

The

Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue:

- Collector's Showcase
- Getting Organised
- Making a Musical Box
- Attention ... Music

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music.

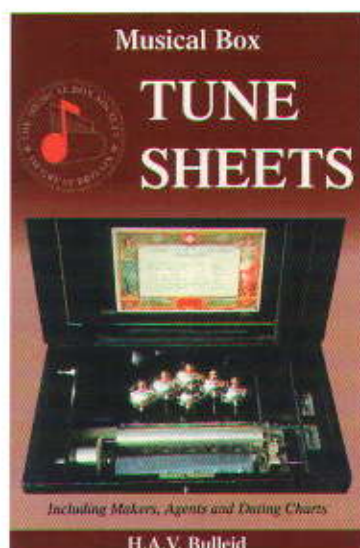
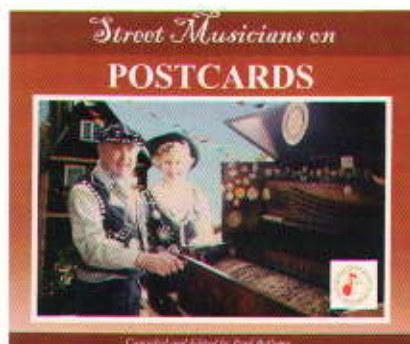
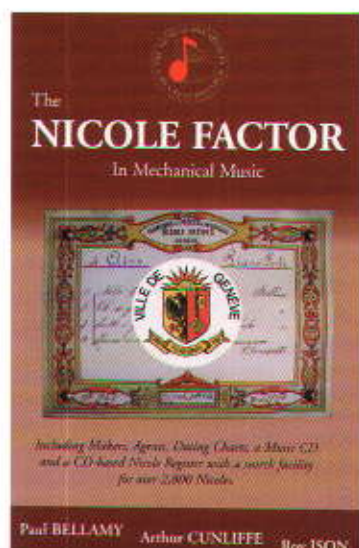
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From the Editors' Desk

What can one say at the end of an era? By now the sad news of Anthony Bulleid's death will have reached most of you. Our Society owes a huge debt to the man whose Oddments No. 121 appears in this journal. An obituary will appear in the next issue, which will attempt to do justice to this meticulous researcher and friend. In the meantime his family has requested that they are not contacted at this sad and private time. Anthony was an editor's dream. His articles were always submitted well ahead of deadlines, were clear and concise and well illustrated. His gentle sense of humour pervaded his writing and precluded any chance of them being dull or boring! His loss will be keenly felt throughout the musical box world.

Our President could not have known how timely his Message in this Journal would be. Anthony was always very keen that the "Mantle of Elijah should fall upon Elisha" and that a successor should be found. In conversation with him I know that he was aware of at least one person whom he felt could continue his work. Well, now we all have to make a renewed effort to contribute to the Journal if it is to continue to be the respected publication it has become over the years.

In this issue we are delighted to introduce you to 'Cedric', who features on the front cover. It is quite amazing how the newly-retired engineering types are creating delightful small street organs. We had a man in the Nickelodeon last week who is doing just this. After a tour round the instruments last autumn he

had gone home, done some research and started work. He arrived with various bits, including pipes, and wanting advice with pouches and leather supplies. Thanks to Gordon Bartlett for sharing his experiences with us all. Don Busby continues with his researches into making a full sized musical box – this will continue for several issues, as it is a work in progress. Luuk Goldhoorn pops up again with an article on a paper strip-playing xylophone. How invaluable are these small articles to an editor. Informative and useful "fillers". We have included too a small piece about a musical harp that has been brought in for repair. It is a delightful object.

Mick Doswell's article about a plastic organette makes most interesting reading for those, like me, who thought they weren't produced much after the turn of the twentieth century.

We are delighted to report that in this issue are three 'Letters to the Editor'. Keep up the good work – we love to hear from you!

Finally, please read the paragraph on Page 308 about musical boxes stolen from one of our members. Security is becoming increasingly important, especially for those of us who demonstrate and play items in public. Unfortunately "the public" does not always respond in the manner anticipated.

Cover Picture

'Cedric', who graces the top of a colourful street organ recently built by Gordon Bartlett
See article on Page 317.

