outside of the spring barrel as the cylinder in which the pins were placed. He put these works in rings and in 1802 they were brought on the market as a novelty. Three years later, by 1805, these objects were already totally out of fashion.

But the idea of having music in something had taken root, and so there were successors. Watches, pendants and other objets de virtue followed. All these were made by goldsmiths and therefore the housing was in gold. Only musical watches are sometimes made in silver cases, but those were exceptions.

Snuff boxes were added to the program from about 1810 onwards and watch keys came into fashion around 1820. Why so late? Maybe to house the last barillet movements which were still in stock?

Between those years, 1810 and 1820, in about 1815, the musical seal was added to the assortment. This novelty sold quite well judging by the number of items that are still in existence. They also were made of gold and mostly decorated with precious stones.



Nine out of ten have an oval form, but rectangular examples with canted corners were also made. Inside is a musical work of the barillet type, mostly with not over 9 teeth. In later ones one can find two stacks of combs, which brought the number of teeth up to 12. To some of these 'objets de virtue' an automaton was added, often an erotic one.

The difference between all these items and the seal is that the seal could not be used as a seal. It was far too delicate. When you have such a musical seal in your

hands, or better between your fingers, you'll be aware of the fragile construction. The bottom is plain but so thin that an intaglio is impossible. So, realising that using a seal needs some pressure and some heat, it is hardly believable that musical seals that could be used were ever made.

But exception proves the rule: Not long ago in a French auction two seals with initials engraved in the bottom plate were offered for sale. So, at last, seals which could be used as seals? Inspection of the items however showed that the



Fig 2. A barrillet movement, showing the pinned mainspring barrel (right) and the comb, bottom left, seen on edge.

engraved initials were not in mirror writing, and so the seals still were not intended to be used. The final conclusion should therefore be that a musical seal was not a seal at all. Just a novelty that was shaped in the form of a seal. But is it?

Look at the following picture (Fig 3). This musical seal is not made of gold, but from a metal, most probably brass. It also does not have the delicate form of the gold musical seals. There is a big difference in weight: A gold seal weights about 25 grams, this one about 50% more. It is far more robust, in other words: it can be used. And not only can be, most probably has been used. In the bottom plate (Fig 4) is an intaglio: a deer in lying position and the motto 'sinceritas'. In figure 2 the musical work is shown: a barillet with 8 teeth, normal for these types of novelties.



Fig 3. Intaglio musical seal.



Fig 4. Engraved base of the workable seal with intaglio heraldic crest.

21st. Century Mechanical Music

Continued from page 144

This page also allows notes whether you have any recording of the roll in audio (.wav), MIDI, or MP3 formats. The Sort/Display page provides the ability to sort the whole database and display required information of selected rolls at the top of the screen. The Record page allows you to make live recordings of rolls and save them on your computer – just plug in a microphone and the database does the rest (I think – not yet tried). All pages give you access to the facility to play back any recordings you have made, and to print out lists according to the parameters on the Sort/Display screen.

Obviously the user has to input all the information to start with, but once that is done this program is a very good tool for managing your roll collection – a lot more flexible and easier to use than an ordinary “spreadsheet”.

Piano Roll Label Maker – is also available from www.pianorollstuff.com at a cost of \$49.95 plus postage of \$4, around £28 to the UK.

Many original piano roll boxes have missing or badly damaged labels, and this program helps to deal with that. It contains over 1000 label templates, including at least some Orchestrelle labels. Having chosen the label you want (they are displayed on screen in alphabetical order), you then type in the relevant title, composer, number, etc. for your roll. You can edit the text size and font to get the right match, and the background colours, the result being displayed on screen. When it comes to printing the labels, you can store up several to print together, print single labels, or sheets of the same label. There are also options to print leader repair templates for repairing the roll leader and for Box end reinforcers. If you have roll labels not included in the software, you can add a scanned picture as a new template.

I haven't used either of these programs “in anger” yet, but first impressions indicate they are easy to use, and very comprehensive. They both come with typed user booklets explaining their use. I know of no other similar programs.

Music Box 15 – Available by download from www.henstoothdiscs.com at a cost of \$15 (about £8).

This is a bit of Mechanical Music Fun, being a “virtual” disc musical box. When you start the program you see a room with a disc box, a cabinet and a stack of discs. By using the computer mouse and clicking on the right part, you can open the box, lift the disc bar, move a disc to the machine, etc. and play the tune. The sound is a simulated musical box, and although not perfect, it gives a reasonable sound, depending on your computer, of course. When the tune plays, an image of a disc rotates, and the hole pattern actually matches the tune! One shortcoming is that it has no autostop – it will continue playing until you stop it. The program comes with a number of tunes already available, but will, in fact, play any MIDI file. Very entertaining.

Chromatia Tuner – Available by download from www.fmjsoft.com at a cost of \$19.95, (about £11). (Shareware trial version available).

This is a computer based musical tuner. You will need a reasonably fast computer, and a good microphone. The screen display is in the form of an analogue meter with a moving pointer, just like a conventional electronic tuner, plus several buttons for controlling how the tuner operates. You can set the master frequency (usually based on A4) to practically any frequency, and also calibrate it against a reference source.

There are over 30 built-in temperaments and scales, and you can also add your own custom ones, and add octave stretching.

(concluded on Page 149...)

The Saleroom Scene Past and Present

by Laurence Fisher

The editorial 'From the Editor's Desk' (The Music Box, Vol. 23/3, autumn 2007) covered in part the feelings and disappointments of those who had been loyal clients of the London salerooms (principally Sotheby's and Christie's) for the last twenty-odd years. In this article I would like to give some insight into the current situation, particularly with regard to the loss of mechanical music auctions in London.

In the good old days of five or six sales per year at Christie's, much of the stock was coming in over the counter with perhaps as much as 30% arriving automatically as part of larger consignments. In addition there were many enquiries by telephone, which sometimes seemed to ring even when off the hook, and letters which filled an in-tray in under a week. A sale was almost constructed as quickly as it was later sold. That said, the specialist or specialists in charge then did have to travel long distances at weird hours of the day to secure the rarer pieces.

Coming to the history of the later sales from 2004, I had to source many of the better and rarer examples by running all over the place. I made many trips to remote areas, plus various international visits, to bring back the high-draw items. Knowing that since the year 2000 things had been a little slower, someone had to make up for this by much travelling and 'personal contact' business-getting. It is apparent that a sale could no longer have happened almost automatically with items arriving of their own accord as they had done in the past. It can therefore be demonstrated that those older days of the 1980s and 1990s are well and truly over.

Another point here is that

Christie's used to, and still does, operate an 'internal-competitor' business environment, in that items consigned to a certain, say, regional saleroom are stored there for sale if possible at that same saleroom, rather than consigned to a central pool. In order to consign items centrally that would have a positive bearing on the outcome of the total value of the sale, inevitably there would be a negative effect on the consigning room's results: there would have been a paltry cache of items that might well have changed the management's mind and placed the regional sale back into a mixed-title category. I had this in the back of my mind quite a few times and this thought only prompted me to get more and more items for London.

It did, however, come to the point where the management even wanted me to start the sale at 10.00 a.m., which would have been very inconvenient for those wanting to view before they bought on sale day. "10.00 a.m.? Over my dead body," I exclaimed! I felt that I cared more for the subject than the money, but to be seen to do so, I had to plot sales with certain levels - which worked. I treated the items for sale at Christie's like they were my own; being protective, careful and above all open to receive their musical qualities. I would play the ones that I liked again and again to familiarise myself with their sound - after all, is it not the sound of a musical box which eventually denotes its value?

Despite this down-turn in supply of items to sell, the year-on-year figures for turnover in mechanical music over the past thirty years show that the values increased by a substantial amount towards the end. Since the unsettling period of the 1999-2001 market crash many collectors realised they

might never get their money back, leaving their boxes sitting in the dark, waiting to be sold when the time is right. Another recession might be imminent but there is still an 'off the boil' selection that should appeal to today's collectors, which happens to be the £200-800 bracket (key-wind boxes for instance). These appear often and make perfect additions to most collections.

Sotheby's really came out of the fold nearly eight years ago, when they decided to raise the minimum lot benchmark by a considerable tug. They also lost many decent, hardworking and knowledgeable specialists and other members of staff through their change in business direction by aiming at just the top end of the market. This made any sort of gain from holding specialist, mid-high range auctions unfeasible. Take a look in their recent catalogues, which have "mechanical music" as part of the sale title, lumped in with clocks, wrist watches etc., and you will be confronted with less than ten lots on average. The boxes are often nice, but the choice is rather disappointing.

Now back to Christie's.

When I took over as specialist head when Nick Hawkins left for Skinner's in October 2004, I was confronted with a department that was blended in with toys, dolls, doll's houses and so forth, twice a year. Thinking that, as tradition often guided people's expectations, this was their usual practice to lump these subjects together, I pondered the idea of making mechanical music a stand-alone catalogue once again - just as Christopher Proudfoot had done some years before. I thought it was worth a try - to make this exciting once more, the items to stand out

proudly and separately for those who were not necessarily aware of their importance and to take my part in its success. Above all, I aimed to make it just as interesting to the newcomer as it was to the established 'punter'.

After a rather long and indeed heated meeting with the general manager at South Kensington, I was given the go-ahead to make the first sale. In 31st May 2005 I wrote a single-title catalogue in the six months I was given to complete this exercise. Early signs were good, with a total of 304 lots. Moving on, the next sale and the one after saw the appearance of more unusual boxes and earlier examples but this was not without the use of my legs carrying me around the country trying to grab suitable entries in time for the printers. However, sales were now happening less frequently.

An auction is a very complicated affair. Very briefly; when found, an item has to be catalogued, researched, valued by way of a guide, the vendor has to agree an appropriate reserve, the room-layout has to be designed with a security block-out for the smaller 'cabinet-friendly' pieces, the condition reports to be sent to clients all over the world, the meeting of those who come to the viewing, the stress of the sale and the tidy up afterwards with cheques for the right amounts to be mailed and bank transfers undertaken. Multiply this list by the number of lots in the sale and you probably get an insight into how six months can suddenly vanish into thin air.

