

# *The* **Music Box**

*An International Journal of Mechanical Music*



## **In this issue:**

- Westminster's Carillon
- Cuban Street Organ
- Stephen Rimbault's Clock
- CD Review

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

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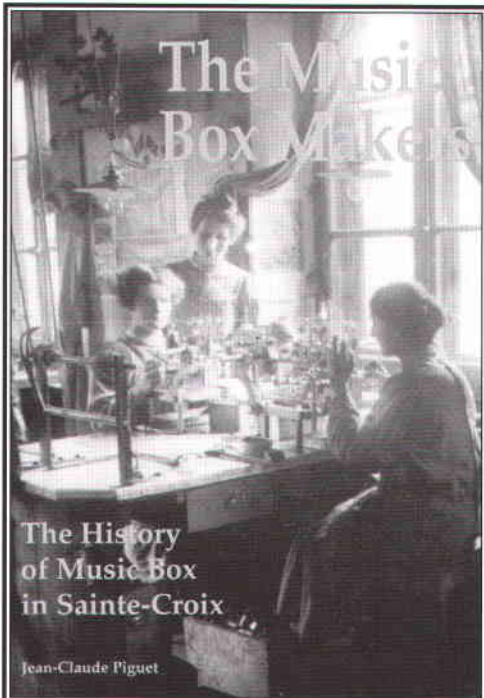
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# From the Editors' Desk

**A**s I took some visitors around the Nickelodeon Museum this morning one of them suddenly asked "If you had the choice, which instrument do you really still want to add to the collection? Is there something you are still chasing?" My first reaction was "are we expecting snow this winter?" (remember, this IS Canada!) I thought about the Stephen Rimbault clock featured elsewhere in this Journal... and then a couple of very special fairground organs came to mind... and a Philipps Paganini... and many items featured in the Royal Music Machines exhibition held in Utrecht... and then reality hit me. With acquisitions come responsibilities, storage and insurance being just a part of it. It's great to be able to enjoy what one has, without the lust for more, more and more. It is terrific to be able to see and hear wonderful instruments without having to care for and maintain them! Keep up with the Society visits to members' collections!

My next reaction was to realise that collecting is never really over. There is always something new to discover, another instrument, more music for an existing one, to add – a reason to get up in the morning.

The visitor went on to ask about the 'software' for the instruments. Could we get new barrels for the barrel organs and pianos? What about rolls for the player pianos? Card music for the organs and Piano Melodico? We thought after he had gone that it would be interesting to find out if any members had experience of making these things. We have heard rumours of new barrels being made for old

instruments but have never seen an article on how it was achieved. How do you set about re-cutting or indeed arranging music for a Racca Piano? What about the zinc disks made for an organette – I remember hearing at a Society meeting some while ago about someone who was making such metal discs, but it was never written up to my knowledge.

We had an e-mail this week asking if an article on making a small street organ would be interesting. As editors we are interested in most things related to the mechanical music field, and welcome articles for consideration (we even appreciate helpful criticism – occasionally!) We are looking forward to publishing a series of articles next year by a member who is actually making his own musical box from scratch – to quote some of my younger friends, "How kool is that?" In this issue Arthur Ord-Hume gives us some insight into the carillon formerly installed in, and specially built for, the Swiss Centre in the City of Westminster. The building has now been demolished, but the carillon is set to rise Phoenix-like in a new metamorphosis. We have been obliged by lack of space to prune this article, but will willingly supply the original text via e-mail on request.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY 2009!

### Cover Picture

Stephen Rimbault's Clock.

See article on Page 253.

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## Contents

Society News	235
From the President	236
Chanctonbury Ring	236
The Music Box DVD	240
Terne Valley Meeting	237
Register News	241
Sale Report - Society	242
Sale Report - Bonham's	243
Westminster's Carillon	245
Colour Pages	247
Cuban Street Organ	249
Stephen Rimbault's Clock	253
CD Review	254
Musical Box Oddments	119
News from Other Societies	260
Letters to the Editor	262
Obituary	263
Classified Ads	265

The Editors welcome articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editors expressly reserve the right to amend or refuse any of the foregoing.

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The Music Box is printed for and published by the Society quarterly 27th February, 27th April, 7th August, 7th November from the Editorial Office.

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Back numbers obtainable from:

Roy Ison, 5 East Bight, Lincoln, LN2 1QH © 2007 The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 23 Number 8 Winter 2008



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## Dates for your Diary 2008 / 2009

### Chanctonbury Ring - Christmas Open day

*Saturday 29th November*  
*10.30 coffee for an 11am start*

**Lunch provided**

**Please phone Ted Brown on  
01403823533 to confirm your place**

### Teme Valley Winders Christmas Meeting

*Saturday 6th December 2008*  
*12 noon start*

**Buffet Lunch and mince pies**

**Please contact**

**John Phillips on 01584 78 1118,  
so adequate catering can be arranged**

### Spring Meeting 2009 Winchester

*Hosts David and Lesley Worrall*  
*Friday 24th April – 26th April 2009*

**Information Sheet and Booking  
Form enclosed**

### Essex Meeting

*Saturday 2nd May 2009 10am - 4pm*  
*At the Parish Rooms, Holy Trinity  
Church, Rayleigh, Essex*

**Bring your own lunch – coffee & tea  
provided by us**

**Why not bring along your own  
favourite musical item to show?**

**Please phone  
Bruce Allen – 01702 23 2040**

# President's Message

## No. 10

# Chanctonbury Ring

## Open Day Meeting 19th

### July 2008

By Alan K Clark

Yet another year is drawing to its close. May I wish you all well in the hope that the worst is now over and from now on things get better in relation to global economic problems. The Society is, by and large, doing well in these difficult times and we are holding our own. However, your continued support and commitment is vital to our future success.

The "new look" silent auction was tried at our last meeting held at Eastham Grange. The auction rather took the organisers by surprise as the number of entries received was far greater than expected. In fact, insufficient entry forms had been printed and an emergency system had to be devised at the last minute. In spite of this, the auction was a success with 58 lots being offered with only 19 being unsold. Over £64 was raised by the donations, and the members present decided that this should be given to John and Hilda's appeal for the Tenbury Wells Cottage Hospital and Air Ambulance rather than being donated to Society funds

The worth of this type of auction can be demonstrated by using an example. One lot sold for £80 which after deductions meant that the buyer paid £84.00 and the seller received £76.00. Had the same item gone to an average auction house the buyer would have had to pay £98.80 and the seller would have received £61.20. This means that both the buyer and the vendor saved £14.80 each simply by using our auction. An added bonus is that Society members had an opportunity to purchase many interesting items. The advantages of this type of auction must be obvious to all. There were glitches of course and refinements to the

system need to be made. More help will be required as those running the auction on this occasion were so busy they missed some of the talks. These silent auctions will not be suitable for every meeting, but on this occasion the idea worked well.

The meeting will be the subject of a full report elsewhere in the journal, but on behalf of those who attended, I would like to thank John and Hilda Phillips, John Farmer, John Harrold, Doug Pell and all their helpers for their magnificent efforts and for their organisational skills. This will be a hard act to follow. Thanks also to Daphne for her hard work in her capacity as Meetings Secretary. Well done all of you and thanks to those who brought instruments along for the organ grind. Certainly this was a meeting that was very entertaining and informative and John's new music room provided an ideal venue for the event.

It will not be long before the end of the year, but before then we have a visit to Germany planned. It looks as though it will be an interesting and informative event with our group having the chance to see many new museums and collections. I understand that many of our companions abroad are thrilled at the prospect of seeing us and they have already planned a super time for us. We are indeed very lucky to have such good friends.

There seems to be little else to say on this occasion except I would ask you all to renew your subscription as soon as possible in the New Year so that we can keep our wonderful society going and enjoy life to the full.

**Arthur Cunliffe.**

A goodly number of members and guests attended Ted and Kay's latest meeting held at the Old School Bucks Green. The meeting started with Ted demonstrating a modern automaton Clock and Watch repairer at his bench. This was followed by six enjoyable tunes played on David's Sublime Harmony Mandolin box by Langdorff. Most of the morning was then very pleasantly spent listening to a series of well known tunes played for comparison on various machines. We heard tunes from Les Cloches De Cornville, Daisy Bell, and its earlier version Sarah Sarah, Faust, Don Juan, Norma and Sonambula played on the Cabinetto organette, 15 ½" inch Regina and Polyphons, 17 ¼" inch Britannia, Barrel Piano, Mechanical OrguINETTE, etc.

The morning was rounded off with a description and demonstration of Triola and Tanzbar instruments. Following the large buffet lunch and puddings, those who had brought organs to play attempted to lose some of those calories by playing their, or other, organs. The day was sunny and warm, and we had music from seven pipe organs, played by barrel and paper roll, some modern and some old, (one even made in America), one street piano and one Grand Roller Organ which was supplied and played by Kevin.

Thus ended yet another thoroughly enjoyable day, which must be one of the great values of belonging to our society. Thanks go to Ted, Kay, and the members' wives and other helpers for ensuring the success of the meeting.

## ***MBSGB in The TEME VALLEY***

*Society Members Autumn Meeting - 12th, 13th and 14th September 2008*

The MBSGB Autumn Meeting for 2008 took place at Eastham Grange, the home of John and Hilda Phillips, set in the beautiful Teme Valley in the north of Worcestershire near to the border with Shropshire. The meeting had two set purposes in its programme; first, to formally open the new Music Room, purpose built at Eastham Grange to house and set off John's collection of Mechanical Music instruments, and second, for Society members to hold a public Organ Grind in the grounds to raise money for two charities, The County Air Ambulance, and the Tenbury Wells Cottage Hospital.

The meeting which, including day visitors, was supported by 69 members, opened formally on the Friday evening with a private dinner at the One Hundred House Hotel, situated at the nearby village of Great Witley. This was followed by a presentation given by Charles Hadwell, a local resident from another nearby village, Abberley, on the Imperial Faberge Eggs. Over a set of slides, he outlined the history of these interesting and expensive examples of jeweller's craftsmanship, worked in precious metals and jewels to exquisite designs. The first egg was made in the early 1880's for Czar Alexander III as an Easter present for the Czarina, and in the years that followed the



*MBSGB President Arthur Cunliffe officially opens the Eastham Grange music room.*

tradition was continued and extended to include birthdays and, by his son Czar Nicholas II, Dowager Czarinas, until the events of the Communist Revolution of 1916/7 brought it to an end. Over the years Faberge is known to have produced 56 such Imperial Easter Eggs and of these, the whereabouts of 32 is known. Each egg contained a "Surprise" that varied from year to year, of most interest to the members in this respect being the egg containing, in the words of the speaker, "A mechanical bird that pops up and twitters!" A somewhat dismissive description, over which Singing Bird box enthusiasts may wish to ponder. During the presentation, we were shown pictures of all known 32 eggs including the three in the Queen's possession.

On Saturday morning, we repaired to Eastham Grange to be welcomed by John and Hilda in the new Music Room. This had been finished ready for our visit the night before! Our first talk was given by John Moorhouse, a member of the British Horological Institute and also the Teme Valley Winders, his subject, "Singing Bird Boxes", being almost a sequel to the previous evening's reference to singing birds. His talk about the history of these interesting items was well illustrated by slides to show and explain the developments of the movements over the years from their first introduction and the work of Bontemps, through that of Brugier then Phalibois to Griesbaum and those still being produced today by Reuge of St Croix.





*Members enjoying a street organ*

A break followed, during which we had our first opportunity to take in the facilities of the Music Room as well as to view the instruments in John's collection arranged around the room. It also gave us an opportunity to view the entries in the Silent Auction, the first occasion such an event had been undertaken by the Society.

After the break, we assembled outside the Music Room for the formal opening to take place, a task suitably performed by our own President, Mr Arthur Cunliffe, who thanked John and Hilda and wished them every success with this splendid housing for the growing collection of mechanical music instruments.

Then followed a talk by John Farmer on Automatic Pianos in which the two pianos in John's collection were used to illustrate the subject. First we heard a Weber Duo-Art Pedal-Electric Grand, completely rebuilt from scratch by John

with help from John Farmer and others and finished just before meeting. Then we heard a Yamaha Disclavier Upright. As an added dimension, as both of these pianos could also be played by the human hand, we were treated to two short recitals by Jason Fisher, a friend of John and Hilda, who very capably demonstrated his skills on these instruments.

During these two presentations, we both experienced and appreciated a further new direction taken for this meeting, the use of audio-visual support. With microphones and amplified speech and with a video camera used to show close-up images of the action on a screen, all in the room could both see and hear as if they were in the front row!