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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 24 Number 2 Summer 2009

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Dates for your Diary 2009

Chanctonbury Ring

Sunday 10th May 2009

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Lunch provided

Please contact Ted Brown
on 01403823533

Annual General Meeting & Society Auction

Saturday 6th June 2009

Road Village Hall

Near Northampton

10.30a.m. Start

followed by buffet lunch

Society Auction 2p.m.

Teme Valley Winders

Saturday 27th June 2009

1.30 p.m. start

Please contact John Phillips
on 01584 78 1118

Chanctonbury Ring

Open Day

Saturday 18th July 2009

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Lunch provided

Please contact Ted Brown
on 01403823533

Teme Valley Winders

Saturday 19th September 2009

12 noon start

Please contact John Phillips
on 01584 78 1118

Continued on Page 309

President's Message No. 12

One of the advantages of belonging to a Society such as ours is that four times a year we can read and enjoy our Society Journal. I believe that the Journal is the single most important part of Society life as it is the lynch pin that holds everything together. True, we do have many other occasions when we can gather together and enjoy meeting each other and talk almost endlessly about our hobby, but without the Journal, I fear all else would go rapidly downhill.

The editor has an important and, dare we say, a daunting task in finding and organising suitable material for publication. Their ideal is that every issue of the Journal should have a balanced mix of news, information and diverse articles. Add to this a lively correspondence section, important notices and helpful hints and tips and we should have a first class publication. Without the help of members this is simply not possible to sustain so we all need to assist by finding interesting topics for publication. Those who feel nervous about their literary skills have no need to worry as either the editor, or the Publications Committee, will help any one in a kind and understanding way.

Those who do take the trouble to do research and write articles deserve to have their efforts suitably acknowledged and appreciated. There have been occasions in the past when authors have gone to great trouble to produce an article and, for some reason, their efforts have not been published. Electronic and "snail mail" can sometimes go astray. Any article that is sent to the editors or to the publications committee will be acknowledged on receipt. This will be done either by email or postcard whichever is the most suitable.

Should any contributor not receive an acknowledgement within a reasonable time, please ask if it has

arrived safely. All articles will be "flagged" so that they will remain noticed and acted upon within a reasonable time. All authors will then know that their efforts have not gone astray or been misplaced. All articles are important and valued and are genuinely appreciated.

Of course any editor should have the right to edit and furthermore refuse to publish any material that might be classified as politically sensitive, offensive, ethically ill-advised or otherwise ill-judged. The editor will continue to produce a balanced journal which will be published on the specified date. None of this can be achieved unless there is a substantial input from the membership as there is always a shortage of articles, accounts and pictures.

Any help you are able to give will assist the Society to keep going in these difficult times. Do not forget that the Letters to the Editor section is always interesting especially when used to give snippets of wisdom and advice. There is always a shortage of brief articles which can be used as "page fillers". These are helpful to the editor who will use them to help create a pictorially satisfying page presentation. Do not think that you have nothing useful to say as all of us have a talent and knowledge that may be useful to others. I hope that you will put pen to paper and seek out your camera so that we may all benefit. Every scrap of knowledge and information is golden.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Anthony Bulleid

Just as we go to press, the news has come through that Anthony Bulleid passed away peacefully in hospital on the morning of Tuesday April 5th at the age of 95.

An obituary will be printed in the Autumn edition of *The Music Box*.

Musical Boxes Stolen from Member

Four items of mechanical music have been stolen from a prominent member of our Society. They include:

1. 12.5 inch table top Monopol disc box; it had one detached foot at time of theft, which will either be replaced/attached and therefore different from the other three, or be absent. A disc may, or may not, have been stolen with it – This is a rare size of Monopol, so replacement discs would be hard to find.