I really did not mind the actions behind getting a sale together, as this comes with the job. It had to be done and I liked the challenge. 2006 was a wonderful year - three world records were realised and, due to the quality of several rather nice musical boxes, singing birds and 'items of virtue', the total turnover of the 562 lots

offered that year was £998,000. I would refrain from agreeing with the editor's comments that in all cases, a decline in item quality had happened. The choice of finer, earlier and more beautiful items obviously had a good bearing on the money raised but as you can see from the catalogues, I tried very hard to include a few un-restored, unspoiled boxes, which had reasonable estimates aimed at those who could work on it in the shed! A sale, which included a fun pile of firewood for £200 and a gold enamel and pearl-set perfume sprayer automaton pistol for £300,000, is, I hope, a demonstration of the choice that I wanted to deliver as often as possible; something for all tastes, all pockets at all times.

Then came one eventful morning in April.

In a meeting aimed at general departmental information from specialists, which were held once a month, we had a visit from a member of the senior board. All fourteen of us from the Collectables department initially thought that it was a good idea for the management to take a more active role in specialist support but we knew we were in trouble when she opened her mouth. Redundancy for all, close departments now, no going back, end of story. It was ruthless and savage.

It was so sad to think that this could come to an end so suddenly when all of us managing collectables for Christies cared so much about what we did and how we did it. All that knowledge, the loss of loyal clients and the money they spent over the years, the many happy memories of meeting with friends in one location, all gone and never to be repeated. The last ever Mechanical Music sale held at Christie's, took place at 2 p.m. on 31st May 2007.

Stress got the better of me. Just

before this final sale, I had a mild heart attack. It really hurt in more ways than one. I now feel much better but it does concern me that it can happen to anyone, anywhere and at anytime. I am just off the medication, but still at times feel sore. Mechanical Music, for me during this unsettling time, made me feel better than the pills they plied me with in hospital.

Fortunately, Bonhams, for whom I now work, is now the only International fine art and antiques auction house to have a dedicated mechanical music department in the UK.

Now is this or is this not very depressing?

Have any of you picked up a copy of the Antiques Trade Gazette recently? It's well worth signing up to receive this excellent weekly newspaper. Take note of the letters on the back page over the course of the last four weeks (from 20th September backwards); there have been calls to get lawyers on to both Christie's and Sotheby's now that they have set their premium to 25% (they now take 47 ½% in total from both buyer and seller). That the possibility of litigation may creep into the auction world is neither here nor there; the only thing which all of us can be sure of is that Contemporary Art has now displaced fine antiques and relegated the specialist musical box market to the rear. This proves, does it not, that greed is truly in the eyes of those who know everything about figures, tables and pie charts and to whom the difference between a damper and an end-stone means nothing!

I was very excited to have been asked by Jon Baddeley of Bonhams, at the start of August, to head up the mechanical music department in London whilst working with the highly dedicated and well-respected team comprising of Mark Hannam and Alan Pratt for the sales in Knowle. Knowle is

one of the most effective, attractive and enjoyable of venues. As a provincial saleroom for mechanical music it offers good accessibility and a pleasant environment. Being pretty much in the centre of the country, it is easily reached by all. It does remind me in many ways of what Philips in Bayswater was like fifteen years ago. Those were the days! Bonhams will still use London Knightsbridge for the more 'bounding' pieces such as the two 4-air Grand-Format boxes that featured in the November 2007 sale.

I will try my very best to continue to serve you. If the MBSGB wants the auction market to remain and conditions to improve, I believe it has to recognise that a good opportunity at Christie's has been lost but a better opportunity at Bonhams is now available. I may not be the most active of members, especially of late, but I trust that with your support, we can all meet up regularly, like the good old days, at sales where I have written catalogues with realistic estimates offering a good selection of lots that you will love. At least with London and Knowle, everyone has a choice. The Bonhams Mechanical Music team, namely Mark, Alan and myself, are really very excited about the future. To be honest, can it possibly get any worse? Would you be one to stand aside to let it get worse?

Let's work on the success of mechanical music for the future today and leave the recent turmoil behind where it belongs. There is still much work to be done to broadcast our interests to those who may not even be aware of our work. The historical importance of the society and its bearing on one of the most niche subjects of music is an unique asset, which gives the mechanical music experience its flavour of trust and distinction - long may it continue with a greater element of approachability, commitment and youth inclusion.

Laurence Fisher is the Specialist Head of Mechanical Music at Bonhams, London. He is a member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain (No. 2906), The British Vintage Wireless Society and the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.

Just a note on realistic estimates, as Laurence has brought up the subject. We attended the Bonham's sale in November, and noted that quite a number of the higher-estimated items failed to reach their reserves. As one seasoned and regular buyer at the London rooms remarked to us afterwards, referring to an extremely large and rather ugly French musical table clock with matching side pieces, 'They should have let that go at £85,000 - it's a dog!' We understand the item did sell after the sale.

We should like to thank Messrs Bonham's for their regular advertising support which is more important to members now than ever - Ed.

21st. Century Mechanical Music *Continued from page 146*

The needle inertia and hold time can be changed, and the program will also show a spectrum of the sound received, and create a report of the tuning process. Whilst there are a lot of tuning programs available on the Internet, I have not found one as comprehensive as this, particularly for antique instruments like ours. Most programs only cater for guitars or pianos. I had problems with the previous version providing erratic readings, but the latest version is better, and compares well with my Korg OT-120 electronic tuner, although the Korg is more convenient to use, if less comprehensive.

That's it for now. Next time I will try and get away from computers and review a few modern mechanical musical instruments. If you have experience of any of the modern instruments, I would welcome your input.

New Members

We welcome the following new members who have joined us since the last journal was printed, we hope you will attend a local area group or one of the national weekend meetings.

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.

- 3001 Keith Hunt Devon
- 3002 Malcolm MacDonald
Shropshire
- 3003 Prof I.V. Jayson Manchester
- 3004 Sina Hildebrand Germany
- 3005 Bertand Reichen South Africa
- 3006 Zoran Nikacevic Yorkshire
- 3007 Nigel Wall Suffolk
- 3008 R.Tyrell-Price Essex
- 3009 D.W.Clutt & Mrs.G.Dexter.
Isle of Wight
- 3010 M.G.Langford Staffs
- 3011 Paul Butler Devon
- 3012 Dr.Christopher B.Williams
London
- 3013 Alan J.Cooke Lancashire
- 3014 G.F.Henderson Essex
- 3015 Matthew Hopkinson Herts.

To get the most out of your membership it is well worth joining one of the local area groups in Essex, Sussex or Worcestershire where other collectors and many instruments may be seen and heard and advice freely given.

The Sound of Music

Don Busby, Paul Bellamy

What is it that makes one musical box, be it a disc or cylinder type, sound different to another one? How is the piano forte effect produced in a piano forte musical box? The quality of sound produced by any musical box is affected by numerous factors and one can do no better than to read the work of HAV Bulleid with particular regard to tooth stiffness (See references 1 and 2).

Most people will have a general understanding of what the term 'stiffness' means but the mathematics are difficult to explain to a lay person. The actual loudness of a given tooth depends on the amount it is lifted by the pin at the point of release. The higher the lift the greater the energy imparted in flexing the tooth and the greater the resulting sound. Two teeth of the same pitch but different stiffness will produce a different loudness and the quality of that sound will be different. Bulleid not only discusses the factor of stiffness but, more importantly, deals with the term 'relative stiffness'. On page 7 of reference 1 he states, "It was soon established by the early makers that there was an optimum range of dimensions for good tooth performance, and equally that by small changes in dimensions teeth of the same pitch could be made of different stiffnesses and therefore of different loudness for a given lift".

The object of this article is to examine the mathematics behind the terms in the hope that some idea of the principles of tooth vibration will be better understood. In doing so, the non-mathematician will be asked to accept the result of some of the equations developed.

Relative Stiffness (RS) is a function of tooth thickness (T),

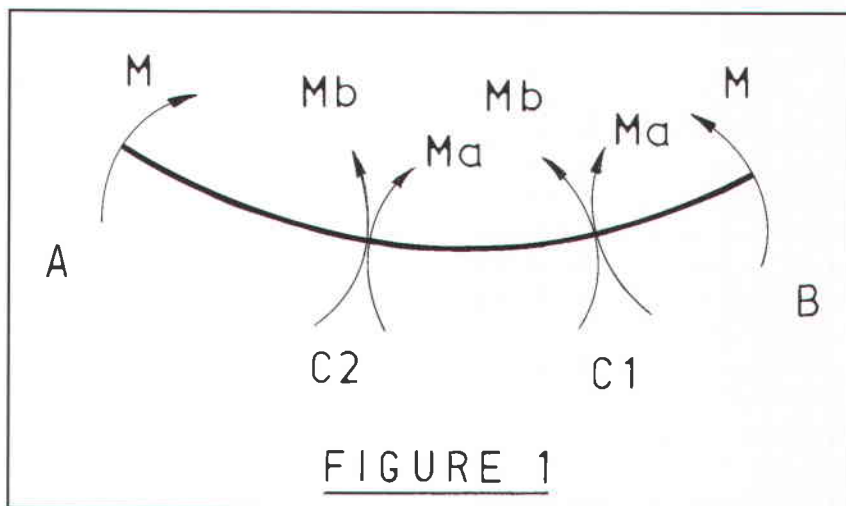


Figure 1: Forces acting on a deflected elastic beam

width (W) and length (L). Of course, width and thickness vary for most teeth along their lengths and the lengths of teeth vary along the length of the comb. This study seeks to set out the mechanical and mathematical principles involved in the theoretical relationship $RS = KWT^3/L$ (where K is a constant) and is an adaptation of reference 3. It was prompted by the fact that, although it seems fairly obvious that stiffness of a tooth will vary proportionately with width and inversely with length, its relationship with the cube of thickness is not obvious.