After an excellent lunch, served in the Music Room by a local catering company, members prepared for the main event of the day, the Charity Organ Grind. About a dozen Organs and Organettes were in full voice around the grounds

in readiness for the public's enjoyment. The money collected was to go to two local charities selected by John and Hilda, Tenbury Wells Cottage Hospital and the County Air Ambulance. Entrance charges at the gate, the contributions placed in the collecting boxes and the Silent Auction premiums, together raised a total of £756.68, to be shared between these two charities, £500 going to the Air Ambulance and the balance the Hospital.

The Organ Grind over, members repaired to The Hundred House Hotel at Great Witley and prepared for the Evening Banquet. This was followed by a Comedian Slot of 15-20 minutes during which David Harrison entertained with a non-stop string of jokes and anecdotes. This was followed by a piece of pure homespun entertainment provided by three of our members, Alan Pratt, Doug Pell and Maurice Adams, each with a 20 note, 420 tune Concertina, together with John Harold, playing his 40 note, 800 tune Accordion. These instruments, plus an accompanying set of drums and cymbals, are manufactured by Musik Canten Schmiede of Leipzig, Germany and are linked by radio signals to play in unison. Moving around amongst the tables, this quartet lifted our spirits and encouraged us to join in and sing with a series of old time songs for our enjoyment.

On Sunday morning the meeting returned to Eastham Grange. First came a talk

and demonstration by John Harold on the practice of bushing worn pivot holes in clocks and musical boxes. The example he had chosen on which to work was the back-plate of an 18th Century Longcase Clock with worn pivot holes. His approach was to use solid brass plugs, which he was able to obtain in the correct colour to match that of the original brass, and then to re-drill the pivot hole. This approach was preferred to the use of ready-made bushes, which in his experience were of the wrong colour and of a hardness that caused them to split when being hammered into the plate. Although he worked on a clock back-plate, the principles would be the same for bushing worn pivot holes in a musical box movement. Again, during this presentation, the audio-visual support enabled all present to see and hear clearly and so follow John's work as closely as they wished.

John Phillips then took us on an audio-visual tour of the instruments forming the collection housed in the new Music Room. Amongst the instruments played for us were two Chamber Barrel Organs. The first was an Imhof and Mukle organ with 50 notes, 85 pipes in 4 ranks and dating from circa 1865. Originally weight-driven but now converted to electric drive, it has 40 barrels that are spirally pinned and play for 5 minutes each. The second organ dates from around 1840 and is believed to have come from a clock and to have been built by an unknown Black Forest organ builder. It is weight driven, also has 50 notes but in 5

ranks, one of which consists of metal-coned trumpets.

Next we heard a 48 note Racca Piano that, as some members present remembered, had been purchased by John at the street mart in Longiano during our visit to the AMMI Street Organ Festival in September 2007! We then heard a selection of larger disk musical boxes, including a very recently purchased 15½" Regina "Corona", a 27½" Symphonion, and a 19½" Polyphon. These were then followed by a selection of cylinder musical boxes including an interchangeable with six cylinders, also purchased in Longiano, a Oiseau Chantant Musical Box by an unknown maker and, finally, a 6 Air Organocleide by Lecoultre and recently restored by Alan Godier.

The results of the Silent Auction were then announced and the buyers and sellers exchanged goods and money. This was the first event of its type to be held by the society and was judged a considerable success. The number of items entered for sale, 58, far exceeded expectations; 21 members submitted bids resulting in 39 of the items being sold and a total of £64.48 being realised for Society funds. The meeting, however, directed that this amount be added to the charitable collection of the previous day.

A buffet lunch was then served for us, again in the Music Room by the same local catering company; and so ended another Society meeting which, to judge by both overheard and solicited

comments, was a very successful and interesting weekend.

Our thanks and appreciation to all concerned in its planning and execution: to the speakers and entertainers arranged by John; to the One Hundred House Hotel and the caterers at Eastham Grange for some very good meals; to Alan Pratt, Doug Pell, John Harold and Maurice Adams for entertaining us so delightfully on the Saturday evening. Thanks must also go to Doug again for his part in providing the visual element of the Audio-Visual support that was so much appreciated by all present, many of whom considered that it had set a standard for all future meetings. Finally, to Daphne, our meetings organizer, a very big thank you for arranging this weekend. Our very grateful thanks on this occasion, however, must go to our hosts, John and Hilda Phillips, who provided us with a programme that was entertaining and most enjoyable and a setting par excellence. We could not wish for better surroundings in which to hold our meetings.

*Note: During the course of this meeting, we were saddened to hear that one of our number, John Sands, had been taken seriously ill and rushed to hospital by Air Ambulance. Sadly, we learned later that John had passed away with his family at his side. An obituary appears elsewhere in this journal. It was a coincidence that the County Air Ambulance that rushed John to hospital was a chosen charity for the Organ Grind later in our programme of events.*



## The Music Box DVD Update

By Robert Ducat-brown

If you attended the AGM in June or have read the précis of the minutes, you will know that we demonstrated the DVD of the 'Music Box' journals at the meeting. We had hoped that we would be able to enclose the DVD of our journals with this copy. However after studying the draft we found that there were a large number of errors in the hyperlinks, which were often going to the wrong page and that some pages were unacceptably crooked. This meant that we would need to physically check every link of which there are in the region of 3000 as many are cross referenced. I set about this with some help from another member; the job goes quite quickly until one of two things happen. If you find an error it may take some time to locate the correct page, the other is far more time consuming, and that is coming across an interesting article from the past and stopping to read it. This has made me realise what a wonderful wealth of information there is in our journals covering more than 40 years. Roy Evett has been working on the menu design and he has made many improvements to the operation of the DVD.

When the project is completed all of us who have access to a reasonably up-to-date computer will have all of the past journals to hand. To obtain the best results from the DVD you will need to obtain or download a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader 9, if you have an earlier version the update can be downloaded free of charge.

Would it be practical to include Acrobat Reader 9 on the disc, with Adobe's approval of course? There are those of us who use computers that are not connected to the Internet, such as the one we use to lay out The Music Box! - Ed

## IMPORTANT REMINDER: ANNUAL DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS

The Society intends to publish an Annual Directory that will contain a list of all members showing Membership Number, Name and Home County, plus Telephone Number and e-mail address where these are known. However, in order to address any member's wish for privacy, the Telephone Number and email Address can be omitted if a member requires. If you wish to "opt out" of these two pieces of information, please use the form included with the Autumn issue of The Music Box.

Conversely, if you want to ensure that they are included, please also use the form.

Of the 70 responses received to date, 60 members have agreed to be included and sent in additional information.

The Committee hopes that most members will NOT opt out so that members in the same locality can get to know each other, and perhaps form more local groups. The first issue of the new directory will be published with the Spring 2009 journal.

## ANNUAL DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS: RESTORERS

As an additional service to members, a list of restorers will be included in the Annual Directory of Members. If you are a restorer of any type of mechanical music and have not yet received a letter inviting your participation, please ask for a copy by writing or emailing the Correspondence Secretary (see list of Officers in this journal).

## Chippenham Model Show 2009

Saturday 7th March 2009

Need Hall,  
The High Street,  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire,  
SN15 3ER

Earlier this year our society was invited to display a variety of mechanical musical instruments and automata at the National Vintage Communications Fair at Leamington Spa. Our displays raised considerable interest and even gained us a new member.

Whilst there, I was approached by the organiser of the Chippenham Model Show who was extremely keen for our society to display at their next model show. I agreed, and already Kevin McElhone has agreed to display with me. Any other members interested in joining us with a favourite box or two would be most welcome, please contact Daphne Ladell – Tel: 01737 84 3644 or email Daphne.Ladell@btinternet.com

# Register News. No: 61

This edition of Register News consists of a series of unrelated snippets and I hope you will forgive me as on this occasion as I do not have a sole topic for discussion. The number of boxes registered has now reached the 8,200 mark. What you may not know is the fact that there are now 1001 boxes listed that have a photograph to accompany them. These photographs are saved with the record card for that box. Many boxes have a series of photographs with 376 of them having an extra photograph of their tune sheets.



*Bremond Mandoline basse piccolo (sic) tune sheet - compare with Sheet No. 4 in the Tune Sheet book.*

Most of the recent information comes from what was put in the auction catalogues of 1950 to 1970. Unfortunately, the standard of accuracy in some of these old catalogues was not as good as that seen today, but of course, our knowledge has improved greatly since those early days and we must not be too critical. I would ask those people who do send me in information about their musical boxes to include their email address. I believe that the majority of people these days have this method of making contact. It enables me to let you know that I have received the information and also gives you a line of communication should you feel there has been an unacceptable delay in receiving your Register paperwork.

I have just obtained my copy of the Third Tune Sheet Supplement and the Search Engine. It was put to use straight away and it helped me enormously when trying to identify some tune sheets that were illustrated on Ebay. I would strongly advise all

who have not yet ordered a copy of the Third Tune Sheet Supplement and the new Search Engine to do so right away. They are essential when studying tune sheets and help significantly when trying to identify the maker of a musical box. Anthony Bulleid has done another superb job compiling the new supplement and Luuk Goldhoorn is to be congratulated on producing a Search Engine that has made it a great deal easier to find a specific tune sheet. Thanks to both of you.

I am compiling a list of all tunes and composers names found on musical boxes. Up to the present time I have 129 composers listed in a file and a second file lists all the tune titles I have been able to date and identify. The tune title file stands at 1,227 with more being added whenever I can find a new tune and date it accurately. This is another area where I need your help, as finding the facts about tunes is not always that easy! The tune file is a particularly difficult one to compile and correct as

often-varying dates are given in reference books for the date of composition. I always take the date of the first known performance for preference. I am not sure if members would appreciate another reference work, but an alphabetical listing of composer's names along with details of their birth and death could be designed using these two databases. The file could be adapted to list the tunes they composed together with the date when they were written.

It should be possible, either by looking for a composer or the title of a tune, to find all the required information. A good database would also be able to find the title of any tune composed in a specific year. If you have any views on this subject please use the Letters to the Editor section of the journal and let us have your comments.

Two examples are given below:

Carafa. (1787 – 1872)  
Masaniello 1827

La Violette 1828  
La Prison d'Edinbourg 1833  
Noted for the year 1831:  
Casimer (Adam)  
Norma (Bellini)  
La Somnambula (Bellini)  
Robert le Diable (Meyerbeer)  
Zampa (Herold)

Occasionally another unusual craft mark is seen on a box. On a LeCoultre box serial number 27168 Register number R-8120, a very clear and finely stamped craft mark of a perching bird is on the brass bedplate along with a small capital B. The head of the bird is turned upwards with an open beak as though singing. The mark is in great detail even down to being able to see individual feathers on the tail. It looks as though the feet of the bird were originally designed to look as though the bird was perching on a branch, but that part has been omitted. The detail in this design is outstanding. It begs the question who or why did someone take so much trouble and for what reason?

In some newspapers there are competitions in which the reader is invited to spot the ball in a game of football, but cunningly the ball has been blanked out in the picture! Adapting this idea somewhat, I have included a picture of a Bremond tune sheet and ask you to spot the difference between tune sheet number 4 in the Tune Sheet book and the one printed here. There are at least two differences to find. No prizes are offered, and the answers will be given in the next Register News. If you have not got a copy of the Tune Sheet book or the supplements it will be very difficult for you to accept this challenge. Surely, this must be another good reason for buying the Tune Sheet books, supplements and the Search

Engine! To conclude, I ask all who are given a Register number to put that number on their box straight away. The Register number works in a similar way to the registration number on a motor vehicle in that it clearly identifies the item. The number should be put on the baseboard underneath at the rear left hand corner. The register paperwork should also go with the box and be passed on to any new owner when necessary. Failure to do this means the potential value of the Register is reduced significantly. The worth to the purchaser of a registered box is much improved in that greater detail as to the past history of the box may be there on the paperwork. I remember well one new owner being very impressed when he found out that the box that he had just bought had been through two salerooms in times past and had once been part of an important collection.

**Arthur Cunliffe.**

## **Society Auction 2008**

From Christopher Proudfoot

The auction held every year in conjunction with the AGM is a jolly, informal affair, a sale at which the buyers have no idea what they are going to find until they get there, and descriptions (which buyers do not actually see until the auctioneer reads them out) are at the whim of individual vendors. So are reserves, which can cause an auctioneer a bit of a headache when reserves are fixed at amounts that do not correspond with normal bids. What is an auctioneer to do with a figure like £1,175? He has to treat it as £1,200 – but the chances are

the vendor would be satisfied with £1,100!

As at most auctions, prices are all over the place, but a bit more so because there are fewer dealers there to mop up the lots that no one particularly wants. On the other hand, if there is someone there that particularly wants something, the price will be as much as in any other auction. And, again as at any other auction, the easy things to sell are the ones that are first class examples of their type (e.g. in untouched original condition), while half-finished restoration projects tend to be less attractive than the ones that haven't even been started.