2. Paillard cylinder box, lever wound, 28 cm cylinder in 52 cm long box, playing 8 airs, including Gilbert and Sullivan, Bizet and Offenbach. Lid top suffers from a slight water-damage mark; the top has wood inlaid design of roses, ribbon and foliage. The original tune sheet was badly torn, and the box was considered a 'marriage', i.e. base of box was not the original for the movement. Cylinder wheel numbered 3087

3. Ducommun Girod early key-wound movement in walnut plain case, playing four airs on 8 1/4 inch cylinder. Signed in top left corner of bedplate, and numbered 25651. One of the teeth had been repaired (about middle of the comb.) Original tune sheet had been re-backed. Overall length of box 38 cm. (15")

4. A modern reproduction (Reuge?) of a singing bird box (i.e. not a bird cage), about 15 cm by about 9 cm, in a dark bluish-grey colour, with a pearlised/speckled effect resembling granite. There is a small clock dial in the front face; clock not working due to lack of battery. The lid, which opens to reveal the bird, is of the same colour and material as the rest of the box, which is trimmed with brass.

Should you hear of anything like these, please contact Ted Brown (contact details under the Officers panel) in the first instance.

Dates for your Diary 2009 Continued

Chanctonbury Ring

Sunday 4th October 2009

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Please contact Ted Brown
on 01403823533

Autumn Meeting 2009 Derby

Hosted by Nicholas and
Eileen Simons

Friday 9th October –
11th October 2009

Chanctonbury Ring - Christmas Meeting

Saturday 28th November 2009

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Please contact Ted Brown on
01403823533

Teme Valley Winders – Christmas Meeting

Saturday 5th December 2009

Please contact John Phillips
on 01584 78 1118

Chanctonbury Ring

Sunday 4th October 2009

12 noon start

Please contact John Phillips
on 01584 78 1118

OVERSEAS TRIP - NEW JERSEY - USA

JOIN THE MBSI 60TH 'DIAMOND JUBILEE' ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Tuesday 1st – Saturday 12th September 2009

MBSI - HIGHLIGHTS

Featuring The Murtogh Guinness Collection 'Tour & Reception',
The Don Neilson Collection (one of the biggest collections in the States),
The MBSI Museum Collection.

Open houses including Coulson Conn's collection and lots more:
Educational Workshops, Mart, Banquet Dinner and Historic Sites.

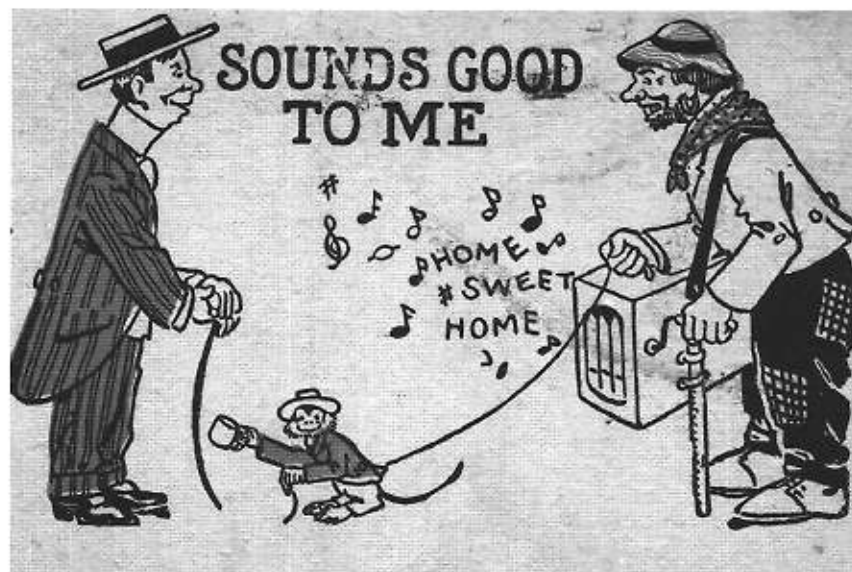
MBSGB - HIGHLIGHTS

On the 6th we travel by train to Annapolis,
where we will be staying for the rest of our trip. Annapolis was
founded in 1649 and is full of American history.

We are fortunate that our hotel is close to it's beautiful harbour.

From here we will visit the impressive private collection of Dick and
Cheryl Hack, also Durward Centre's and Matt Jaro's (including Matt's
Movie theatre) impressive collections. We will also have time for
sightseeing (or shopping if you wish) in Annapolis, also in Baltimore,
which happens to be the home of one of the collections. As we will be
staying close to Washington DC, we will take the opportunity to spend
a day sightseeing or relaxing in this capital district of America.