Consider a very thin elastic beam of uniform width, hence weightless for practical purposes, and imagine it held lightly at the ends between the thumb and finger of each hand. Thus, there are no forces acting upon it. Then imagine the person rotating both hands in opposite directions. The rotational forces applied will be opposite and equal because the beam has now taken up a stable curved shape, fig 1. We call these rotational forces 'couples' or bending moments. At any point along the beam, because the beam is static, the forces at that point must be in equilibrium; they must also be in equilibrium with the couples at A and B for each

portion of the beam either side of the point. The couples acting at a point C1 are therefore Ma and Mb as shown in fig 1, where Ma and Mb are themselves equal. The same premise holds true at all points, e.g. as shown at C2. Now imagine C1 and C2 being very close together. This small length and all other such small lengths of the beam are under identical stresses and are therefore similarly deformed.

Easy so far! Not quite because our beam, the comb tooth, is fixed at one end and free at the other. When the tip is lifted, a couple is still applied but not in the same way as it would be if our thumb and finger was trying to rotate the tip rather than just lifting it. Instead, the force applied by the pin lifting the tip applies a couple that varies from zero at the tip to a maximum at the root of the tooth. At the instant of maximum lift the tooth will have a different curvature to the beam described above. The top of the tooth is still compressed and the bottom stretched as before, but somewhere in between there is an imaginary line where it remains its original length. So, think about this line as similar to that very thin weightless beam of fig 1. It is called the 'neutral axis'.

When a material is compressed or stretched by an applied force and that force is suddenly removed, the energy imparted to the material is released and it tends to regain its original shape. The material is said to be elastic. Steel can be highly elastic particularly when hardened. Imagine a ball bearing dropped onto a hard surface; it tends to bounce very high but not quite to its original height because energy is lost through internal friction within the grain structure of the material. A piece of elastic rubber is not, in fact, very elastic in mathematical terms. A hardened tooth would break but when its hardness is tempered it acts as a spring. Thus, when the tooth is released, the potential energy within (due to the compressive forces at the top and tensile forces at the bottom) translates to energy of motion called kinetic energy. This causes the tooth to bend downwards until the forces are in balance once again, but now reversed at the lower limit of movement.

Of course, some energy has now been dissipated and the tooth does not go down as far as it was initially lifted. As there is nothing to restrain the tip, the tensile and compressive forces now act in reverse and the tip rises again but, due to further dissipation of energy within the tooth, not as far. That completes the first vibration cycle. The tooth continues this cycle of motion at a constant frequency but with ever decreasing amplitude. Amplitude at any time is related to the distance between the upper and lower limits of movement of its tip in its cycle. Hence we hear the sound of the tooth and the frequency of vibration is the measure of its pitch.

Now consider just a small arc of the tooth, seen from

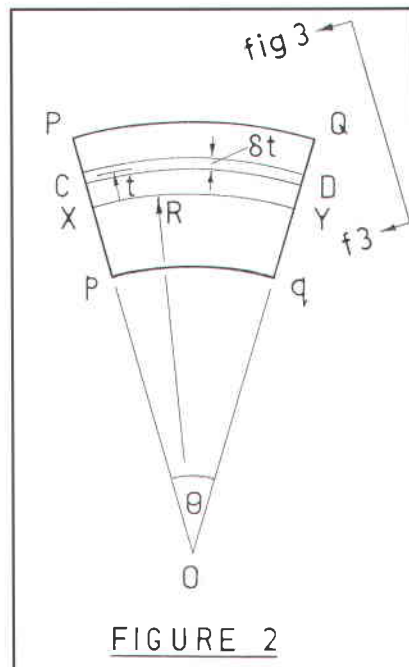


Figure 2: Side view of part of a deflected tooth (Pp to Qq)

the side, at any part of its motion. Fig 2 shows it after its release and just at the end of its first half cycle. The top part of the arc, PQ, which was in compression at the outset, is now in tension and the bottom, pq, has reversed from tension to compression. The neutral axis is where the length of the tooth has not changed; it is neither stretched nor compressed and is shown as XY and, for this tooth of uniform cross-section, is halfway between PQ and pq. The mid-thickness radius of curvature of the whole tooth is R.

Next, let us imagine we are looking along the length of the tooth at a cross-section at PCXp of fig 2. What we see is shown in fig 3. Imagine a very thin layer of the tooth, CC', parallel to and above the neutral axis, XX'. This is where we use a mathematical symbol δ to denote a measurement, which is very small. The thickness of CC' is only part of the tooth's total thickness T, so we shall call it δt and it is at a distance t from the neutral axis. The whole of CC' is, in this case, under tension but the mathematics will work whether in tension or compression. Let us consider the effect of forces on this thin layer of the tooth at CC', whose area is $W\delta t$. For simplicity we have made the assumption that width and thickness of the tooth are both constant throughout its length. Returning to fig 2, the length of layer CD was equal to that of XY when at rest but is now stretched to CD. The length XY is calculated as $R\theta$, where θ is the angle subtended by arc XY at the centre of curvature. CD is similarly calculated as $(R + t)\theta$ long.

The term 'strain' is the ratio of the increase in length divided by its original length. Thus the strain of the layer through CD is $(R + t)\theta$ minus $R\theta$ all divided by $R\theta$. This can be expanded to $R\theta + t\theta - R\theta$ all divided

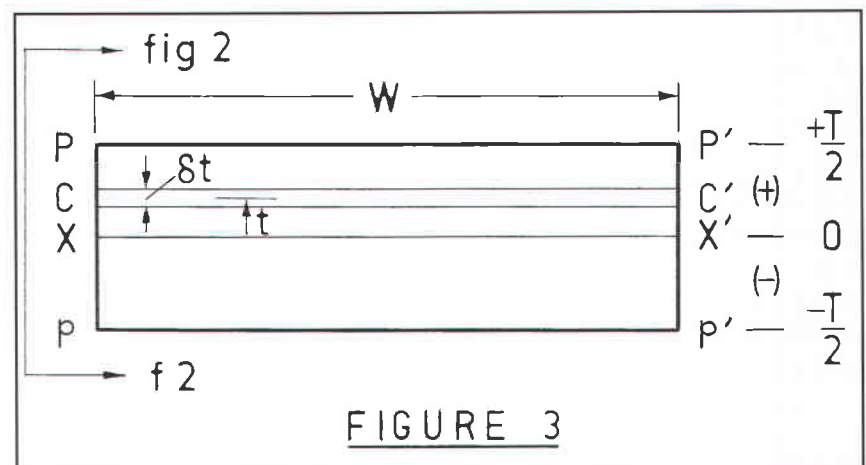


Figure 3: Section at Pp across width of tooth

by $R\theta$, which reduces to give: **Strain** = t/R . Of course, for a layer on the other side of the neutral axis the equation equally applies but, because it is in compression, the strain is said to be negative, i.e. $-t/R$.

A chap called Hooke first showed that tension in an elastic material is proportional to the extension produced. Another chap called Young said that this elastic property can be measured and gave it a term called Young's Modulus, denoted by the letter 'E' for elasticity. He measured it as stress divided by strain, i.e. **E = stress/strain**, in which stress is the force per unit area and strain is the increase in length per unit of length. Each material has its own modulus of elasticity but we can treat E as a constant in our calculations because of the uniformity of material in our comb and its teeth.

We shall now calculate the tension which has stretched layer CD. Since $E = \text{stress}/\text{strain}$, by transposition we get $\text{stress} = E \times \text{strain}$. Stress is the force per unit area which has produced such strain, so the tension necessary to stretch layer CD from its original length of XY is given by: **E x strain x cross-sectional area** of the layer. Substituting known parameters gives: Tension (in CD) = $E \times t/R \times W\delta t$, which on grouping constants becomes $\text{tension} = (EW/R).t\delta t$.

Now we return to the idea of a **bending moment** or **couple**. Just as we applied a bending moment to the ends of our beam, so there is a bending moment for each cross-section of the tooth about the neutral axis, see fig 3. For the bending moment of CC' about XX' it is the tension on CC' times its distance, t, from the neutral axis, i.e. $(EW/R).t^2\delta t$.

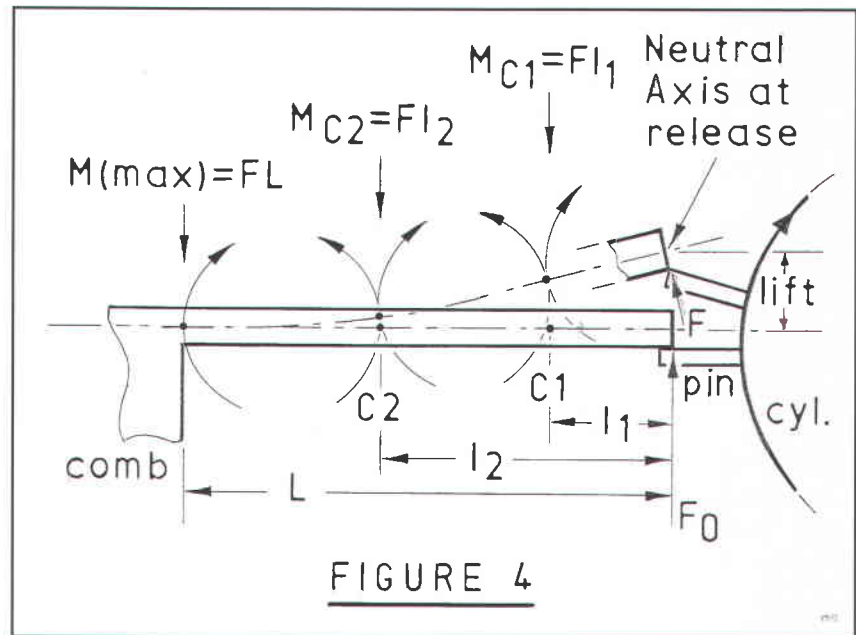


Figure 4: Length of tooth affects Relative Stiffness

The **total moment, M**, of the tooth at this point is the sum of the moments of each strip such as CC' across its whole thickness, T. Therefore M is the sum of $(EW/R).t^2\delta t$ for all strips. This is achieved by mathematical integration denoted by the symbol \int . Since we are considering a tooth of constant width and thickness our only variable is t and the other letters therefore represent constants. Our equation can therefore be written as $M = (EW/R).\int t^2\delta t$, the integration being carried out from below the neutral axis to above, over the full thickness of the tooth, i.e. from $-T/2$ to $+T/2$. A reader not versed in mathematics is asked to accept that the result of this integration is KWT^3 , where K is a constant equal to $E/12R$. Thus, the **bending moment is KWT^3** and light is now dawning on why it is the **cube** of thickness which affects stiffness. We have now derived an equation for the bending moment at a point along the length of the tooth, i.e. at Pp but, as our discussion in relation to fig 1 explained, the increasing distorting moment is carried along the full length of the tooth.