Novelty items often feature in these sales, the sort of things that just didn't find their way into the London Mechanical Music sales, and Lot 1 this time was a musical toilet-roll holder, which sold for £20. A series of manivelles followed, mostly at around £25, apart from a disc one which was knocked down for £48. Lot 16 raised the tone a bit, a sectional comb snuff box in tortoiseshell, which brought £360. Later on, a nice Nicole 4-air box made £400. Piano rolls, however, attract little interest; even less than they used to. There were several lots in the sale, which either didn't sell or made a £1 contribution to Society funds. Discs are a better bet, and the fact that many lots of these failed to find a buyer reflects not so much lack of demand as a failure on the part of vendors to understand the difference between auction and retail values when setting reserves.

Extraneous items sometimes creep in and add to the variety – a Ryobi band saw comes to mind, which made £35. Also slightly outside the MBSGB parameter are gramophones;



## Auction Report Bonhams – Knowle 13th May 2008

from Alan Pratt

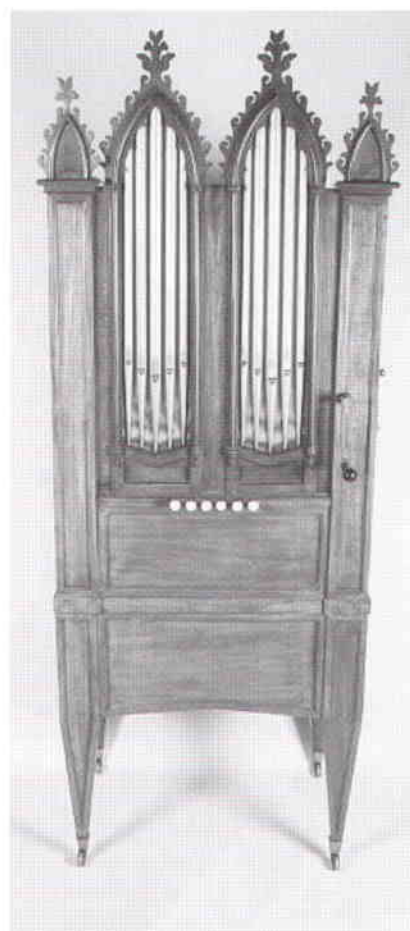
there was one in this sale, confusingly described by its owner as a record player, but actually a very presentable Columbia 'hornless' Grafonola of the early 1920s. £15 is all that it could raise ('hornless' machines seldom attract money), but it was followed by a small Bakelite record player made by Philips in the shape of their logo. This is not a musical box, but two MBSGB members were captivated by it and pushed the price up to £60. Two lots later came the star lot of the sale, a Hicks type barrel piano with a spare cylinder, in working order and less out-of-tune than some, which achieved £1250.

There is always something of interest in these sales (at whatever price level), and buyer's premium is a mere 7½ %. That makes a welcome change from the 20-25% the larger auction houses charge now.

This sale of mechanical music attracted widespread interest not only for the inclusion of the John Powell collection, but also because Bonhams are now the only nationwide auction house with specialist mechanical music sales throughout the year.

With over 100 lots on offer there was something for every interest, and the very first lot, an Edison Diamond Disc player, exceeded its estimate to sell for £538. An EMG gramophone Mark IX was in demand as usual and made £1500.

Moving on to John Powell's collection, a Gem Cabinet Roller Organ went for £675, followed quickly by a very attractive Flight and Robson chamber barrel organ at £3000.

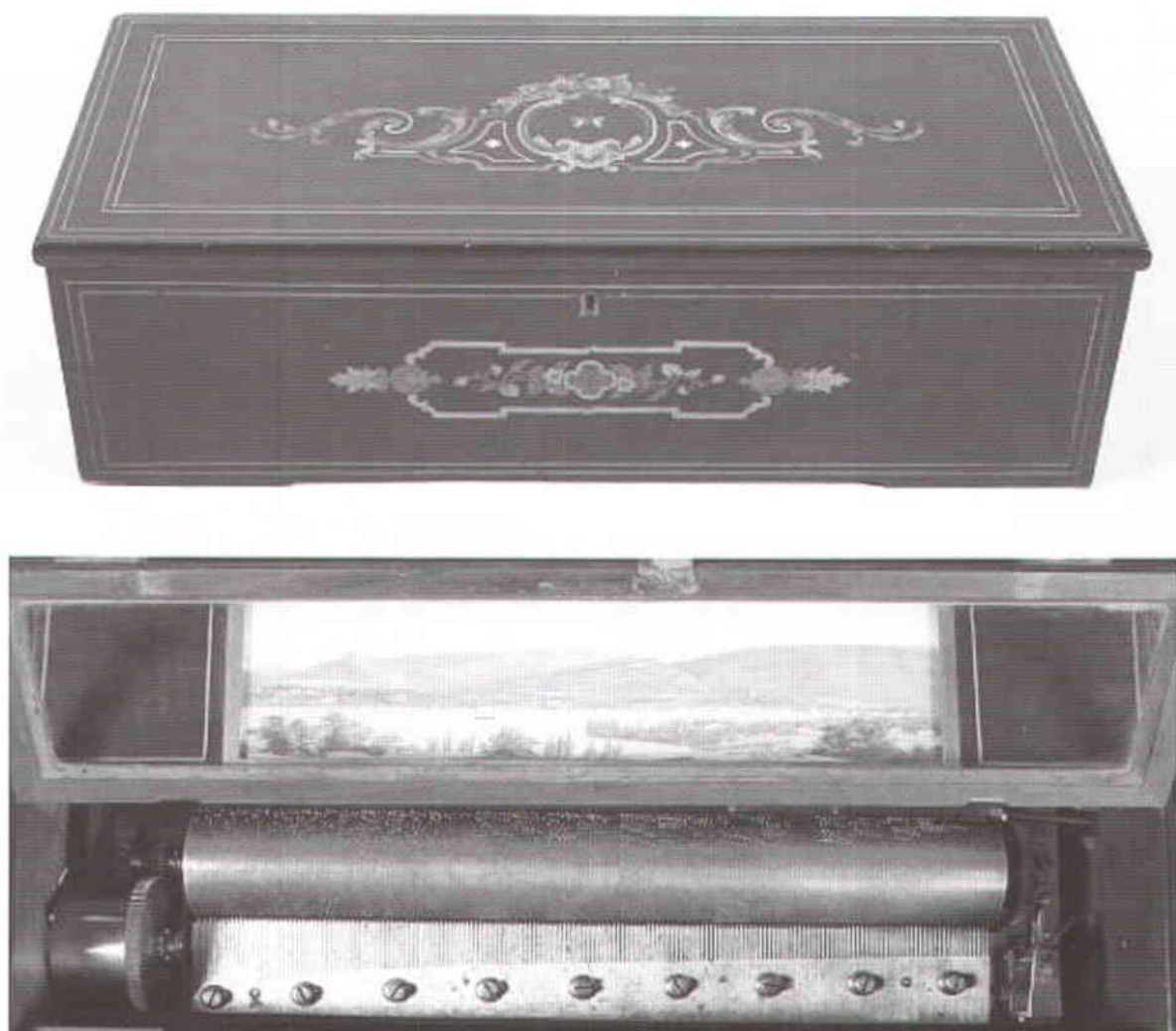


*Fig 1. Chamber Barrel organ by Flight & Robson - Lot 86*

A musical clock with Napoleonic figure under a glass dome realised £1225 and an interchangeable box by PVF (Lot 91) with four cylinders made £1680. The next lot was also a PVF interchangeable and made £1930. A six-air Grand Format mandoline box by Nicole Freres (Lot 104), and another mandoline box with half dust lid painted with a scene of Lake Geneva (Lot 105) were in demand and realised £1680 and £1750 respectively. A Mermod Freres sublime-harmony box with three cylinders and double-spring 'longue-marche' motor made £2750. In addition to these more expensive boxes, there was a wide selection of boxes by Bremond, Ducummun Girod, Nicole, Lecoultre and Langdorf, among others, which sold at prices between £180 and £600.



*Fig 2 - Nicole Frères serial No 44306 – Lot 104*



*Fig 2 - Early Nicole Frères with inner half lid painted with scene of Lake Geneva - Lot 105*

The star among the cylinder boxes, however, was a C. Lecoultre playing four airs. The single section comb had 185 teeth with mandoline teeth in groups of up to six across half the cylinder. With its original diamond-shaped tunesheet this box attracted much interest and the hammer fell at £3705.

Among the disc boxes a Stella 17 1/4" on a matching stand with 50 discs realised £2250, and an unusual Harmonia, playing 16" Stella-type discs, with heavily carved case made £1600. A singing-bird-in cage in Eastern style realised £2000, whilst a Model 9 singing bird box by Griesbaum, in need of

some attention, made £770.

No sale of mechanical music is complete without one or two novelties and a 1937 Coronation commemorative jug by Crown Devon Fielding fetched a very respectable £400. Two manivelles, both playing well, made £100.

All prices quoted are inclusive of Buyers Premium.

The next Mechanical Music sale at Bonhams Knowle is on September 30th 2008 for which entries are now being accepted. Bonhams hold four Mechanical Music sales each year – two in London and two at Knowle. For details contact



*Fig 3 (right) - Stella disc machine on original stand - Lot 116*

Mark Hannam on 01564 776151 (Knowle) or Laurence Fisher on 08700 273 633 (London).

# Westminster's Carillon

## – the Curious Tale of the Swiss Glockenspiel –

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Early in 1985 I was sitting in my London office when my secretary chanced upon something in *The Evening Standard*. 'It says here that they're going to erect a glockenspiel on the Swiss Centre in Leicester Square', she said. 'And it's going to be a major West End attraction when it's finished.'

I sensed that this was going to be something of interest to all mechanical musical instrument lovers so I telephoned the Swiss National Tourist Office which, along with the national airline Swissair, ran this distinctive building on the north side of Leicester Square. The man on the switchboard knew all about it and said he'd put me through to the chap in charge of the project. And that is how I got to know the affable Albert Kunz.

To mark the 400th anniversary of Westminster City Council the Swiss National Tourist Office had decided to present its host City with a large and distinctive musical and automaton clock. Central to this was to be a 24-bell carillon, 23 of which would bear the coat of arms of its Canton and the ward of London to which it was attributed. The 24th bell would be dedicated to the City itself.

The bells were to be cast in Switzerland at the bell-foundry of H Ruetschi, SA, of Aarau. They would be played every hour from a player mechanism to the accompaniment of an extensive and complex bucolic parade of animals and country



*Casting the first and largest bell at Aarau, Switzerland, in the summer of 1985*

folk. A large clock would show time, date and sign of the Zodiac.

But Mr Kunz was not a happy man. It seemed that the newspaper story was a bit premature as it had picked up on the local authority planning application and, from it, concluded it was virtually 'a done deal'. It now turned out that it wasn't. The idea of the carillon was OK but nobody had decided where to put it or how to work it.

Mr Kunz appointed me Chief Carillon Adviser to the Swiss National Tourist Office! By the time I left that office an hour or so after I had entered it, I was loaded up with architect's drawings of the façade of the Swiss Centre, Rautschi's bell specifications and a brief to produce something exciting

out of a hat!

A week later I was back with some ideas. The 24 bells were fine but the bell that was considered the lowest was far too light. I carefully adjusted all the bell weights. I admit I cheated here because I simply wrote in the weights recommended by Eijsbouts in Holland whose foundry and fascinating bell museum I had only recently visited. Mr Kunz allowed himself to be persuaded that heavier bells would sound much better against the rumble of modern London traffic.

Then I convinced Mr Kunz to agree to letting me extend the compass upwards a bit. We now had 27 bells – a really good compass for enterprising bell music, ancient and (as would be necessary) modern.



A ceremony at Aarau marked the casting of the first and biggest bell, a fiery and hot event that took place on what seemed to be Switzerland's hottest day of the summer.

Meanwhile we had designed a metal frame armature to fit around the curved façade of the Swiss Centre building. The architect's original drawings for the building showed a really substantial curved concrete beam quite adequate to hang six tons of steelwork and bells on. Only after the armature had been cut and welded in three bolt-togetherable sections was the awful truth discovered – that heavy 'concrete beam' was actually a box having wooden beams and sides! It wouldn't stand the weight of a ham-sandwich, let alone bells! Last-minute changes created a sub-frame of 'I'-section steel anchored to the building's main structure.

Albert Kunz understood the ritual of both blessing and parading bells. Though the parade was denied by circumstance, the blessing had to go ahead. The largest bell – bass C – came over first and was taken to Westminster Cathedral where it received its first blessing, thence to the Methodist Central Hall and finally to Westminster Abbey for its third blessing by The Very Rev Dr Edward Carpenter.

In the interim Albert Kunz had made a very special demand. Could I compose a set of memorable quarter chimes? Because the quarters and hour strike were to be 'visual' features, I was restricted to those bells clustered at the centre adjacent to a large electronic clock, and the two upper outermost ones. These bells were provided with artificial jaquemarts –

Swiss peasant figures dressed in National costume and supposedly pulling the bell hammer with a length of rope.