(for more information please contact Daphne Ladell –
01737 84 3644 or email Daphne.Ladell@btinternet.com)



The Postcard Book

If you like this, please consider
purchasing The Postcard Book of
Street Musicians!

For details see advertisement on
the inside front cover.

Teme Valley Winders Christmas Meeting

6th December 2008 – Eastham Grange

The first Winders meeting to be held in John Phillips's new music room started with a delicious buffet lunch and mince pies, organised by Hilda Phillips (still recovering from her recent foot operations), followed by a chance to chat and gossip. Several new attendees were present, Pat and David Lloydlangston, from Farnham, Bernard and Joyce North from Ludlow, and Edward Hollingworth from Cirencester.

The meeting was eventually called to order by John Phillips who invited Alan Pratt to start the presentations. Alan had been working on the 15 1/2" Polyphon from Addenbrookes, which was being regularly jammed with inappropriate coins. Alan's solution was to extend the existing trigger shaft and mount an external knob with which the instrument can be started. He did the work in the way he believed the makers would have done, and made it as reversible as possible, including blanking of the coin slot. Hopefully the children will now get continuing pleasure from the instrument. Although Alan had brought the instrument to the meeting, most of his talk was supported by a "Powerpoint" presentation on the big screen, with detailed photographs of his work.

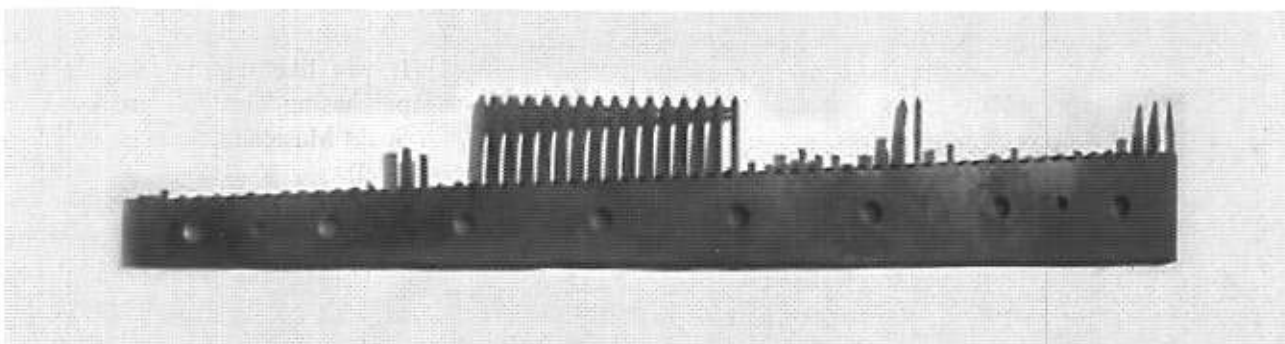
John Moorhouse also made use of the video projector and Powerpoint to support his talk on Music in Automata showing the development of musical movements in automata (unfortunately the techies couldn't get the embedded sound to work – Sorry John!). This was followed by an extract from a DVD from the Patek Phillipe museum showing the inner workings of the "Singing Bird Pistol". This amazing film merges photographs with detailed animation to show how each part of the mechanism works and interacts with the rest. A copy of this DVD is now held in the Society Archives. John Phillips and John Moorhouse then showed a selection of bird feathers (many still attached to the birds!!) which are used for re-feathering mechanical singing birds.

John Farmer lightened the mood a little with a few Christmas-ish novelties including a singing frog, a modern plastic (free!) "musical?" box, a Christmas musical roundabout and Santa's Musical Toy Box. He then played a piano roll – "Adeste Fidelis", but couldn't persuade the audience to sing. Doug Pell had also brought a piano roll of "The Sound of Music", which he hadn't heard because he doesn't have a piano. Nicholas Simons then took to the piano and played two (foot pumped) rolls

– Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy, a Medley of Film Cues (Meliora Rolls), and "Moya Maruschka", arranged by Adam Ramet and cut by Julian Dyer. The first is fun, and the second is exciting !!