So where do we go with all this maths?

Consider our tooth of uniform width and thickness and of length L, seen from its side as shown in fig 4. **F is the force** exerted normal to the tooth by the cylinder pin. The maximum value of the couple M applied at the fixed end of a tooth = FL. It is equal to the bending moment derived above, i.e. $FL = KWT^3$. The force is therefore given by $F = KWT^3/L$. The units W, T and L are measured in millimetres. Finally, the force needed to lift the tooth a certain amount is a direct measure of its stiffness.

In order to compare this stiffness with that of any other tooth, we use the term **Relative Stiffness (RS)**. When calculated, the forces are small and the comparison of stiffness is a comparison of small numbers, e.g. 0.063 and 0.052. To ease comparison we substitute K by 10000, so allowing us to compare 630 with 520.

Finally, let us take a last look at width, thickness and length of a tooth, W, T and L. We can show that relative stiffness $RS =$

10000WT³/L. We can rewrite the equation in terms of its 'powers' (e.g. 2 x 2 x 2 = 2³ or 2 to the power of 3), i.e. 104WT³L-1. It is three dimensional in units of length. So, what measure has the greatest effect on stiffness? Is it length, width or thickness? There are five dimensions of length here, one a positive W, three are positive Ts and a negative L (because it is a dividing parameter), reducing to three positive units of length. The largest and therefore the most influential of these is T, the thickness of the tooth.

Consider the above discussion of 'dimensions' from another point of view. Since all teeth are made from material of similar quality and properties, RS is related to the distortion of material in a tooth, i.e. it is volume-related. It is not concerned with other units such as mass and time which do not enter into these considerations. RS is therefore a measure of the amount of metal being deflected.

In practice, few teeth are of uniform thickness and width and hence in stiffness. They tend to get thinner towards the tip (for unleaded teeth) and the width is often tapered towards the treble end of a comb. At the bass end, the length of the lead weight adds enormously to the stiffness, leaving only a short length not soldered rigidly to the tooth. Hence leads tend to get shorter as they progress away from the lowest pitched leaded tooth. Long slender teeth have a longer duration of vibration compared with short stiff ones.

In conclusion, however we analyze the mathematics of vibration, the music makers did it by trial and error, creating some fantastic sound qualities in the process. We get bright sounds and mellow ones, some of long

duration, others short, some loud others soft. In combination we get the interaction of one vibrating tooth with another to get sublime harmony. With teeth of different stiffness and same pitch we get forte piano. With teeth of the same pitch but different lift, we get another version of forte piano as found in those rare long-and-short-pin movements. We get the sound of music!

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Record Review

by Kevin McElhone

I have been collecting Aeolian Orchestrelle instruments and rolls for around twenty-five years now but I still get much pleasure from hearing a well restored instrument playing a selection of tunes, particularly when that includes some old favourites of mine but also some tunes I have never heard before. Recordings of Aeolian reed organs are rare with only one such complete recording having previously been issued - I know, I played the instrument for it.

Paul Morris has produced two recordings of his enormous model "F", one of which is the earlier 'Grand' 58 note rolls which emulate a single keyboard instrument and the second recording is the 116 note rolls which were specifically designed emulate a two-manual instrument to be played on the larger models of reed organ and also the pipe organs made by the Aeolian Company.

The trouble with listening to a recording like this is that I would like to buy the instrument! Fortunately my ceilings are only 7ft 9" high and the model "F" is around 8ft 6 inches tall so I cannot be 'tempted'... Just remember that an instrument like this cost many hundreds of pounds, the cost of several terraced houses when new.

The 58 note recording includes titles well known such as Ghosts, (well-liked by the Player Piano Group of the South-West at social meetings, particularly when the room lights are turned on/off by one member who wants to give a scary effect!) and Hands across the Sea by Sousa.

(Continued on Page 163)

Bonhams Mechanical Music Auction – 16th October 07

from Alan Pratt

This was the second mechanical music sale of the year at the Knowle, West Midlands, saleroom and it attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd.

An early item in the sale was an EMG gramophone with the 'trademark' papier mache horn. This excellent example with a dark oak case and an original 'Expert' soundbox made £2600. Bells-in-sight cylinder boxes were well represented in this sale, and a good example by Bremond with mandarin strikers, drum and castanette made a healthy £2350. (Fig 1) A similar box by Langdorf et Fils was not far behind at £1975.

There was excellent value to be found among the mid-priced boxes with instruments by, among others, PVF, Allibert and Ducommun Girod realising between £250 and £950. Two Nicole Frères boxes, both with serial numbers in the 33000 series, provoked some active bidding with the fortepiano (Lot 143) making £2700 (Fig 2) and the single comb (Lot 144) £1975.

An early oval clock base with an un-named movement playing six airs on eighty-six teeth in forty-three groups of two all in a walnut case decorated with some fine marquetry depicting swans and fauna was good value at £540.

Among the disc playing boxes, a Polyphon Style 42D playing 11" discs on duplex combs, together with nineteen discs, made £1900. A coin-operated style 104 by the same maker, with ten 19 5/8" was in demand at £3350. (Fig 3) Two Style 45 boxes also by Polyphon offered good value with the ebonised case



Fig 1. Bremond Bell Box



Fig 3. Polyphon

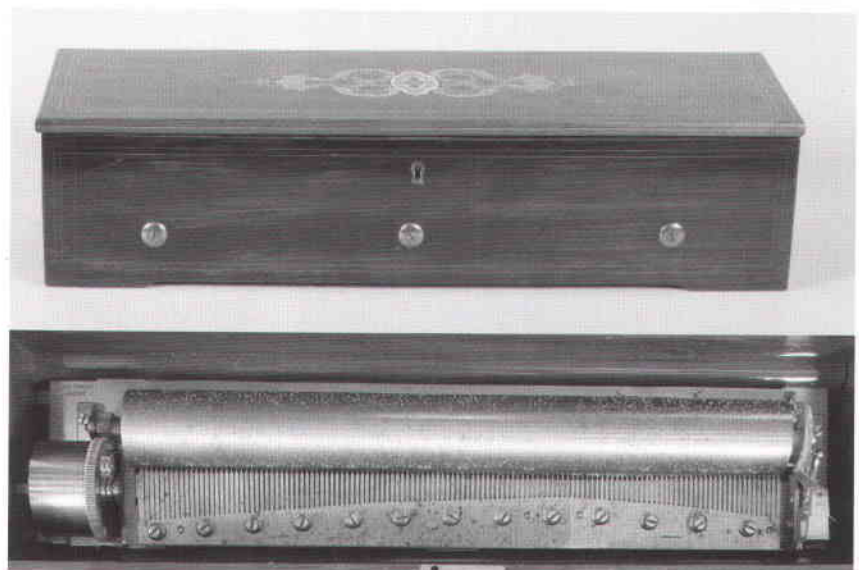


Fig 2. Nicole Freres Forte-Piano box

model going for £950, whilst the walnut cased one realised £1600. A coin-operated Brittonia by B.H.Abrahams together with thirty-five 17 1/4" discs made £2280.

The little Serinette organs are always in demand when they come up for sale, and a very clean example of the Miracourt-made instrument made £580. (Fig 4) A very attractive barrel piano by Imhof and Muckle with four excellent barrels, complete with tunesheets, realised £1900.

At the other end of the size range, a Bontems singing bird housed in a fine tortoiseshell case, and complete with mahogany

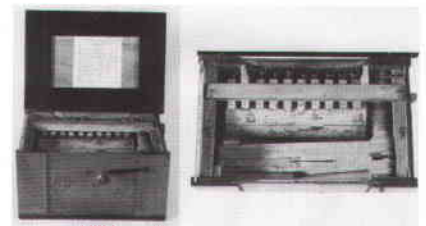


Fig 4. Serinette Organ

travelling case, made £1730. (Fig 5)

The next Mechanical Music sale at Knowle will be on Tuesday 13th May 2008. To discuss entries for this sale contact Mark Hannam on 01564 6151 or email mark.hannam@bonhams.com.

All the prices given in this report included the Buyers Premium.

Musical Box Oddments No. 116

by Anthony Bulleid



Fig. 1. Paillard 106,781, Columbia type with drum and bells and list of all-German composers with several 1890 tunes, latest no. 3, Der Obersteiger (master miner), 1894.

Paillard Dating Chart

Thanks to our Registrar for the tune sheet in Fig. 1, which is in the series at both 339 and 358 (and should soon be in our third Supplement, reaching up to no. 400). Here it is on C. Paillard serial 106781 which was bought at the Leipzig 1894 Exhibition.

It is obviously one of a selection of boxes provided by Paillard for sale during that Exhibition, all with their tune list headings and some of the tune titles translated into German. This one was handled by Heinrich Zimmermann whose sticker overlaps the tune sheet and mentions his St. Petersburg and Moscow offices.