Within the constraints of the pre-selected bells, I produced what came to be known as Leicester Square Chimes.

The *modus operandi* of the whole thing was a Yamaha TX7 tone-generator keyboard which, suitably modified, could record music onto electronic chips. At that time it was still a new and advanced technique. I consoled myself that at least we had 27 bells, making it the biggest carillon (and the only playable carillon) in London!

Over the weeks that followed the bells were connected to the player mechanism and a long series of late-night and early-morning tests were conducted. We began recording the melodies for the player system which included universally-popular songs, Swiss folk melodies and early English music by Purcell, Blow and Bull. Dr Jan Jaap Haspels is an expert carillonneur and so I was delighted to be able to persuade him to record some of the programme including ancient Dutch carillon-music.

On November 20th 1985, the Lord Mayor of London, Councillor Roger Bramble, and M Jean-Jacques Cevey, president of the Swiss National Tourist Office, unveiled the new open-air attraction. The automaton display was not yet finished so the matter went ahead without it (it was not to be installed until the following Spring). It was a rather cold day with a fitful breeze that tugged at the temporary curtains which obscured the bells until the moment of unveiling. It had cost £400,000 to plan, design, build and erect and London

gratefully accepted it.

Since that November day in 1985 the Swiss Glockenspiel has sounded its music three times a day with a five-minute concert and chimed away the hours with very few adjustments once the hammers with their hard rubber clappers had bedded in. A tourist attraction in its own right, it has been the centre of attention for visitors from all over the world. It has been photographed and recorded thousands of times.

In 1991, the Confederation of Switzerland celebrated its 700th anniversary. The younger City of Westminster marked the occasion by renaming the adjacent New Coventry Street as Swiss Court in perpetuity.

When it was unveiled I recall the Lord Mayor's words: 'It is our fervent hope and desire that this carillon may ring out across the next few hundred years...' Well, bells may be long-lasting but buildings aren't and the distinctive Swiss Centre outgrew its mandate. The Tourist Office and Swissair moved out and, in the fullness of time, the building was sold 'for redevelopment' which is a euphemism for 'demolition'.

The carillon was taken down and the once-bright bells, now bearing more than two decades of London pollution, were trucked back to Switzerland for reconditioning. Some were so corroded they will have to be melted down and re-cast. The Swiss Centre building with its once so distinctive curved façade was pulled down to make way for a new £200m nine-storey building providing 195-room hotel accommodation, penthouse flats and a host of other 21st century attractions.

*Concluded on Page 259...*



Above: The 'Dutch' Cuban organ in a parade in Holland, together with a Dutch street organ by Perlee.  
See article on page 249

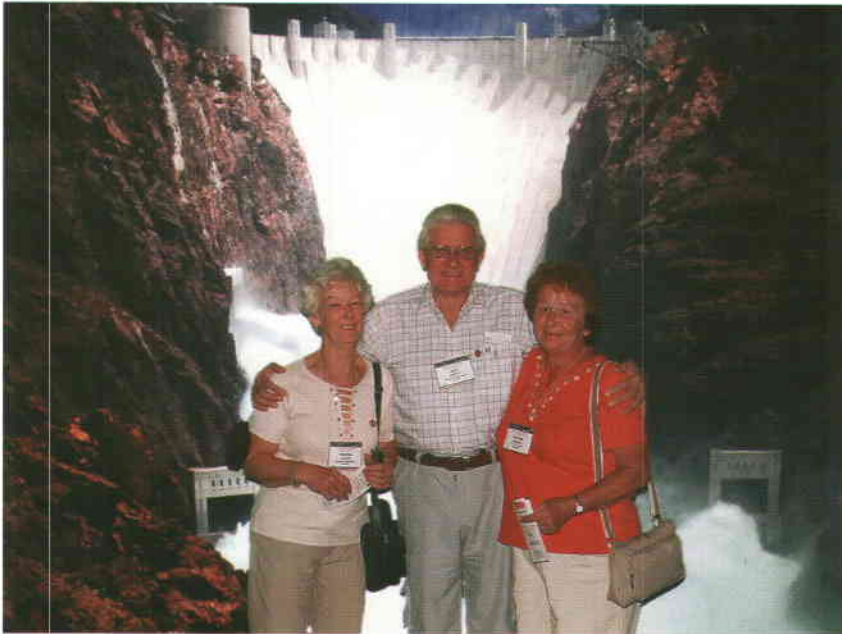


Members admire several small street organs at the Teme Valley Winders meeting at Eastham Grange  
- see article on page 237



# MBSI Convention Memories

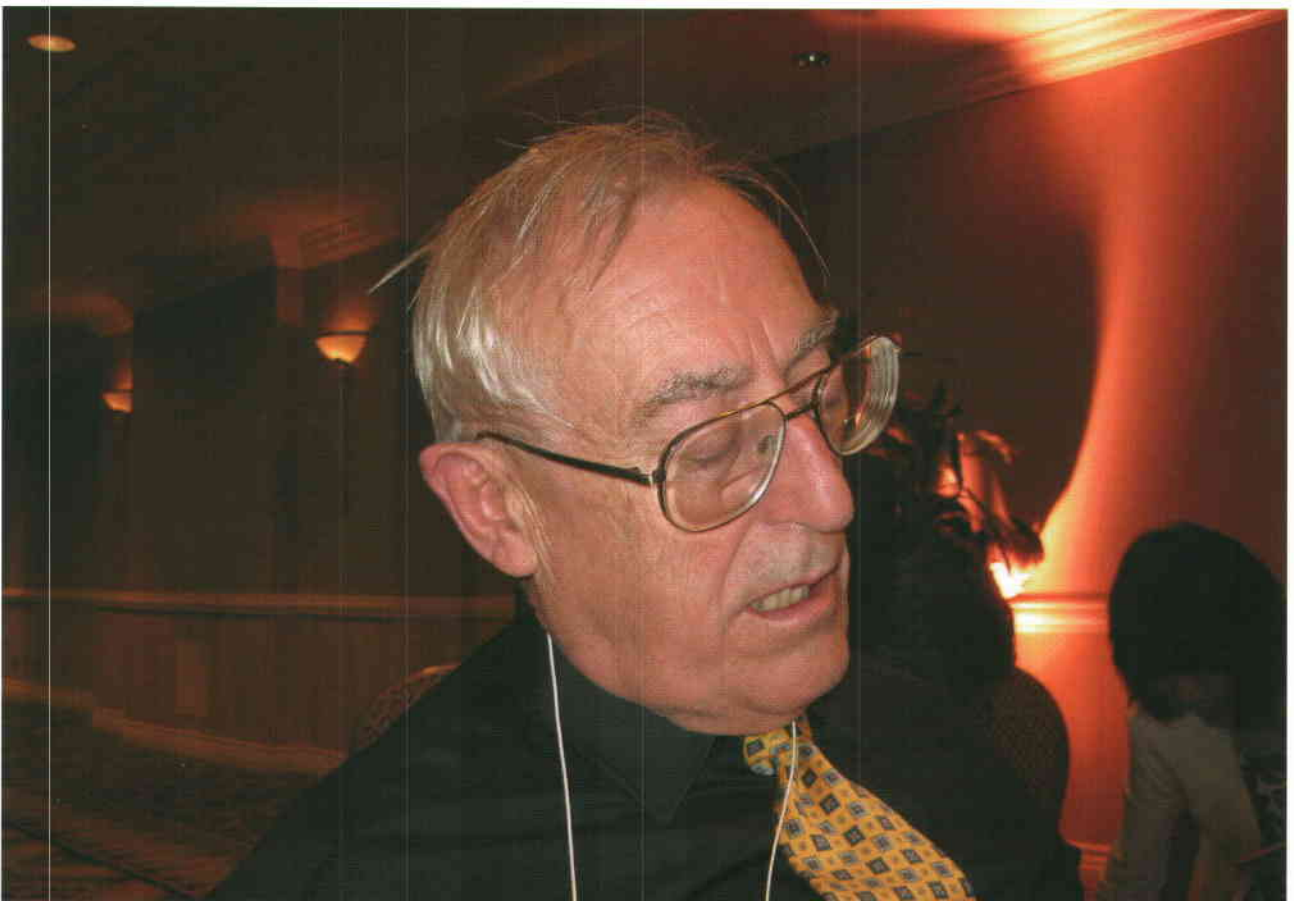
By The Editors



**Dam Hot. 110 Fahrenheit!** MBSGB visits The Hoover Dam. Roy Evett with wife Pamela and Daphne Ladell. Poor Daphne almost melted with the heat.



**Guess Who?** Daphne Ladell sporting her new eye make-up on her way to see the Hoover Dam.



**In The Land of Nod.** Paul Bellamy pictured during Mac King's comedy magic act after the MBSI banquet dinner in Las Vegas. Was he under his spell or had the jet-lag caught up with him?



# A Cuban Street Organ

by Roy Evett

My son and his lady friend decided to marry in April 2006 and choose a beach resort close to Guardalavaca, Cuba for the event.

Shortly after our arrival we were told that there was a “thing” that played music somewhere on the complex and that it was operated twice a week. I thought little of it at the time, there being other “things” on my mind.

However, some days later whilst enjoying a Cuba Libre or two in a little bar on the complex, we heard the unmistakable “hootin’ and a tootin’ of a street organ. At the same time I could hear a Cuban band playing. I downed the Cuba Libre and shot off with Pamela and my brother Dennis to find the organ, muttering all the way to myself about how thoughtless it was for a band to be playing somewhere close by at the same time.

I soon found the organ playing Cuban music and, to my amazement, found it was being accompanied by the band! It was a strange combination but somehow it seemed to work in a way that only the Caribbean’s can do. (Figs 1, 2 and 3).

With my smattering of Costas’ Spanish and a bit of sign language, I managed to explain to the owners that I was a collector of mechanical music machines and immediately we were “amigos”. The three of them proudly demonstrated the organ again and excitedly explained every last detail of operation, though I could understand little of what they were saying.

Sadly, my knowledge of street organs is matched only by my



Fig 1. The Cuban organ by the Cuayo Family of Holguin

knowledge of Spanish and therefore I am unable to impart much of the technical detail of the machine. The bellows were driven by an electric motor and the punched card music book was cranked through by hand. To my partially deaf and untrained ears, the organ had a unique sound quite different to its European counterparts and also looked somewhat different than the street organs I have seen in the past.

I did pick up from the conversation that they claimed the instrument to be in its 100th year. At least that’s what I thought they were saying and it seemed to be borne out by the maker’s plate inside, fig 4, which read: -

FCA. OE. ORGANOS  
HOLGUIN CUBA  
MODELO – 001 – 78  
MUSICAL GROUP  
FROM CUBA  
CUAYO FAMILY  
20 – 12 – 06

The front of the case is carved

with maker’s name: -

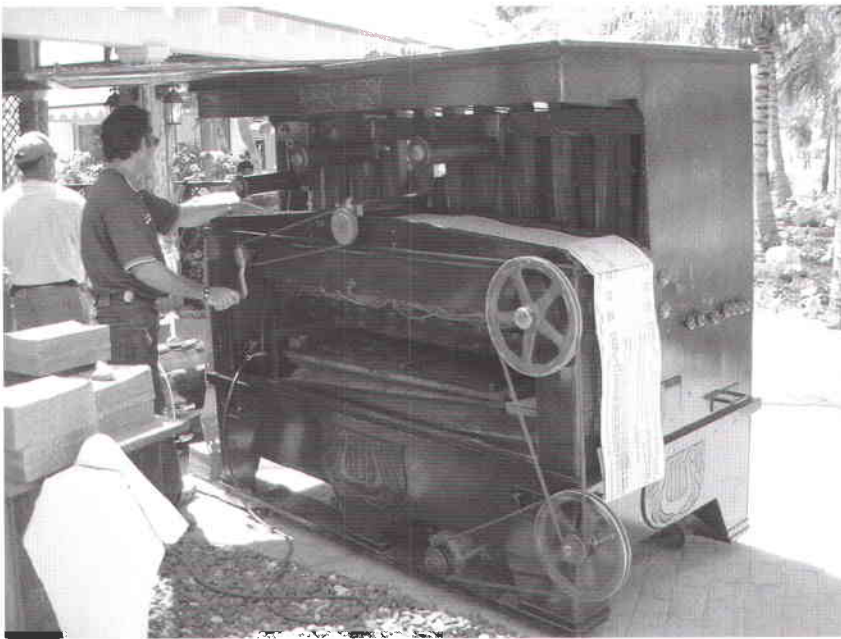
“CUAYO Y SONIDO  
CUBANO”, which I guess  
means: -

“Cuayo and Cuban Sound” fig 5.