John Harrold had brought a Black Forest Flute Clock mechanism which he has been restoring. It was made by Emilian Wehrel of Furtwangen, and has 9 pipes playing 2 tunes. It has no reservoir, so is extremely difficult to get it to play consistently. We were able to see close-up views of the mechanism using the camera and projector. Kath Turner followed, with her 12" Monopol disc box circa 1895, and Richard Manning demonstrated his Paillard 2-per turn, 12 tune cylinder box, which he had rescued from a garage. He had been able to identify tunes by listening to the CD from the Nicole Factor.

John Phillips then played several of his instruments in the music room, including the Imhof & Muckle barrel organ (members were invited to select a barrel from the 40 available), the Regina Autochange disc box, and the Racca 48-note Piano Melodico, after which attendees gradually drifted away having had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.



Hopeless case? Kevin McElhone found this restorer's nightmare!

Chanctonbury Ring Meeting - 22nd February 2009

By Alan K Clark

Ted and Kay had almost a full house for their latest meeting. For two new members this was their first Musical Box Society meeting, and they were warned of the addictive quality of the sounds produced by the items in Ted's collection. The first talk by Ted outlined the continuing and increasing value of the Register of Musical Boxes. He showed the printed listing of the stolen boxes and mentioned the fact that more than two had been recovered due to the listing. He emphasised that the ownership of the boxes was not recorded by the Registrar, and any member who had lost a box needed to inform the Registrar so that the details could be added to the stolen list. If it was then recovered, there was a good chance of its return. The Register had also allowed the production of a huge list of the names and details of the tunes recorded on musical box tune sheets. Ted held a copy of this so any shortened or garbled versions found on members tune sheets could be corrected. We then had a tune identification session for tunes on member's boxes and tape recordings.

This was followed by a very erudite talk on The Quadrille by David Worrell. We learned that the quadrille started about 1815 in London, it had five sections, each of 32 bars length normally set in $\frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ time. After this well researched history, we had demonstrations of several quadrilles played on three Nicole Frères boxes.

Daphne then bravely showed her Chordephon which she had

previously demonstrated at one of our past meetings. Since then the machine had needed the serious attention of both Daphne and Clive to return it to full working order. The faults encountered included the fact that it had been fitted with the wrong type of strings, and that the tuning scale quoted was wrong. The Chordephon utilised a very ingenious method of damping the strings using two star wheels, one to damp and then pluck the string, whilst the second one allowed the string to be damped at a time chosen by the second disc projection operating the second star wheel. Thus either staccato, or long notes could be played at the whim of the tune arranger. The machine sounded brilliant, and discs were played to demonstrate both uses of the dampers. Unfortunately adjusting the two dampers to operate correctly on each string without them touching the next string was very difficult.

The morning session finished with Ted playing us some tunes on his 12 note barrel organ. Following our very enjoyable lunch provided by Ted, Kay, and their helpers, Daphne outlined the plans for the societies visit to the USA in September. The meeting was arranged to allow attendance at the MBSI's 60th anniversary meeting, and then to be extended to visit other collections in Annapolis and Baltimore.

Terry then demonstrated his Frères Nicole three-air snuffbox in a green printed metal case. This dated from about 1835, and was serial No

13718. Paul Bellamy outlined the latest research on the Nicole families, and this was followed by Norman playing some tunes on his modern pipe organ, which could play 20, 26 or 28 note rolls. Paul Baker then played some very busy roll arrangements on Ted's player piano, and Kevin played the Aeolian Orchestrelle to demonstrate some equally enjoyable new re-cut rolls that he had had copied from some originals in his collection. The day finished with Ted playing a carefully selected range of tunes on his disc boxes ranging in size from the delightful $5\frac{1}{4}$ inch Symphonion, through boxes with bells and without, up to the $15\frac{1}{2}$ inch Regina and Polyphon models.

Dates for your diary

The dates for Ted's next meetings are: -

**May 10th,
and July the 18th.**

This is the summer Open Day and will include an organ grind.

Thus yet another thoroughly enjoyable day was had by one and all, thank you Ted and Kay.