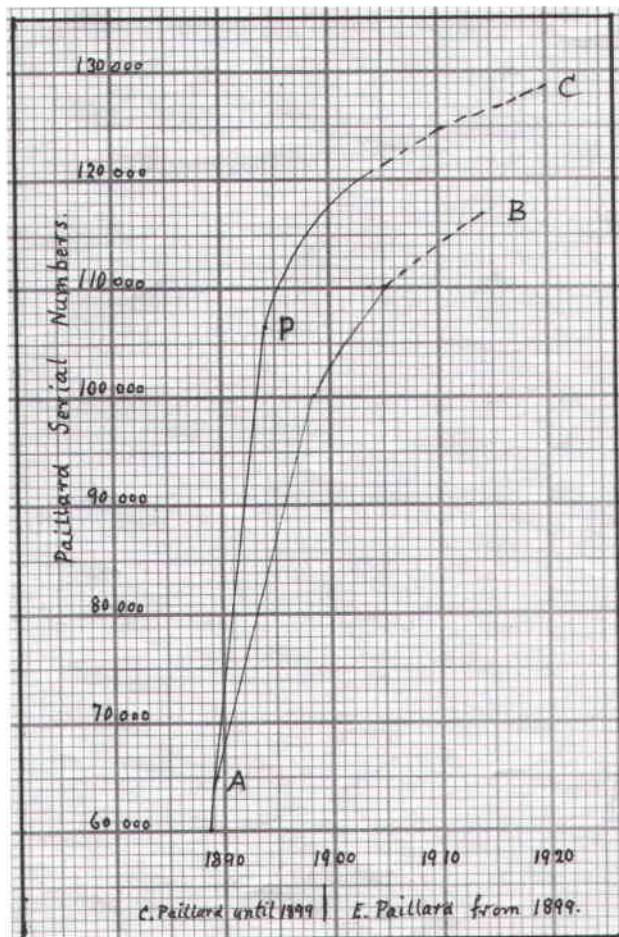


Fig. 2. Revised upper part of Chart 12. AB is the existing curve, which should be replaced by new curve AC. Point P is for serial 106,781 made in 1894. The dotted ending is uncertain, but Paillard stopped production of musical boxes in 1920.

The number of airs and cylinder length in the top cartouche are given as “8 arien 12 Zoll” for the 8 airs 12 Pouces. Just below, COLUMBIA is stamped in purple. Next, written in blue “In sight Drum & Bells Zither.” Finally, smaller writing in red “Playing time 8-10 minutes”

A German visitor bought serial 106781 at the Exhibition and sent it to England as a wedding present. It is now in the Brentford Museum. And it makes the first really reliable fix for those later Paillard boxes in Dating Chart 12. I still lack the data to improve the earlier part of Chart 12, but a good revision after serial 60,000 is in Fig. 2.

Easy Puzzle Picture for Experts.

How can an expert tell, after a good look at Fig.3, that it shows a key-wind musical box, at the end of a tune, that was made by L'Épée in France about 1856?

I have named components in the Fig. 3 caption, and if you follow them from left to right of Fig. 3, the clues will open up...

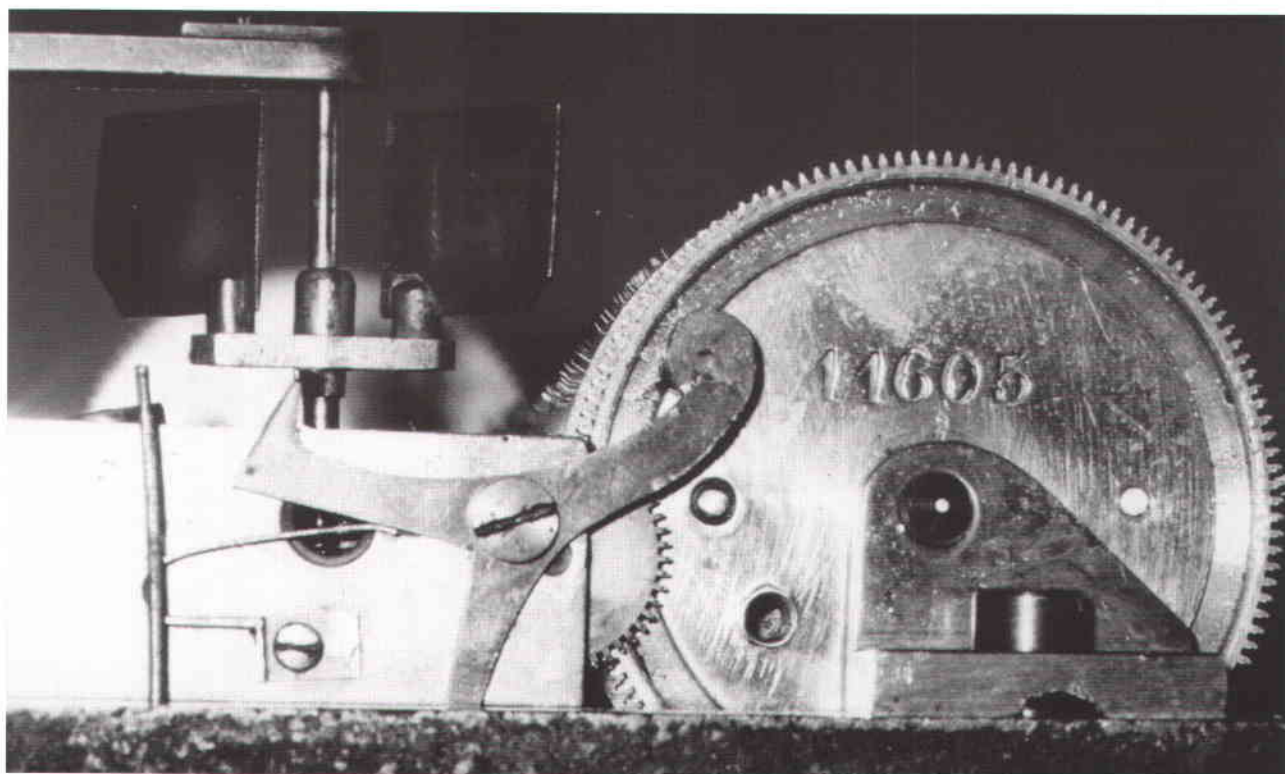


Fig. 3. A musical box governor and great wheel. From left to right, - the upright pin of the instant stop; the French type of clock spring holding up the stop arm; the catch of the stop arm holding the stop tail of the governor; the lever of the stop arm reaching through a slot in the bedplate; the stop pin of the stop arm in the slot on its circular track round the great wheel; serial 11605 stamped on the great wheel.

The instant stop and the stop arm can only be worked by levers under the bedplate, so the box must be key-wind. The French type of spring was used only by L'Epée, who must be the maker. Their dating chart shows serial 11605 was made in 1856. Quite easy, really.

Tune sheet on Interchangeable.

Makers of rechange cylinder boxes always listed all the tunes on a tune sheet. That was no good on interchangeable boxes with extra cylinders always available, so they

were generally supplied with one tune sheet per cylinder. So something had to be provided for the lid, and a typical example by Paillard is in Fig. 4.

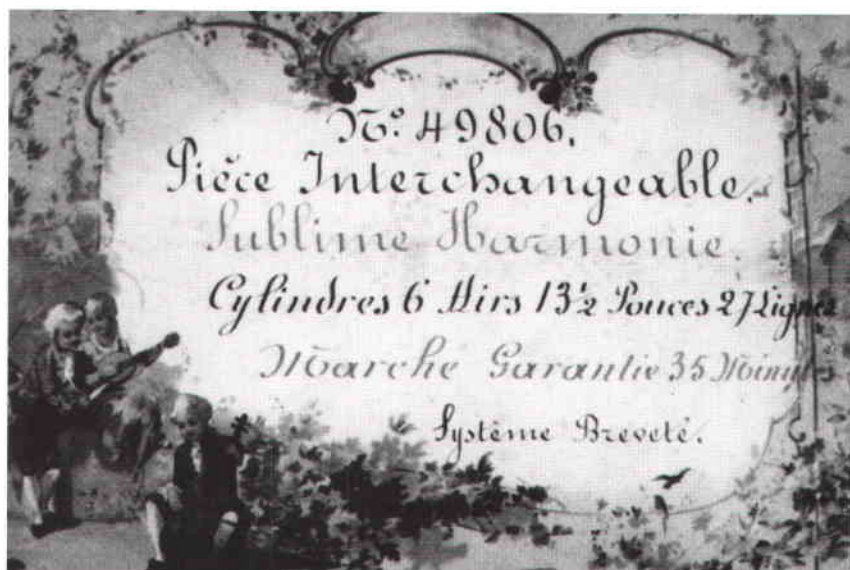


Fig. 4. Most of the tune sheet on the lid of Paillard 49804 (like Fig. 1, and no. 339 in our series). It gives the tune list heading, the cylinder data, 35 minutes "long run" and a reminder that the interchangeable system is patented.



Fig. 5. The launching 1876 trade card of Henry Gautschi - now noted for the long and narrow stickers often quite carefully applied to tune sheets.

A Famous Agent.

At last a trade card of Henry Gautschi & Sons has turned up. One side shows a large Orchestral box with their name inside the lid, and states "Manufacturers and Importers". The other side shows their impressive premises at 1030 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, established 1876; here reproduced in Fig. 5.

H. Gautschi came from Ste. Croix but his links with the musical box makers have not so far been reported, and his name does not appear in the Piguet book. However he must have had plenty of know-how, because he obviously prospered at Philadelphia. Also, his 1876 starting date shows that he must have handled repairs and trade-ins. For instance, the Paillard box with tune sheet shown at no. 22 was first sold in 1845, so it was quite second-hand when it got its Gautschi sticker.

Must do Better.

Wide printer's border tune sheets, sometimes with printed A B, like no. 74, have long been credited to Alliez & Berguer as agents for cartel boxes. Now the remains of an automaton have turned up, consisting only of the petite musique with its driving pulley as seen in Fig. 6. In case anyone still has the spelling worries so daunting in the 1980s, here is a close-up of the names and



Fig. 6. Typical *petite musique* serial 480, with drive as often found in rocking ship automata.

locality, in Fig. 7.

During the last thirty years, these A & B cartel boxes of the 1850 to 1865 period have turned up fairly regularly. And so have equally distinctive boxes by a contemporary Geneva agent, Henriot. But we do not yet know who made any of them. The only recorded clue is that one was stamped with a maker's name: Badel of Geneva, -about whom nothing is apparently known except this one box and his inclusion by Chapuis as a maker.

The only other possible clue hinges round the question so often not answered - that is, which tune is pinned on the cylinder track lines? Well, certainly several by both these agents are pinned with tune one on the lines. That

was very rare on Geneva boxes but it was the common standard throughout the Ste. Croix and L'Auberson region. And, I recall, we never seem to hear about boxes made by significant Ste. Croix makers like Louis Jaques and the Jaccards.