Incredibly, although the organ lives outside on the hotel complex, protected from the heat of the sun and the tropical rainstorms by just a few plywood sheets and a plastic tarpaulin, it showed no sign of distress and played beautifully.

I took a few photos, listened to a few more tunes and returned to my Cuba Libres’.

I more or less forgot about the organ until I attended the MBSI meeting in Seattle in 2006. Somewhere along the line I mentioned the Cuban organ and to my surprise, no one had heard of an organ made in Cuba. Then at the annual breakfast I found myself sitting next to a gentleman who told me that he was from Cuba, having moved to



*Fig 2. Keyframe of the Cuayo organ.*

America about twenty-five years ago. Ah, ha, I thought, here we have a native Cuban who is also a music box collector, he must know. But no, he was not aware of any organ makers in Cuba. When I returned to England I asked a number of our members if they had heard anything about Cuban organs. None did. Have I found something special?

Now this was supposed to be the end of my article and I handed it to my neighbour Jim, for proof reading before submitting to our editors.

The very next evening found Jim knocking excitedly on my door.

"Roy" he said, "You will not believe this but as I was driving home today, I switched on the car radio and caught the last three minutes of a program that mentioned someone writing music for a Cuban organ! "

He didn't know the name of the program, just that it was a BBC channel, but did manage to note the names Leon and Milades". An hour or so on my trusty computer found the program in the BBC archives. It was a re-run

of a documentary made in 1996. Entitled "Mucho Corozon" which translates to "With a Lot of Heart", it is a story of the love that developed between a young Cuban girl and a Dutchman.

They had met whilst he was on holiday in Cuba and they found they had something rather unique in common. The young lady, Milades Sosa, was involved in street organ building in Holguin, Cuba. The young man was none other than Leon van Leeuwen, the maternal grandson of the famous Gijsbert Perlee.

I decided that I should try to meet Leon and dig a little deeper. Getting to meet such a busy man, at the times that I could be in Amsterdam, proved to be quite difficult. However, with the help of Arno van der Heijden, I managed to get an appointment for my brother Dennis and I to visit. Arno guided us on bicycles to the Perlee premises in Westerstraat, in the middle of Amsterdam, where after much beating on the doors we were eventually heard and invited in by Leon.

I had expected to have a chat about the Cuban organ over a cup of coffee, but that was

not to be. In fact Leon was quite evasive of the subject and instead gave us a full private tour and demonstration of all his street organs. We were even allowed to crank the machines ourselves. This was wonderful of course and a great honour to have the opportunity to operate such famous organs as "de Arabier", "de Flamingo", "de Drie Pruiken", "de Cello" etc. However, I did become rather frustrated when each time I tried to raise the subject of Cuban organs, Leon made some excuse not to talk about it and went on with his tour.

After an hour or so after we had played the last organ, Leon announced "OK. Now we can say something about those Cuban organs".

He led us behind what we had thought was the final organ and there was a Cuban organ! We were speechless. We recognised it immediately and thought at first that it was the one we had seen in Cuba the year before but I could see that the wording on the front was different. It read "CIEN ANOS DE TRADICION", meaning: - "Hundred years of tradition", fig 6.

Inside there was a small plate that read: -

CADENCIA  
M.R

and a maker's plate fig 12, which read: -

FCA .OE . ORGANOS  
TRADICION .ORIENTAL  
HOLGUIN .CUBA  
M-1A"-V-LXVI  
NO-XV11

Leon showed us two photographs he had affixed to the inside. One was of the Cuayo family outside the organ workshop in Holguin,





Fig 3. A Cuban organ in Holland (Perlee Collection)

fig 7, and one of them playing a different organ somewhere in Cuba, fig 8.

He then went on to tell us a little about Cuban organs and the history of the two organs we had seen.

The Cubans have been building street organs for over 100 years and the city of Holguin was the centre for organ building. Indeed, the only remaining street organ factory left in the Americas is in Holguin.

The Cuban organ is used as an accompaniment to a band and often a troupe of dancers. Because it is an accompaniment and not a “stand alone” music machine, they leave out the percussion section. This must have been the difference in sound that I had detected when I heard it in Cuba.

In the early 1990s a Dutch organisation (the Council for Culture I think) arranged an exhibition and tour of music from around the world. Naturally, the Perlee organs would form part and Leon suggested that the Cubans were invited. The

Cuayo family accepted and duly arrived with their organ, band and dance troupe to join the tour with Leon and “de Arabier”.

During the tour, Leon became fascinated with this curious Cuban organ and eventually made an offer to buy it. After much soul searching the Cuayos’ accepted what must have seemed to them more like a king’s ransom. This was followed by great emotion and tears from

the owners. They had sold a piece of their history.

Now back to the machine we had seen in Cuba. Leon told us that it was not 100 years old, in fact, he had helped build it as a replacement in 1996. It was built from an assortment of old Cuban and European parts in much the same way as they manage to keep their cars going.

Unfortunately, as I was just expecting a short chat, I had taken neither camera nor note book with me. Leon said he would let me have photographs of the organ and of his time in Cuba but sadly I have not been able to contact him again. Then earlier this year, Arno spotted an advertisement in an Amsterdam newspaper saying the Cuban organ was to be played in a town some miles away. Knowing I did not have pictures he kindly went along and took the necessary photos of it being played by Leon alongside a small band. Figs 9, 10 and 11.

Now that is as much as I know about the Cuban organ but what I have found seems to open up a can of worms that maybe other



Fig 4. Photograph of the Cuayo family on the frame of the 'Dutch' Cuban organ.



readers can help sort out.

1. The date on the maker's plate on the machine in Cuba seems to be a later addition done with a different punch. The model number also has the appearance of '-78' having been added.

2. The carving on front of the machine in Holland says "Cien Anos De Tradicion", a term more appropriate to a machine just built.

3. Is the maker's plate on the machine in Holland really 100 years old and how should we interpret the roman numerals?

Is 'M-1A"-V-LXVI' the model number or is it the date 1/5/66?

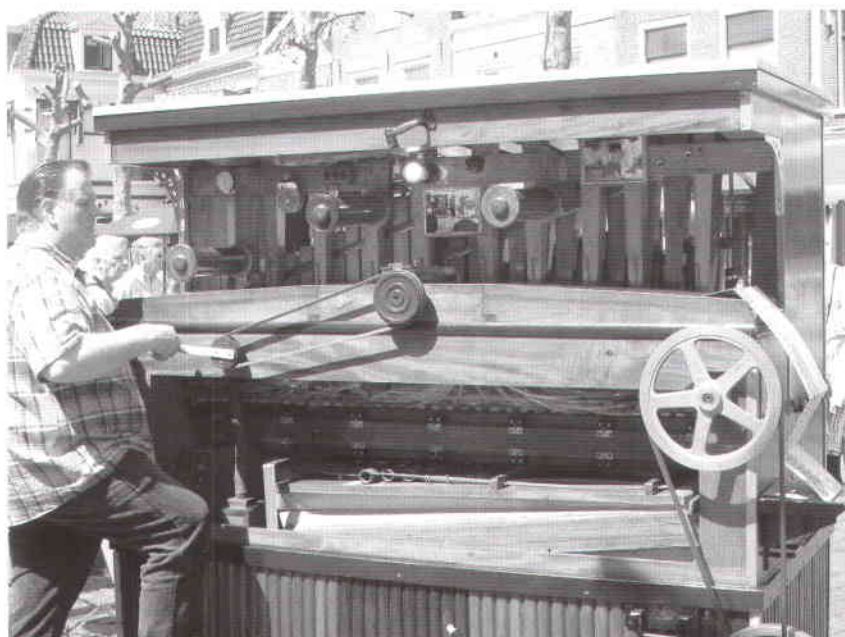
Is 'NO-XVII' the serial number 17?

Perhaps it was just a bit of jiggery pokery to get past the politics and bureaucracy of two governments that eventually suffocated the love affair between Leon and Milades.

In April 2008 the Perlee collection of street organs was sold to The National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht. I wonder how they will demonstrate the Cuban organ without a band.



*Fig 5. Leon van Leeuwen (behind the organ) playing with a small band in Cuban style.*



*Fig 6. Leon van Leeuwen at the key frame.*

## Gifts! – Lost for ideas?

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# Stephen Rimbault's Clock

## A four-train musical bracket clock

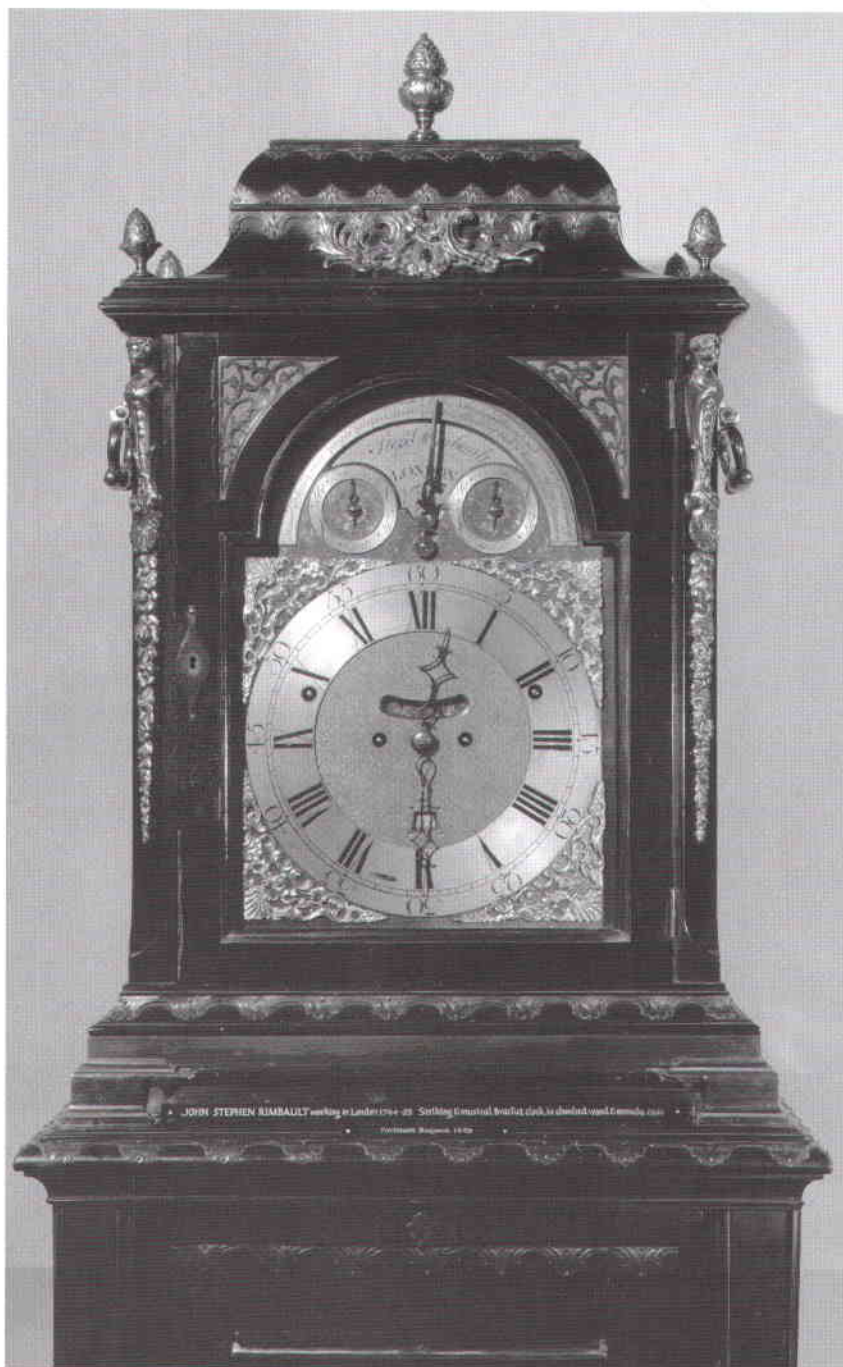


Fig 1. Bracket clock by Stephen Rimbault, London. Reproduced by kind permission of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The invention of the musical box is indisputably that of the Swiss, Antoine Favre. Like most inventions, they are not always as original as one might think, more of a development of something else. All the elements of the musical box existed for many years and particularly through the close association with the watchmaker.

Although Favre was the 'father' of the musical box, it was left to other watchmakers to develop a musical novelty into a truly remarkable musical instrument in its own right, independent of the watch.

On the MBSG Oxford Meeting on Friday 23rd March 2007, we visited the Ashmolean Museum of

Art and Archaeology. Here there is a fine example of a musical clock by Stephen Rimbault, a London maker between 1744 and 1785. The illustration is by courtesy of the museum. The clock sits on a matching pedestal (partially shown). The height from clock base to the top finial is 75.5cm and it is 41.5cm wide, 28cm deep.