Teme Valley Winders - 21st March, 2009 – Eastham Grange

By John Farmer

The "Teme Valley Winders" was always intended to embrace clock "winders" as well as mechanical music "winders" since two of the founders are also members of horological societies. Attendees at this meeting included several clock "winders" with the addition of Michael and Jean Page, and Ian Ford to the group. We were also pleased to be joined by the editors of *The Music Box*, Lesley & David Evans who were in the UK for several weeks, and Society members Malcolm and Ann McDonald. They brought the total to a comfortable 28 people in all.

John Phillips opened the meeting and Alan Pratt advised us of the hospitalisation of Alan Wyatt following a cycling accident. All sent their wishes for his quick recovery and signed a card to be sent to him. The first speaker was John Farmer who gave a talk about the Seeburg model "L" coin piano, which he was currently restoring. This has a 54 note piano action, with no keyboard, and uses a standard 10 tune "A" roll. The unit is electrically powered and is coin operated, being able to count coins and play the appropriate number of tunes.

John Phillips himself followed up with a demonstration of the newly issued society DVD containing volumes 1 to 22 of *The Music Box* projected onto the large screen. Members all agreed that this is a great achievement for the Society, and invaluable to members. John found an article about Tomasso on the DVD, which led nicely to his next item, an explanation of the Tomasso barrel pinning machine that he has recently



added to his collection. John Harrold was next to present, showing, first, a 1/4 repeating Swiss watch movement, with a 31-note cylinder musical mechanism. The cover to the teeth (in groups of 3 and 4) has the tune engraved on it. The movement had been taken from its original case and mounted in a miniature grandfather clock case made of Japanned Iron. The second item was a Nicole, 2 per turn, Forte-piano musical box from about 1840, playing 8 tunes. The contrast between forte and piano being nicely set up. Although the mechanism had been cleaned and one or two dampers done it was largely in original condition, with very little wear.

Nicholas Simons opened with his Singing Frog singing "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong, and then explained that he had brought along two percussion instruments to demonstrate. The first was a Melodette, an instrument from around 1878, which uses a card music band to play 17 glockenspiel bars. It wasn't complete when Nicholas acquired it, so he had to make 7 new bars from black iron. He only has one music strip at present – "Yankee Doodle". His second percussion

instrument was a Pianolodeon (made by Chein in the USA), from the 1950/60 period. This is a plastic miniature piano, about 2 ft. high, electrically powered, and pneumatically operated. It was designed to run on 110volts, 60Hz, so running it through a transformer on 50Hz. electricity means the air blower runs slowly. However, it did play a roll of "Yellow Bird" reasonably well. It uses tuned bars rather than strings, and the hammers are operated by small pistons. The keys on the keyboard also move.

Bernard North (a clock "Winder") showed a small alarm clock, bought in Hong Kong, in the style of a carriage clock. The alarm plays Chinese music on a small musical movement. Another clock Winder, Mike Page, had brought along a lead clock weight that came from a clock made by Thomas Vernon of Ludlow (1711 – 1740). Mike noted that the lead on the top of the weight looked as if it had been partially melted at some stage. Mike had then found other weights with similar features on clocks from the same period. A brief discussion ensued on the reasons for this feature, but no definite conclusion reached.

Brian Chapman had brought along a friend's modern 20 note keyless street organ to demonstrate. This was a Wittmann and Niemeczek Bauchorgel from Austria that had impressed Brian with its quality of construction and sound. It plays standard 20 note Raffin music rolls, and weighs in at 5.4Kg. It comes with a shoulder strap and the handle can be turned from the back or side. Further details of this and other organs by this builder can be found at www.drehorgel.at. Brian's second instrument was a small tortoiseshell snuffbox which had, unusually, a transparent lid through which a carved bust can be seen. The box has groups of 4 teeth, plus one group of 6, and plays 2 tunes, at a surprisingly moderate pace, rather than the frantic playing of many such boxes.