However, there are five A & B boxes on the Register, serial numbers 788 to 9209. And, there are 33 Henriots, serial numbers 10463 to 14818, quite regular except for a gap between 12802 and 14555. Most have the small embossed tune sheet, and serial number stamped upwards at the spring end of the bedplate, - which does really seem more like a maker than an agent!

Design changes.

I expect there were anxious messages flying between musical box makers and their blank suppliers when thin spring steel became available. These springs could be mounted on the cylinder arbor to drive the cylinder one turn for every turn they were wound up. That of course immediately suggested crank winding, but an interim design preserved lever winding by adding gears to the lever, effectively doubling its stroke. So one (complete) pull of the lever gave one tune. To hold



Fig. 7. Bedplate stamp of 3" cylinder serial 480, with agent's spelling confirmed. Figs. 6 and 7 thanks to Robin Biggins.

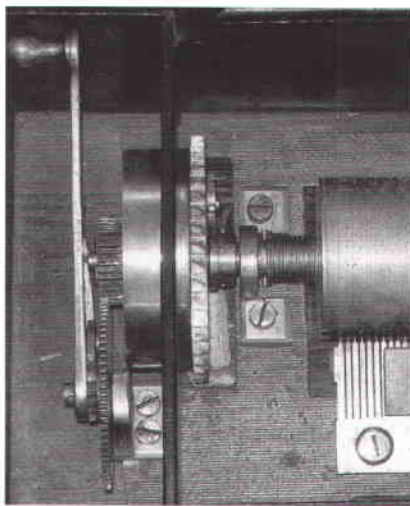


Fig. 8. An early adaptation of light spring drive, with conventional cylinder bearings, geared winding lever, and large ratchet on the spring case. Serial 8782, mandoline, 11" cylinder 104 teeth. Photo thanks to Frank McArthur.

the wound-up spring the spring case gear was altered to ratchet teeth and held by a click under the bedplate, see Fig. 8. This is a good mandolin box, with 11" (28 cm) cylinder playing six unusual airs, the only one I recognised being the last or finale, Home sweet home. Sorry, maker not known, - it has an agent's tune sheet like no. 289.

Comb tooth performance.

The wide availability of digital measuring and recording has now made it comparatively easy to record exactly what happens when the tooth of a comb is lifted and suddenly released. It must be done with properly anchored comb and the tooth lifted slowly (not plucked) and released cleanly from a sharp edge. A suitably positioned miniature mike should be used and there must be no external noise.

Then with co-operative software you can obtain a detailed view of the frequency (in cycles per second, the Hz values) and also the sound intensity (in decibels) {the decibel, one tenth of a bel,

is a ratio of intensities and is logarithmic in character. -3 dB represents a reduction of power (intensity) to 1/2 of the original power. -6 dB represents a reduction of power to 1/4, etc - Ed} and the duration of the sound (in hundredths of a second). You get these three factors for every sound emitted by the tooth (and of course any other sound the mike picks up!) and the record can be made from several cycles of the sound.

It is in fact a snap shot, but the software allows you to extract and magnify most of the details and, for example, it will provide the rather distorted sine wave of the prominent or fundamental note as shown in Fig. 9.

That is easily seen, but there are complications in extracting clear data from prints like Fig. 10 which I will try to elucidate as follows....

(1) The vertical scale, 12 decibels per inch, is based on an artificial zero so they are shown as negatives, the volume decreasing with increasing negatives.

(2) The horizontal scale of frequencies, cycles per second, is logarithmic so as to cover high frequencies. Enough frequencies are numbered, to indicate the scales.

(3) The frequencies and volumes shown are summarized from (at choice) at least twelve cycles.

All this can be seen in Fig. 10. The fundamental note at 603Hz and harmonics at 1206Hz and at 1809Hz are clearly shown. They are an accurate enlargement of those tiny irregularities you can see in the distorted sine wave in Fig. 9.

So I am making a fairly calm U-turn and agreeing that the sound of the fundamental note

can be altered by the presence of harmonics. While disagreeing with the mathematicians who say these harmonics are inaudible, I concede that musical box teeth are not, strictly, simple cantilevered steel bars.

Applying this rather complex technique will answer most of the current queries about combs and their tuning and their behaviour when paired. Very likely it will also show any difference in effect when teeth of the same pitch are

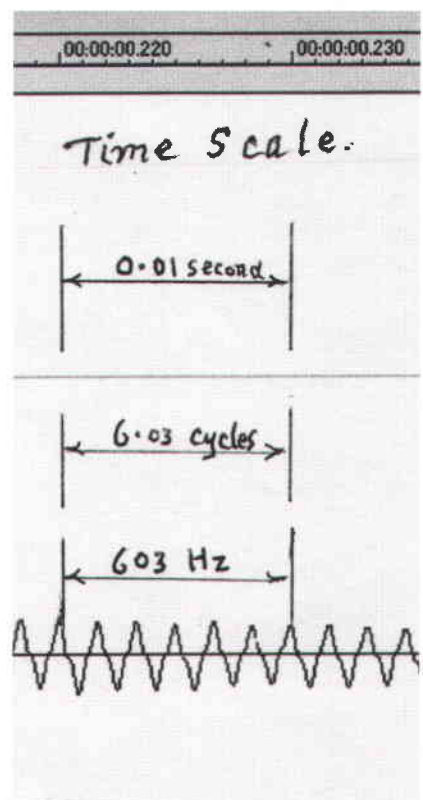
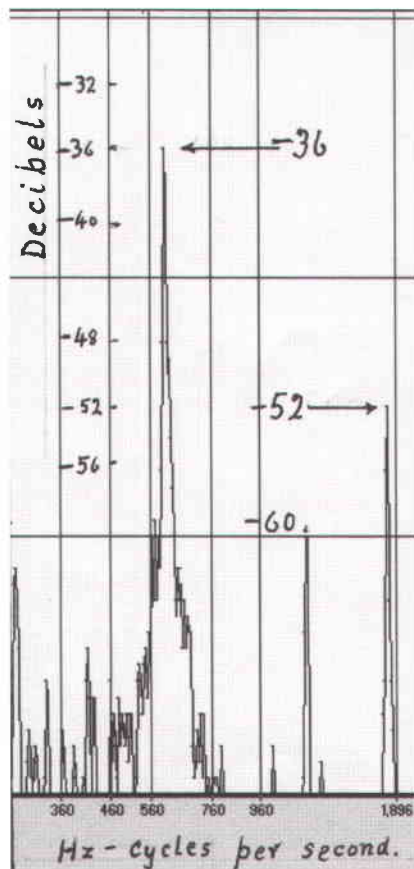


Fig. 9. Waveform of the sound recorded, showing distortions due to the "extras."

together or in separate combs. And it will allow accurately measured slight differences in pitch to be applied to sublime harmonic experiments. But all this and others will depend on a rigorous control of the ideal mike placing and the ideal mounting of combs and correct playing of teeth... and... a wise choice of the huge array of data and presentation offered by the receiving computer.



" Fig. 10. This is a spectral analysis of the frequencies recorded in Fig. 9, and shows the fundamental note, 603Hz and its peak volume, -36 decibels. Also harmonics of frequency about 1810 Hz volume -52 decibels and 1206 Hz volume about -60 decibels. Figs. 9 to 14, thanks to Rod Little.

Making a start.

I made a small start by recording four teeth in the two combs of a typical six-air Sublime Harmonic box by S. Troll, serial 5551 made in 1878 or 79, the early years of the Sublime Harmonic invention. I recorded the 440Hz and the 880Hz teeth on the 51-tooth bass end comb and on the 50-tooth treble end comb.

The results are shown in Figs. 11 to 14. Not surprisingly, they are generally similar to Fig. 10. But the overtones vary considerably. Obviously many more such tests are needed and on a wide variety of combs. The computer can provide extra detail.

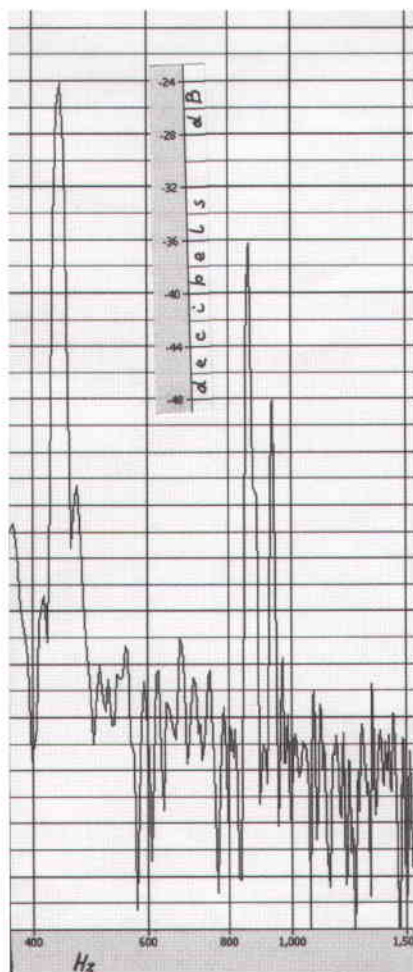


Fig. 11. 440Hz tooth, bass comb. Peak volume -24dB at 442Hz. Next loudest -36dB at 884Hz.

I am unable to carry on this interesting research, and hope others will be inspired to do it. There are plenty of suitable microphones with link to a computer, and the software seems to be generally available, - from Sony's "Sound Forge" for example.

Fig. 13. 880Hz tooth, bass comb. Peak volume -22dB at 883Hz. Next loudest -28dB at about 2100Hz. The third loudest at -38 dB has frequency probably $2 \times 883 = 1766\text{Hz}$.