It is a four-train quarter-chiming and striking fusee bracket clock with verge escapement, the case made from ebonised wood with ormolu embellishments. The main dial is silvered brass, 23cm diameter. The left small dial hand can be set to 'Strike/Silent' and the right dial can be set to 'Chime/Silent'. The chime is very beautiful, played on the same set of twelve tuned bells used for playing the music.

There is a total of twelve airs (Sic): When late I wander, Rule Britannia, Attick Fire, March in Scipio, Minuet in Sampson, Belleishe March, Jolly Mortals, Stanleys Gavot, Hearts of Oak, A March, Sr Chas Sedley's Minuet and Rakes of Marlow. The names are engraved around the top of the dial.

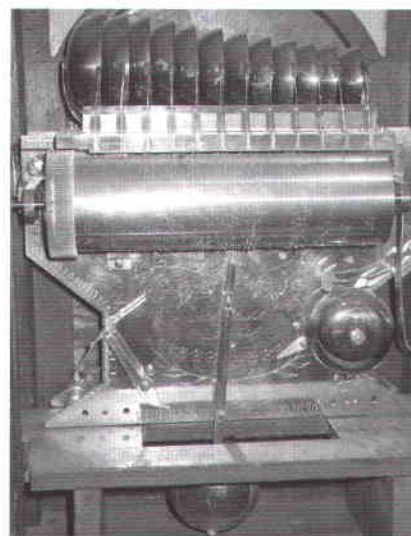


Fig 2. A similar musical clock movement by Thwaites & Reed of London, 1802. (Editors' Coll)



Each bell has two strikers. The musical mechanism (not shown because the clock stands against a glass showcase so cannot be photographed) lies at the back of the case. The bells are mounted horizontally. The strikers are steel hammers on slender shanks fitted to a pivoted support. The support has a small steel projection that is activated by a pinned brass cylinder. The cylinder looks remarkably like a standard 13-inch musical box movement, being similar in diameter and length. Thus, this is a musical box movement in all but name.

Favre, of course, recognised this fact in his description of his two-tune musical movement of 1796, fitted into a tin box that he called 'a carillon without bells or hammers'. The Rimbault movement shows exactly how apt the Favre description is. The 'Invention' was to dispose of the hammers and to pluck directly tuned springs or teeth. Favre's invention also allowed for miniaturisation of the musical elements, the bells. Tuned teeth take up far less space than bells but they cannot be plucked twice in quick succession (even after the invention of the damper by François Nicole). The musical volume of the tuned tooth needed the addition of the lead or brass

weight to compete with the bells. A cylinder equivalent in length to the Rimbault clock can play many more teeth than bells.

Favre's invention is therefore a piece of lateral thinking that had certain advantages, the potential of which took many more years to be exploited by others and was to be the basis of the musical box industry. Rimbault himself exploited someone else's invention of 'tuned bells', which had been used in domestic clocks going back at least as far as the 13-bell carillon clock by Nicholas Vallin dated 1598 now in the British Museum. Illustrations of it can be seen in, amongst other publications, 'Early English Clocks' by Dawson, Drover and Parkes (Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge, 1982). Vallin himself adapted the even earlier public carillon clocks used in churches to domestic use, and these, indeed, were developed from the first 'turret' clocks without dials, also used in churches. One of the first striking turret clocks was installed in the Church of San Gottardo in Milan in 1335. Literally, we can truly say 'what goes around comes around' when old ideas are revamped with lateral thinking and up-dated technology.

## Aeolian Pipe Organ CD Review

The eagerly awaited first recording is now available of Paul Morris 'new' three manual Aeolian Pipe Organ, called 'The Re-birth of Aeolian Pipe Organ Opus.1458'.

Paul had a two manual Aeolian which I helped him to sell a few years ago in order that he could replace it with this instrument which took seven years to restore and install in his home in Exeter, Devon, England.

The instrument is installed in a main chamber 20ft by 9ft 6 inches, with a pedal loft 20ft high. There are currently 9 ranks of pipes on chest No.1, 10 on rank No.2, 5 in the floating Solo division, a wonderful four ranks in the pedal division and three in the Echo. There are also in addition a harp and some chimes giving plenty of scope for full orchestral renditions of a wide range of music. Full details of the opening concert were given in a recent Player Piano Group magazine article.

There is an 8-page book included which gives the full specification and history of the

### Antique Musical Box Repairs and Restoration

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The restored three-manual console of Aeolian Opus 1458  
in the music room of its new home in Blackall Road, Exeter, Devon, England

instrument, along with a centre-spread of illustrations of nine of the Organists from the period who recorded Duo-Art rolls for this Re-producing system. For those that do not remember, the system automatically plays the notes required but in addition controls the stops used and the swell shutters to give a fully reproduced performance of the recording made by the organist.

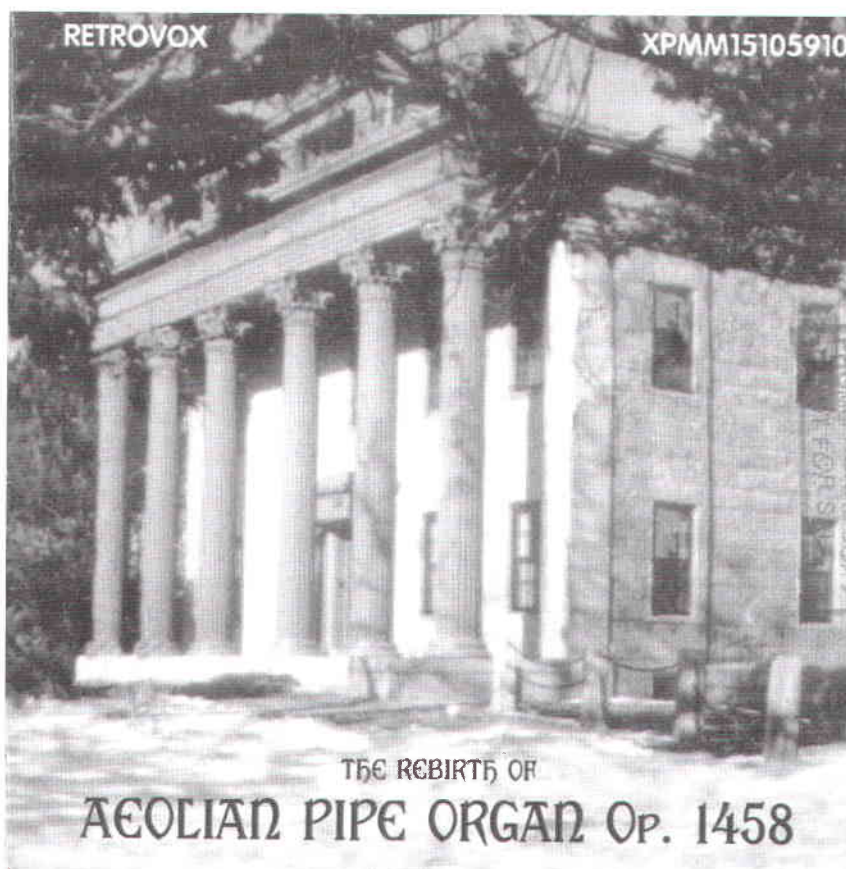
This recording starts with one of my favourite First World War Marches, *Over There*, by George M. Cohan, a rousing start to any programme sure to get the foot tapping. However, much of the recording is given over to more subtle pieces that better show off the nuances and colour combinations of this fine instrument. Many of these tunes were only sold on the 176 note Duo-Art format and were not available on the earlier 116 note and 58 note rolls. The selections we hear include

From the Land of the Sky Blue Water by Cadman, *Le Tango du Reve*, *Woodland Sketches*, Op.51, No.6 & 8, *In the Fairy Glen*, *A Day in Venice*, *Marche*

*Champetre*, *In a Patio* and *Harvest Festival* [Appropriate for this time of year], *After a Dream* and *Evensong*.

I was not familiar with many of the titles, which meant that I was listening more to the instrument rather than just to the tunes. Paul Morris has hand-played one track, *The Love Nest* but the rest are played by organists which include Archer Gibson, Uda Waldrapp, Clarence Eddy, Edwin Lemare, Peietro Yon, Firmin Swinnen and Charles Heinroth.

There are 22 tracks in all and I encourage all readers to buy a copy, either for themselves or to give as a Christmas Present for family members, to introduce them to this fascination musical world. Copies will be available directly from Paul Morris at [musicurio@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:musicurio@yahoo.co.uk), but I expect to have a small stock to take round to shows and meetings myself, [kevin\\_mcelhone@hotmail.com](mailto:kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com)



Front cover of the CD, showing the original home of Opus 1458  
- the Langshaw residence, New Bedford, Massachusetts

# Musical Box Oddments No. 119

By H. A. V. Bulleid

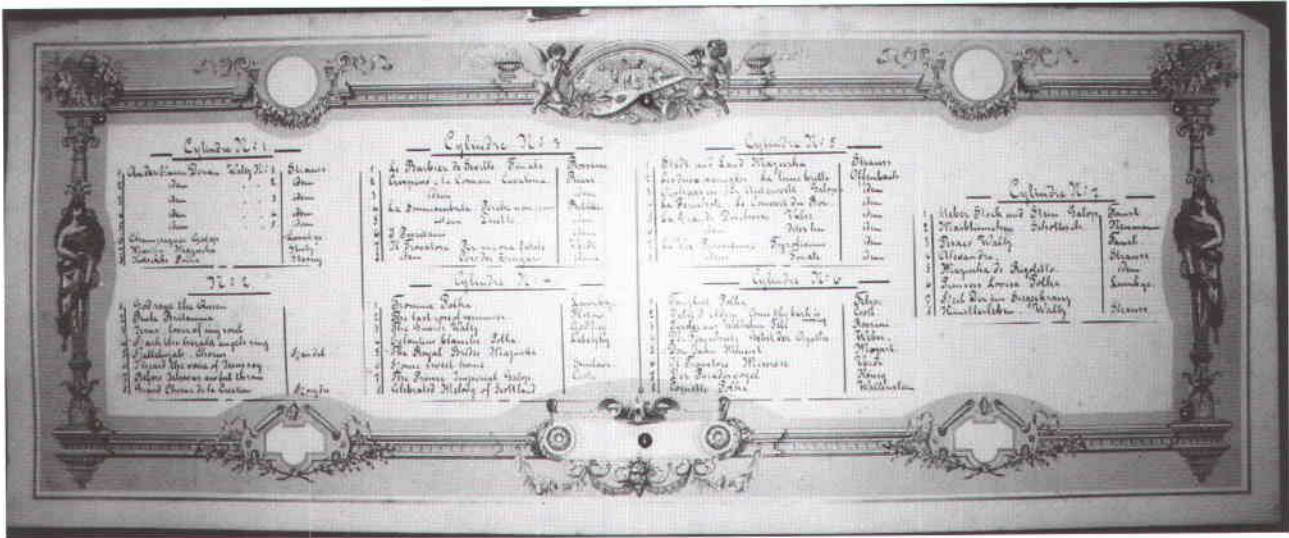


Fig. 1. A typical Rechange cylinder box tune sheet, crowded by seven cylinders.

## Multi-cylinders

There was obviously a great deal of sighing for extra tunes, which had to mean extra cylinders, before these started to be available, about 1850. Even then they had serious limitations, because the cylinder with its arbor and a gear each end is an integral part of the power train. It cannot be removed without serious implications. Everyone in the business started inventing devices, and some were sufficiently successful to allow makers to supply boxes with a few additional cylinders. These were named Rechange, which translates to changeable, able to be changed, which unluckily has a second and ulterior meaning in English.

These Rechange boxes quite honestly did not do a darn thing for the person who simply wanted an extra cylinder. All they did was to allow you to buy more tunes initially. If then you wanted one more, that was too bad. But the need was recognized and something had got to be done about it. The brainier engineers - sorry, horologists - saw that it could only come by removing the cylinder from the complete gear train. More patents resulted, and

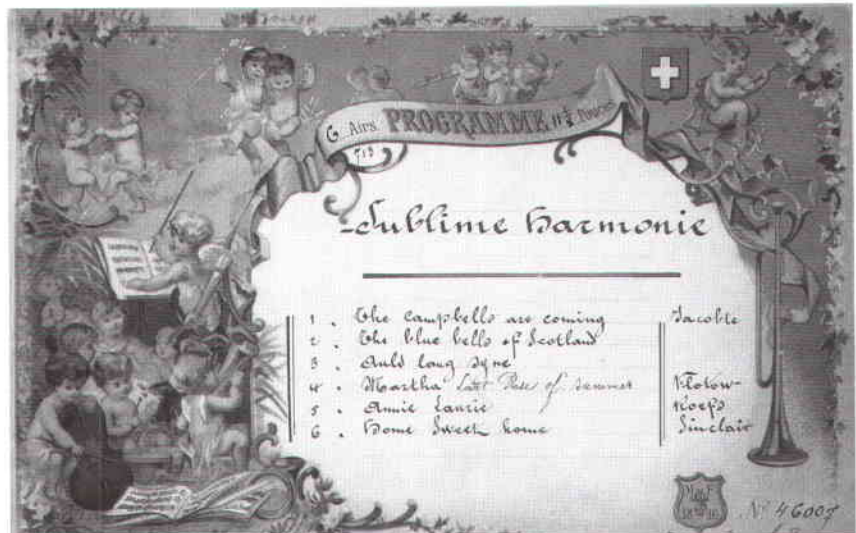


Fig. 2. The calm elegance of an interchangeable cylinder's personalized tune sheet with Mermod's allocated serial number, 46,007.