This is a very fine and interesting piece of work on Anthony's part, from which all sorts of conclusions may be drawn. Comparing Fig 12 with Fig 11 and Fig 14 with fig 13, it is apparent that the treble comb is richer in odd harmonics than the bass comb is. From this analysis one would expect the treble comb

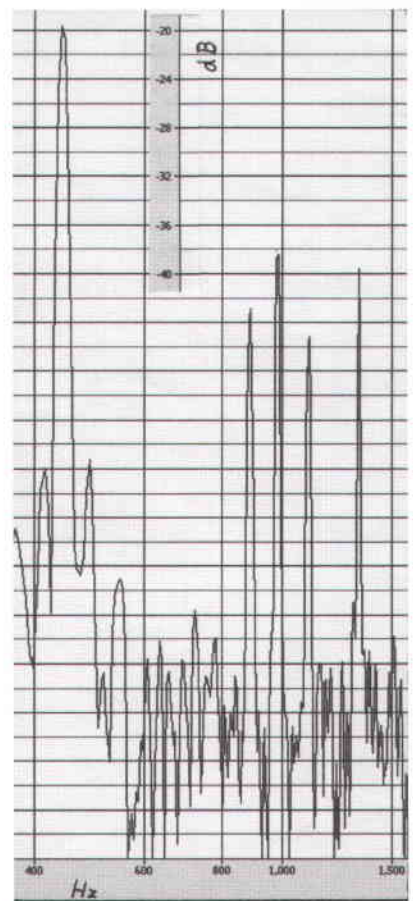
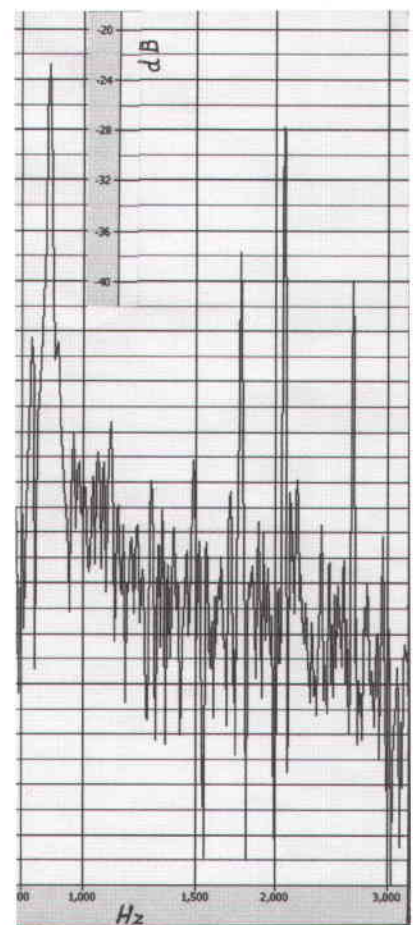


Fig. 12. 440Hz tooth, treble comb. Peak volume -19dB at 442Hz. Next loudest -38dB at 1000 Hz



News from Other Societies from John Farmer

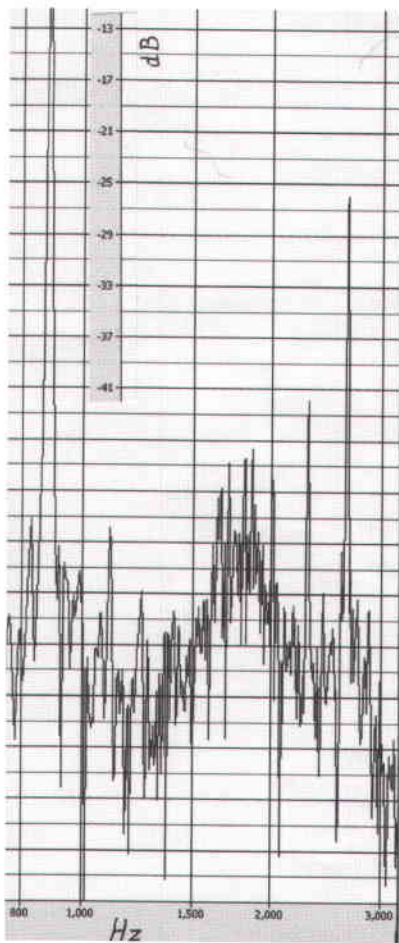


Fig. 14. 880Hz tooth, treble comb.
Peak volume -10 dB at 883Hz Next
loudest -26dB at 2649Hz

to have a 'brighter' tone than the bass one. The presence of spurious tones (e.g. the one at 1000 Hz in Fig 12) confirm Anthony's remark that musical box teeth are not simple cantilevered steel bars. They are, in effect, mechanical resonators. The intended mode of vibration is of course in a vertical plane, but they are capable of, and sometimes willfully do, vibrate in other planes too. They can vibrate sideways as well as vertically, a tendency that the comb tuner (and repairer these days) has to try to prevent. Torsional vibration is also possible. All these unwanted modes introduce spurious responses that are not harmonically related to the intended fundamental, resulting sometimes in rather nasty tonal effects! The graphs shown here illustrate the brilliance of the original tuners and voicers working back in the 1870s without the aid of electronics. - Ed

Het Pierement – January, 2008 (by Peter Whitehead)

Belgium now has its own association for those interested on mechanical music, a first-ever. On 22nd September last, MechaMusica had its inaugural meeting, at which Johnny Claes was elected chairman by the 26 persons present. The aim is to propagate documentation, displays, publicity and advice, with regard to automatic musical instruments. There are voting members and general members (with no voting rights at an AGM) and, for general membership, the annual subscription is €30, €40 for family membership.

There are now more than 100 members of MechaMusica. To mark 100 years since Arthur Bursens started the organ factory in Belgium, MechaMusica will publish a limited edition reprint of a 1925 factory catalogue as well as placing a plaque on the former residence and workplace of Mr. Bursens. Trips to exhibitions and collections of automatic music are planned, as is a regular loose-leaf newsletter which it is hoped will eventually become an established document for consultation.

Should you wish to take up membership, please contact the secretary of MechaMusica, Bjorn Isebaert, Liststraat 9, B-9750 Zingem, Belgium (e-mail address is bjorn.isebaert@telenet.be)

The Utrecht museum, the Nationaal Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement, has recently (from 19th. September to 11th November) held a highly successful exhibition at the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou, in association with the International Franz Liszt Pianoconcours, as part of a cultural exercise involving the Dutch government and industry, to strengthen ties between China and Holland.

Mechanical Music, Vol. 53, No.5, September/October 2007

Robin Biggins writes about one of several Lador musical boxes with hymns related to the Christian Science Church, and having been apparently authorised by the church. They were sold by several dealers in the USA, and 3 examples are held in the Longyear

Museum. Nancy Fratti spotted an unusual drum and bell box at a fair recently. The box, although having Nicole Frères and NF all over it, seemed very like a Paillard. The bell striker is a very animated automaton; there are two whirling dancers, and a (pseudo) drummer.

The Heller Hoard (described by Matthew Caulfield) was discovered in 1977 by Jim Wells. In a collapsing and boarded up house in Macedonia, Ohio, Jim found the remains of around 10 large organs, a Welte Orchestrion, a Tangley Calliaphone, a perforator, and many parts and rolls. These had all been accumulated, and then all but forgotten, by Erwin Heller who had been an organ repair man for various amusement parks. Fortunately Jim was able to purchase all these remains and most have since been returned to their former glory. Joseph E. Roesch describes his approach to re-dampening a Music-Box comb, and Hendrik Strengers discovers that Chestnut Street, Philadelphia was home to some 25 different music related businesses in the 1920s.

Mechanical Music, Vol. 53, No.6, November/December 2007

As mentioned by Luuk Goldhoorn in his article on musical hat-racks in The Music Box, Larry Karp now writes about musical Coathooks by Carl Spiess. A number of different hooks and their movements are illustrated, and details of patents given. The mystery of who arranged musical box music deepens somewhat with Christian Eric's discovery of two boxes with identical arrangements of Au Claire de Lune. However, the boxes are from different makers in different countries! The earliest is in the base of a Palais Royal miniature harp (probably a key or ring stand) by the Parisian maker, Francois Alibert, and dated around 1815 – 1820. The second is dated 1823 and is a musical snuff box by Francois Nicole, although in the key of E against the Alibert one in G.

Joseph E. Roesch's Shop notes cover Rebusing a Musical Box, and Nancy Fratti considers the various options when the time comes to reduce your collection. Robin Biggins discovers a 15 1/2" Regina with some non-standard parts, and discovers that

Al Chofnes wrote about an "Experimental Regina" with similar differences some 23 years ago. The two machines are different and probably were built to use up leftover parts.

The Key Frame (Issue KF3/07)

Probably the most amazing story in this issue is *The Puffin, A Dream Come True*. "Puffin" is the name of the replica 52 key Limonaire style Dutch Street Organ built by Bob Wallington in his front room in Cornwall. Having an all brass Hooghuyts type key frame, the organ took Bob 8 years to build using mainly reclaimed materials from old school desks, a scrap pianola, a tree downed in the 1987 gales, and various workshop scrap bins.

Jory Bennett writes about Louis Blache, an arranger for Chiappa Ltd., and Phillip Upchurch tells the history of an "Old Friend" – the Cleethorpes Gavioli which has now been exported to Massachusetts to the home of its new owner, Roger Weigand. Fred Dahlinger Jr. covers some details of Ruth organ history in his tale about two nearly identical Ruth organs, the Hattenhorst model 38 and the Ohr model 37.

Organ Grinders News, No. 62 – Autumn 2007

Events reviewed in this issue are the Milestones meeting, and the Greeshall Museum Organ Festival, plus a report from the BOGA steering group meeting in August. In Memoriam remembers Mel Colebrook, a well-known music arranger, with comments from John Harrold, and happy memories from Bob Minney.

Organ Grinders News, No. 63 – Winter 2007

Notes from the October Boga Steering Group meeting are followed by reports on the Ilfracombe Victorian Festival, Duncan Mallows' trip to Holland, Germany and Switzerland, John & Tina Pettifer's report on Amateur Organ Builders events, the Llandrindod Wells Victorian Festival and the Twinwoods Organ Festival.