Fig. 3. Paillard's attempt to explain things on one document.





Fig. 4. Mermod's explanatory style.

Arthur Junod and A. Paillard among others produced acceptable results, so that cylinders could be removed and replaced with a reasonable degree of safety.

Unfortunately one technical snag remained. With Rechange boxes, the maker could line up all the cylinders in accurate playing position. But when it came to extra cylinders made later and for boxes with varying age and maintenance, Paillard rightly felt that the close manufacturing tolerances could not be relied upon and he increased the tune track widths on all his interchangeable cylinders from 0.017" to 0.022". That gave room for cumulative lining-up errors of up to 0.0025" either way, before the tooth-pin contact was upset. It became the standard for interchangeables and had the annoying side effect of reducing the number of teeth in

a comb by about one quarter. So, for example, a normal box with 13" cylinder playing six airs with about 128 comb teeth would be reduced to about 98 teeth. The famous formula becomes:  $T = 46L/N$ ... no. of teeth = 46 times the length in inches divided by the number of tunes.

Rechange cylinders, of which there were usually less than five, were simply numbered from 1 upwards and normally crowded onto one larger tune sheet, like nos. 252 (Bremond) and 308 (P-V & f) in the series. This system groaned a bit when there were more than about six cylinders, as threatened in Fig. 1.

Every interchangeable cylinder usually had its own personal serial-numbered tune sheet, a popular example being Mermod's, as in Fig. 2. Some makers felt they simply must have the magic word

"Interchangeable" on every tune sheet, as in Figs. 3 and 4. You can't help feeling sorry for those girls who had to keep writing that interminable "Interchangeable," sometimes artistically curved!

It is one of Life's Great Mysteries that, after the decade of excitement about them up to and even beyond 1905, Interchangeable boxes hardly ever get to Auction with more than one cylinder. Now, over a hundred years later, there are always people wanting extra cylinders, and there are cylinders that have got separated from their box. The Musical Box Society contact for them is David Worrall, a Committee member with address in the list of Officers of the MBSGB (to whom details of stray cylinders without their box should helpfully be sent.)

### The Lion of Lucerne.

A copy of this huge sandstone carving at the Lake of Lucerne has at last turned up, in style, on a musical box case. Luckily the music is of matching quality, - super mandoline from a 17" (43cm) cylinder and 176 comb teeth, serial 9945. The case and the dedication are in Figs. 5 and 6.

### Sorry, no tune sheet.

Yet again, here is a real quality organ box with 13" cylinder, ten airs, 16 organ notes, double spring drive and speed controller, - but no tune sheet. Presumably the tune numbers were in Arabic notation just like on the tune indicator shown in Fig. 7.

### Song and Dance Spectacular.

An unusual, well-endowed, coin operated, interchangeable cylinder musical box has turned up suddenly. It is housed in a special case with glazed top and front combined in a lockable lift-up lid, see Fig. 8. It has crank winding, double springs, 10" (25cm) cylinders, drum, six bells, tune indicator and five dancing girls. Music is from sublime harmonic combs. Both case sides are pierced right through with scroll patterns, allowing good sound radiation



Fig. 5. The ornate 42" (1067mm) case of serial 9945.





Fig. 6. The Lion of Lucerne with dedication to the loyalty and courage of the Swiss Guards.

without having to lift the lid, which would give undesirable access to the cash drawer. Unfortunately, possibly in the name of Progress, the coin-operation feature has been removed.

### Replacement tune plaques.

Many good overture boxes of the 1840s and 1850s came with rather trivial tune sheets, as seen in nos. 237 and 238 of our series. And many have since had a hard life. So, while preserving the original, it is well worth making an engraved plaque as a replacement. All concerned with the project should combine to ensure accuracy and style throughout. One surfaced recently, as seen in Fig. 9, which serves its purpose but could be improved...

General appearance:- fixing screws should be right in square-cut corners or at the centres of curved corners. Main heading should be OUVERTURES. Lettering used for the composers should be nearer the same size as the tune titles, which are rather small. Details:- all nouns, names, and places should have capitals (even Bacio the Kiss). Also, "overture" and the corrected "Act II" should always precede the tune title. Tune 2 final e is missing from Trovatore, but that was only a song by Rossini, so possibly Verdi?

This plaque does its job and technical quality is very good; and I offer my apologies for casually using it to indicate the things that can go wrong.



Fig. 8. Long-running, interchangeable, percussion and dancers.

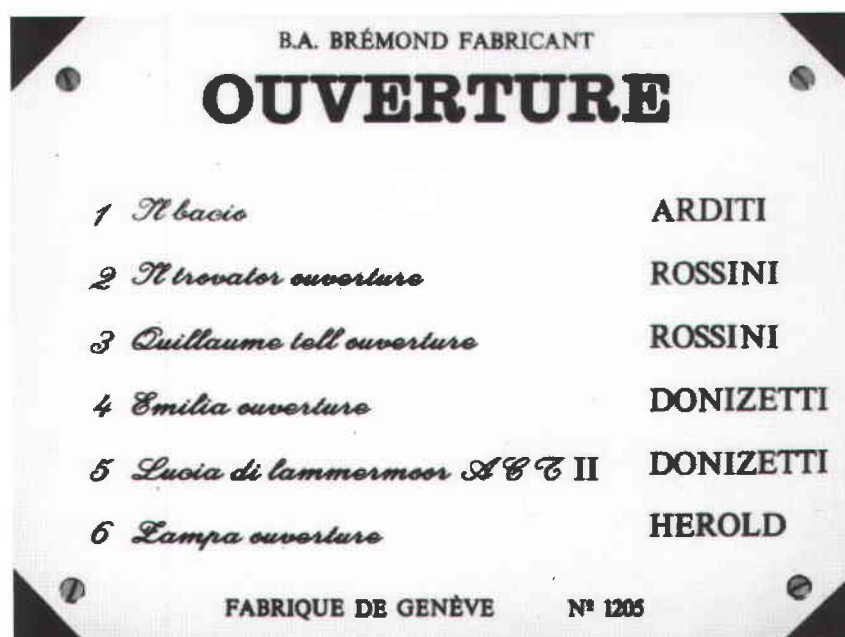


Fig. 9. Replacement tune plaque. All 9 Figs. Thanks to Tim Reed.

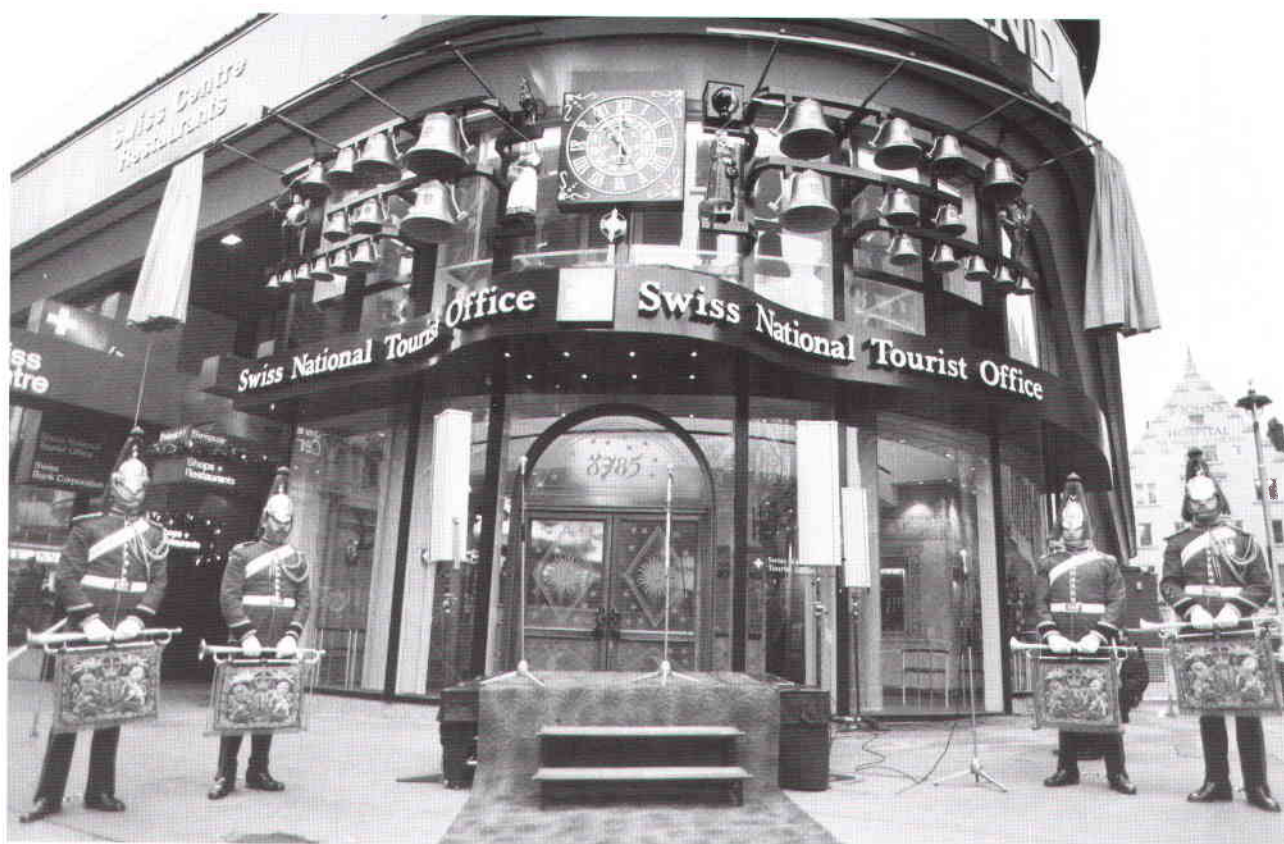


Fig. 5. After the ceremony and trumpeters await guests for a special reception



Fig. 2 The blessing of the largest bell

## Westminster's Carillon

...Continued from Page 246

But the bells shall rise again! The glockenspiel shall arise again, this time on an impressive free-standing arch across Swiss Court next to a Cantonal Tree bearing

all the coats of arms of the Swiss Cantons. The new carillon should be in place by the end of the year – the largest and most complete set of bells to play in the whole of London – including the City of Westminster!



Fig. 4. The Lord Mayor of London, left, with Jean-Jacques Cevey, president of the Swiss National Tourist Office at the presentation ceremony. Note the curtains poorly concealing the carillon above



# News from Other Societies

from John Farmer

## **Mechanical Music, Vol 54, No.3, May/June 2008**

In "Mechanical Mozart", Hendrik Strengers reports on a special meeting at the National Museum van Speelklok tot Pierement in Utrecht, to present a musical programme on a reconstructed clock organ dating from 1826. The unfinished organ was made by Diederich Nicolaus Winkel, who passed away in September 1826 before he was able to finish the instrument. It was eventually acquired by the museum, and recently restored by the museum's restoration team. They also created a new cylinder which plays Mozart's Andante KV616, one of his last compositions, and it was played at the event. The museum has also published a book, *Mechanical Mozart*, describing mechanical music in literature, Winkel, the history of Mozart's organ clock compositions, and the restoration of the organ. (Seems to be a must have for the Archives).

Dan Robinson writes about the ten surviving examples of the Wurlitzer 165 Band Organ, and Dan Choffnes covers the Phonograph in Education, both articles being well illustrated. Joseph Roesch covers mainspring barrel hook repair in Shop Notes, and Tom Meijer writes about the history and restoration of the "Minerva" Mortier organ (reprinted from *Het Pierement*).

## **Mechanical Music, Vol 54, No.4, July/August 2008**

In "Treasures of a Music Box Dealer" part 1, Coulson Conn and Chet Ramsay show off a 26" upright Stella that came with a number of original pieces of equipment. These included a Stella catalogue, and oil applicator for discs, with instructions, two bottles of oil, and a metal syringe for oiling the motor. They also show a B.H Abrahams cylinder box in an upside down box. When carried

by its top handle, the movement is upside down, and the base is the lid. They surmise this was a salesman's demonstration box. Their third item is a modern reproduction of an art deco Regina 8" auto-change disc musical box (although it only plays a single disc).

Larry Karp gives a comprehensive overview of the Musical Photo Album with many illustrations, and covering several different styles, including disc versions. Hendrik Strengers finds yet more information about mechanical music business in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia and Peter Craig writes about "A Mortier Came to Britain" (reprinted from *Vox Humana*).

## **The Key Frame (Issue KF2-08)**

The AGM of F.O.P.S. was a special event this year, it being the 50th. It was held at the premises of the Herbert Silcock family, and to make it extra special, the ex-Tom Alberts 98 key Marengi was present, this being the organ that started F.O.P.S. according to Rudy Nijs. Also reported on in this issue is the 2nd SouthWestern Organ Festival, held at Dingles fairground Heritage Centre in May.

Fred Dahlinger concludes his detailed and well-illustrated Celebration of Gavioli 65 key Band organs, and Roel Raskert tells the story of the World's Largest Travelling Concert organ. This is "Victory", a new Concert Organ commissioned by Willem Kelders and his family in 2001 and completed by Johnny Verbeeck in May 2003. The organ now earns its keep by travelling around Europe. My Early Years, is an autobiographical from Kevin Meayers, (including his appearance on Blue Peter), and Musical Roots by Andy Hinds covers George Botsford, the composer of Black and White Rag, recorded by

Winifred Atwell in 1951.

Also announced in this issue is the launch of "Fair Organ Focus". The book, by member Philip Upchurch and with a forward by Dorothy Robinson traces and commemorates the first fifty years of F.O.P.S. (I must get a copy for the Archives).

## **Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXVII, No.2, 2008**

This usually American flavoured journal takes on a distinctly European taste this time, starting with Lawton W. Posey's article about the Estey organ in Glasgow Cathedrals' Chapel, followed by Michael Hendron's French Harmonium Hunt (Part 1), in which he describes five reed organs discovered in Paris whilst on vacation. Part 2 is to follow.

Joop Rodenburg follows the trend with his article about the Reed Organ (or 'urkuharmooni') in Finland. The country had several reed organ builders, some of which survived into the 1980s. Bengt Edqvist then writes about the Swedish reed Organ (or 'tramporgel'), there having been some 120 Swedish reed organ manufacturers. Jim Tyler adds a twist to the European theme with his story of a Mason & Hamlin instrument located in Utah, which was for sale on Ebay. This was a model 1400, being a "French-style" instrument with European-made harmonium action. It was subsequently purchased by Louis Huivenaar in Holland. It is hoped to learn more about its European innards in due course.

Back to England, Rev. Tony Newnham reports on the Saltaire Festival, 2007, when he gave a recital on several of the organs in the reed organ collection of Pam and Phil Fluke, which is housed in the Victoria Hall. Then Mark



Jefford gives part 6 of his on-going series (Four Harmoniums, Eight Reed Organs and Ten Sloping Stools). Departing Europe we finish off in New Zealand with Milton Wainwright and his story of two ex-church organs.

### **Organ Grinders News, No. 65, Summer 2008**

Two BOGA member have been honoured recently, Peter Risley, with the MBE, for his support for the British Diabetic Association, and Maureen Pilgrim, given the Silver Wolf scouting award for exceptional services to scouting.

Terry Pankhurst writes about his home built Portative Organ, a small hand blown portable keyboard organ, like those dating from Roman times, and Dave and Mavis Baldock describe their home-made "Sidmouth Morris Men" automata which enhances their McCarthy 14 note organ.

Reports on the Annual Gathering at the Black Country Museum in May, and the Milestones event, also in May, complete this issue.

### **Player Piano Group – Bulletin 187, June 2008**

The first report in this edition of the bulletin is the official opening of the Musical Museum, in Brentford. Representatives from the Heritage Lottery fund, the Mayor of Hounslow, and various other dignitaries were there to see Sir Christopher Frayling, great grandson of Daniel Imhof, and Chairman of the Arts Council, formally open the museum. The unveiling of a plaque was followed by Richard Cole, rising through the floor, at the controls of the Wurlitzer.

A report of the PPG AGM at St. Albans Organ museum follows, and having attended this event myself, I was particularly impressed by the entertainment. Several of the organs were played before the meeting, then we had dinner followed by an amazing accordionist, Romano

Viazzani, who later accompanied the singing of Margaret Davis. We were also treated to the Pianola playing of Paul Morris, and an excellent performance on the Wurlitzer by Len Rawle.

Adam Ramet appears to be going in for long distance restoration, having rebuilt an Angelus stack whilst on holiday in New Zealand. He gives details of the work in his well-illustrated article. New Zealand is also the theme of Julian Dyer's article based on various documents preserved from piano dealers Collier & Co. of Wanganui, NZ, which includes reprints of several interesting letters. Finally, Adam Ramet extends his investigations into copyright battles during the early days of the player piano, with a discovery that Winston Churchill was drawn into the subject, and believed that piano rolls did infringe copyright (of sheet music), but gramophone records did not.

### **Non-English journals**

#### **Das Mechanische Musikinstrument (Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente), No. 102, August 2008**

Highlights:-

- A Bremond from heaven (previously in Mechanical Music Jan/Feb 07)
- Austrian Musical Boxes
- The 3-Groschen opera
- The 3-Groschen opera Organ
- Orchestrien builder Johannes Rudolf Haase
- The Pne-Ukelele

#### **Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde Mechanischer Musik No. 103, August 2008**

Highlights:-

- Piano building in Switzerland, past and present.
- What has a Steinway Duo-Art to do with the Hug Music Company?
- The restoration of a large Limonaire Concert Organ
- The Pne-Ukelele

## **New Members**

We welcome the following new members who have joined us since the last journal was printed. If you would like to get in touch with members near to you please contact the correspondence secretary. If you would like to start a NEW Local area group please contact Kevin McElhone on 01536 726759 or kevin\_mcelhone@hotmail.com or Ted Brown on 01403 823533 as either will be pleased to advise.

3032 Mr & Mrs. T.& S.Armitage Surrey

3030 (joint) Mr.M.Izzo. Worcs

2976 (joint) Mr.I.Svenson Sussex

3033 Mr.M.Natrass. Essex.

It is interesting to note that two of these new members are joint members because their partner has enthused them and another is the son of one of our members who attends the local group in Essex. If you have any friends or visitors who show interest in your collection and who might like to join please contact Kevin for a free sample back-issue of the magazine or a supply of joining forms.

**To get the most out of your membership - join a local group.**

### **TO ACCESS THE MBSGB FORUM ON THE WEB SITE**

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

User name: **musicalbox**  
Password: **BABREMOND**

## Letters to the Editors

### From Roy Ison:

Dear Sirs,

I would like to correct some errors that were made in the last edition of Register News concerning the boxes made by François Nicole. I have talked to the registrar and he agrees that these corrections need to be made.

1 All François Nicole boxes found to date have been fitted into cases that have exposed controls. No drop flap cases seem to have been used.

2 The exposed levers were of the flat lever type whilst later ones may have the exposed "button" type.

3 Combs found on early boxes may have no name stamp or when stamped the mark is F. NICOLE. Later boxes have Francis NICOLE on the comb. Some clock movements of later manufacture may still have F. NICOLE stamped on the comb.

4 All François Nicole boxes have scribed "square pattern" cylinders.

I have photographed and recorded details of 24 known François Nicole boxes both in private and museum collections in the USA and Europe and I am willing to share any knowledge I have. No doubt as further boxes are discovered this information will be extended and modified.

Should any member have doubts about a François Nicole box, please contact me and I will be pleased to

help with information and photographs.

**Roy Ison.**

*Tel: (01522) 540406*

*randm@bight.demon.co.uk*

*MBSGB No 2758*

### From Bill Cooper, West Sussex:

Sir,

One cannot say I never send a letter to the society, so off we go again. Recently there was a mention of manivelles - 'Toy Musical Boxes', in the last issue. One doesn't often see them for sale, but in a local auction recently there were two, I picked them up one at a time and gave them a good shake, the man behind me said "they are kids' music boxes, you turn the little handle and they play". They were both OK - no teeth missing.

1.H-H, The ooper zou (very faint to read)

2.Worceslee

Many years ago I sold one to Clive Jones for his museum. Seeing that they were for children, it's a wonder any survived

**Yours**

**Bill Cooper**

### From Arthur Cunliffe:

Sir,

I wonder if I could ask the membership for help and advice on the making of cardboard books suitable for use with a Racca Piano

Melodico. I have never made a music book in my life before and no doubt there will be many pitfalls.

The thickness of both the original and the modern reproductions seems to be half a millimetre, so I presume I would be looking for a card around half that thickness to glue together in a zigzag manner to make a book. Using a card that was the full thickness would mean that a fold when scored for bending would have a weakness, but this is only my view on the matter and I may be completely wrong!

If someone could start me off in the correct manner, I would be most appreciative. Probably I would only wish to make 2 or 3 books so making punches or making sophisticated machinery would be going over the top. Hand cutting of the books, whilst tedious, may be the sensible way to do it.

Can anyone advise where I can obtain a suitable cardboard and what is the best glue to use to stick the folds together? Any other advice would be most welcome except possibly, "don't do it". Of course I would have to find original copies of the books to copy, so if anyone has O Sole Mio and Carnival of Venice in 48 note Racca books, please may I borrow them to make a paper template of the tune.

Always the optimist

**Arthur Cunliffe.**

# John Sands

**Arthur Cunliffe writes:**

As mentioned in the report on the Autumn Meeting, sadly John Sands passed away during the Saturday of that event.

Following on from a life-long interest in musical boxes John became a member of the Society about ten years ago. In the last five years John and Monica were able to attend all of our meetings having decided to take life a little easier. They obviously enjoyed these events very much and we too enjoyed their company.

John left school with excellent qualifications and soon forged a distinguished career for himself. He became a lecturer in electro-mechanical engineering with his talent in that area being in demand. He served in the Royal Navy where he rose to a senior rank. Using his skills as an engineer, he was able to contribute to the effectiveness of many vessels in the navy including submarines.

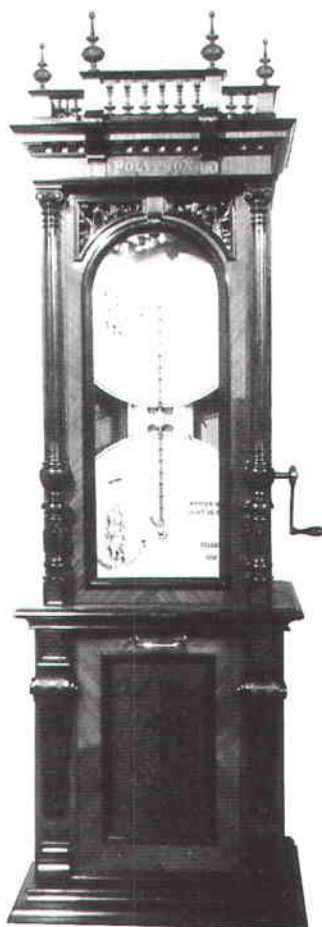
In later life, John and Monica ran a successful antiques business in Stow-on-the-Wold. Here there were usually one or two musical boxes on display. Those who were interested in such items always received a particularly warm welcome with nothing being too much trouble.

We extend our sympathy to Monica and family at this sad time and hope that they might have a little comfort that at the end John was among friends pursuing the hobby he liked most. He will be sadly missed by all of us.



*Keith Harding*  
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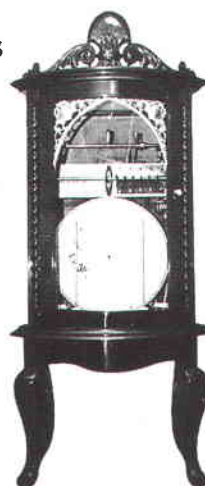
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## CLASSIFIED WANTS

**Any old catalogues** and musical box ephemera. Please contact Ted Brown on 01403 823 533.

**Organette music** wanted. Any Dolcina card music, Organetta, 14-note Melodia & Clarion music. All other organette music, bands, spools and discs considered. Contact Ted Brown on 01403 823 533.

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**31-note Maxfield organette rolls** or bands (5 1/2" wide) Any condition. These are like Celestina but with round holes. Contact Bruce 01702 232040

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*Closing date for the next issue is*

**1st February 2009**

**Deadline dates for Display Advertising Copy**

1st April; 1st July;

1st October; 1st February

Editorial copy **must** be submitted at least 8 days prior to above dates

**Posting of magazine:**

27th February; 27th April;

7th August; 7th November

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE:

**1st February 2009**

Minimum cost each advertisement £5.00.

Members: 16p per word

(bold type 8p per word extra)

Minimum cost each advertisement £9.50

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CASH WITH ORDER PLEASE TO:

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# Mechanical Music sales at Bonhams

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18 November 2008  
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