John Webb reports on the discovery of the Adderbury Organ Grinder. This is a carving in the stone frieze around the church in Adderbury, which appears to depict a man vigorously winding a street organ (I think it is actually a hurdy-gurdy – JF). The Annual Gathering for 2008 will be held on 10th & 11th May at the Black Country

Living Museum near Dudley, West Midlands, followed immediately by another visit to Milestones between 13th and 18th May.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 184, September 2007

Bell ringing is an unusual subject for the PPG bulletin, you might think, but in David Perry's article it is quite appropriate, since he describes the early history of a partnership between Aeolian (makers of the original "Pianolas") and Loughborough Bellfounders Taylors Eayre & Smith. Taylors made carillons – large bell systems usually operated by hand to play tunes, and were looking for ways to automate the carillons. On of their enterprising salesmen had the idea that Player Piano technology might work and the partnership was born. Using standard Player roll and tracker mechanisms with heavy-duty pneumatics, systems capable of playing up to 65 bells were installed around the world from 1922 onwards.

Julian Dyer's roll punching endeavours have become a tad more sophisticated with the addition of a roll spooler, which spools each of the 4 copies separately as they are punched. This reduces damage to the rolls from creasing, etc. when they were left to accumulate on the floor. Also in this issue is an account of the 2007 AMICA overseas trip to Germany and Holland.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 185, December 2007

David Perry continues his investigation into the Taylor/Aeolian automatic carillon partnership, discussing some of the finer points of the system design, the move to use of the 88 note Duo-Art tracker bar (instead of the 65 note originally used), and problems with roll production. The last system was installed in 1953, with a total of 21 installations being identified so far, with research ongoing. A 47-note system was proposed as late as 1960, but APPA, the successors to Aeolian, declined the work. It is believed only 8 systems still exist.

In Musical Anecdotes, I particularly liked this one: - One day, while conducting a concert, Hans Richter was annoyed by a man who persisted in tapping on the floor. Richter stood it patiently for a time, but at last he turned sharply on the offender and remarked: "I am sorry to trouble you, but I can not always keep time with your foot."

NWPPA Journal Christmas 2007

These journals are so stuffed full of interesting articles it is difficult to do them justice in these reviews, so I will just pick a few highlights. I would recommend anyone interested in the history of Player Pianos to consider joining the NWPPA (even if they don't live in the North West), just for the journal.

Terry Broadbent writes most of the articles, and one that caught my eye this time was about "Away in a Manger". It is essentially an American song and tune, originating from a Lutheran Sunday school, with additional verses by Dr. John McFarland. Strangely enough, although the "English" tune is actually of American origin, the Americans use a different tune – "Mueller" by James R Murray. The series on lesser known reproducing systems this time covers the Artrio Angelus, whilst No. 2 of Our Song Roll Collection is "Love's Old Sweet Song" (or "Just a Song at Twilight"), and the next Famous Musician is No. 58 – Nadia Reisenberg (Sister of Clara Rockmore, the famous Theremin player).

When They Were Young No. 19 is about Sergei Rachmaninov who studied as a pianist, from the age of 12, under Nikolai Zverev and then began serious study of composition at the age of 14. The first of 3 articles covering Songs that Won the Wars concerns itself with the Boer war (1899 – 1902) and lists around 35 such songs. And lots more.....

Other Non-English journals

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 4th Quarter, 2007

Highlights: -

Mechanical Piano made by G. Sasso-Vercelli. A method for tuning Organs.

Small interchangeable Musical Boxes.

Report from the Festival in Longiaro.

For Sale

"The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music", new MB-SGB publication with 2 CDs, also "Music Boxes" (Gilbert Bahl, 1993)

**Offers to: Tony
01732 726016**

Letters to the Editors

From Bill Cooper, Sussex:

Sir,

I thought another letter about musical boxes would not go amiss. Just recently I visited an auction locally and lo and behold a musical box in view. Plain fruitwood box, no woodworm, no broken teeth, pins OK, three controls, brass bedplate, stamped in the comb centre L&F and playing 6 airs:

Merrily Merrily Over the Snow, Ye Banks & Braes, La Marseillaise, Over the Sea, Roving de Banjo and God Bless the Princess of Wales. I was a bit puzzled by the last tune; I have that tune on a disc but Prince of Wales. Was the tune out that long ago?

The jewel for the governor is not red, it is clear glass, has anybody seen this before? It plays very well, but of course I will have to clean it etc. It cost £480.

The tune sheet is intact although somewhat tatty, I found small bits of it inside the box, and it is now pasted on card and looks all right.

I wonder if I am the oldest member, my original number was 406.

TO ACCESS THE MBSGB FORUM ON THE WEB SITE

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

Username: **musicalbox**
Password: **BABREMOND**

All MBSG Journals to be Scanned

The electronic age affects the way we access information. The Committee decided some years ago to publish works for the benefit of present and future generations and to ensure that they can be accessed through the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) system. Hence our Tune Sheet Book and its supplements, the Organette Book and The Nicole Factor comply with this requirement and will be deposited in all the major libraries required to hold ISBN copies. Your Committee have now decided to scan all past journals, initially onto DVD, with a unique ISBN. Further details about the technical nature, indexing, search mechanism and availability, etc. will be provided at a later date. The purpose of this announcement is to explain to members how the Society intends to control its existing copyright and disclaimers for the revised DVD format. Due recognition will be given to all who contributed articles published in past journals.

Since 1975, our journals have been registered under the ISSN system (International Standard Serial Number, used for journals, magazines etc). Our books are registered under the ISBN system including CDs such as those associated with The Nicole Factor.

A batch of ISSN and ISBN allocations were obtained in 1976 by the late Reg Waylett, Hon. Secretary. Copyright has always been retained by the Society from the outset of its publications, more formally stated when the ISSN system was introduced for Volume 7 by the simple statement 'Copyright 1975 by the Publishers, The Musical Box Society of Great Britain', preceded by the copyright symbol. It was not until Vol.7/5, that the ISSN number was published for the first time in the Editorial.

Many years passed before the Committee decided to introduce a disclaimer when, unfortunately, editorial oversight exposed the Committee to unnecessary disputes

that arose through indiscretion, misjudgement or error by contributors and advertisers to the Journal.

Present disclaimer.

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So why is it important to restate our position? Modern technology makes our publications available to a much wider audience than its membership, the main reason that we now invest so much time in producing our books as well as the Journal. In this way we promote the Society and invite further research, ensuring that the legacy of the Society's contributing members, past, present and future, is recognised. Indeed, the DVD will be dedicated to the memory of the late John Powell who not only researched and wrote articles but also prepared the master index that we use today.

OBITUARY

John Powell 1931 – 2008

It was with great sadness that we heard of the sudden but peaceful passing of John. He had been in poor health for some time but this did not prevent him from joining us on what was to be his last MBSGB annual overseas tour, this time to Longiano in Italy.

John had been an active Society member since 1975. He was an engineer by training, working for the same state supply company as me, the Central Electricity Generating Board. He and I knew of each other although John worked in an entirely different part of the company and another part of the country. It was no surprise therefore, that when I joined the Society, many a long evening, and sometimes into the 'early hours', was spent talking about boilers and turbines over a few drinks and John's inevitable glass of whisky.

John was one of those rare individuals, very quiet in manner, clever and knowledgeable, always with a smile and a sense of humour and very good company. Even in Longiano as we sat opposite across the festive table, not knowing how close we were to that final parting, John's humour and enthusiasm was still there despite his illness, looking forward to the next meeting in Coventry. Sadly it was not to be.

With John's engineering background he would try and get into the thoughts and intentions of the designers of musical boxes. He was fascinated by long and short pin 'Expressif' musical boxes. He wrote an article about these and he also modified a paper roll mechanism to try to work out a tuning scale for a badly damaged movement.

There were several jigs in his workshop, no doubt attempts to understand some aspect of musical box technology.

John contributed many articles and was a meticulous observer and recorder of things mechanical musical. He formulated the index to our journal, and the new DVD index will be dedicated to his memory.

PB

Record Review

(Continued from page 153)

The more unusual pieces include La Maxixe by Borel-Cloerc and Suite Algerienne March by Saint-Saens. This is a versatile instrument with over 550 reeds to play with many tunes sounding both regal and imposing.

The 116 note recording includes serious pieces such as Chanson du Matin by Elgar, Extase by Louis Gann and Caprice Viennoise by Kreisler but also foot tapping pieces like A Deed of the Pen March by Neil Moret and American Patrol by Meacham - long before it was popularised by Glenn Miller in the 1940's.

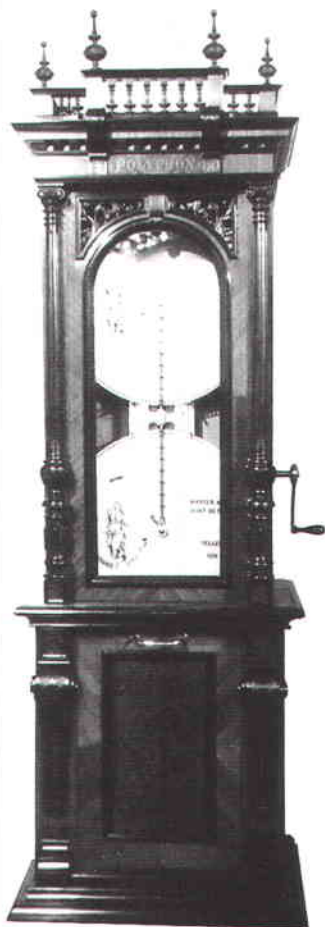
I cannot pick a favourite as it depends on my mood. I have listened to these review copies 5/6 times already while sitting here trying to write a book that is about Disc Musical Boxes rather than roll playing reed organs. Anyone who has already purchased the recordings Paul had made of his old two-manual pipe organ will know that the stop selection and timing of changes will be faultless. You might be interested to know that I helped with the sale of the two-manual pipe organ which has now been replaced by a much larger three-manual model which will not doubt be recorded in due course - so watch this space.

If you would like copies of these recordings please contact Paul Morris directly or Kevin McElhone who will have a limited supply available at MBSGB meetings.



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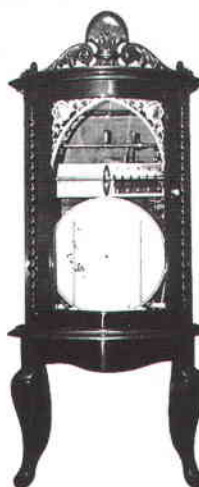
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