John Phillips then returned to the front to demonstrate several musical clocks (hence satisfying both types of Winder!). The first was a large clock by S. J. Joyce of Lombard St., London, from 1820/1830 which plays 7 tunes on 12 bells using 13 hammers, plus a striking component with 5 bells. This was followed by a large glass domed panorama with a clock to one side and a tree containing two birds. In front of tree is a boat on "water". One of the birds drinks from the water and another in the branches flits from side to side, all to a singing bird-type sound. The mechanism needs restoration, and only just plays. The next item was a singing bird French clock by Bontems, c. 1880, containing an impressive bird (modelled on a "Superb Tanager") with an equally impressive singing bird sound. A plain wooden nightingale box was even more impressive in its variety of sounds, and this was followed by a domed clock mounted on top of a cylinder musical box

by Ducommun-Girod. The serial number is 6289 dating it from 1833, and it plays 4 airs on 116 teeth. John also pointed out a wall clock by the same maker with the serial number 9459, dating from 1835. We also heard a long case clock made by Palmer of Loughborough c. 1815. Its musical movement was by Deacon of Leicestershire and it plays 7 tunes on 17 bells using 32 hammers. There is a further bell to strike the hours. Finally John played a large barrel organ of unknown make, but probably originally built into a Black Forest clock. The organ movement is weight driven and has 50 keys with automatic register change (c. 1830/1850).

In the few minutes left before this action meeting was due to end, Nicholas returned to the front and "pedalled" his way through the piano roll "Goin' About", arranged by John Farrell in the style of Fats

Waller, manufactured by Bob Billings under the Jam label. Bernard North then hand played a tune on John Phillips' Duo-Art grand piano, and his Yamaha Disklavier, followed by a tune by Peter Bill on the Weber. The meeting had, of course, been interrupted part way through with tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes provided by Hilda and helpers. The next meeting of the Teme Valley Winders will be on Saturday 21st June 2009, starting at 1:30p.m. prompt (NOT 12 noon as stated in the Spring journal). Those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm and get directions if required. Any instruments, clocks, piano rolls or items of interest are welcome.

We are assured by the Meetings Secretary that the date is June 27th! Please DO check with John Phillips! - Ed



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QUALITY RESTORATIONS & APPRAISALS

Register News No: 63



Fig 1. *LeCoultre case*

During the last thirty five years or so I have used many sources to gather information on cylinder boxes. Many members have completed and sent in registration forms for their boxes and have received in return a Register number. Other information has been obtained from auction house catalogues, visiting sale rooms and from studying the records of repairers. More recently, the internet and Ebay have become a valuable source of information. The situation at the moment is that, within the next few months, I will have run out of old catalogues to study and the supply of information will become a trickle rather than a stream.

Should any of you have a stack of old auction catalogues that you do not wish to keep any longer, please do not throw them out for the waste paper collection but see if it is possible to get them over to me at one of our Society events. You may well have a catalogue that I have never seen before, especially if it is pre 1970. I believe that by the autumn of this year I will be in a better position to record more boxes without a considerable delay as the "backlog" of work should be virtually gone. I hope that the flow of information will not stop altogether before

the Register has reached the magic 10,000 mark.

It is becoming more and more difficult to find a box that has not already been registered especially as some boxes turn up again and again seemingly doing an endless round of the auction rooms. Some of these are of course "the lost causes" that many restorers have regarded as un-restorable. I salute the buyer who believes he or she can bring back to life a box that has defeated eight or so other people! I hope that within the next few years the Society will be able come to the aid of both amateur and professional restorers by providing information and helpful techniques.

Since writing the last Register News, I have devised a method of using the computer to search Nicole gamme numbers in ascending order and to relate how they linked in with the serial numbers marked on the movements. The result clearly shows that the rise in gamme numbers not only follows the rise in serial numbers as one would expect, but that significant batches of boxes were made with the same gamme number. This too was to be expected, but these batches of boxes mainly stayed within tight little groups with the first and last noted serial number being around 5,000 boxes apart. This would suggest that Nicole realised the importance of keeping up to date with the popular airs of the day and dropping programmes that were not selling as well. Of course there are exceptions when a customer must have ordered a special set of tunes or wished to have a box that played the old favourites. The computer also shows that during the latter part of Nicole's production the number of new gamme numbers diminished indicating that indeed the firm was in decline. Of course by this time many of the family members were either retired or near retirement.

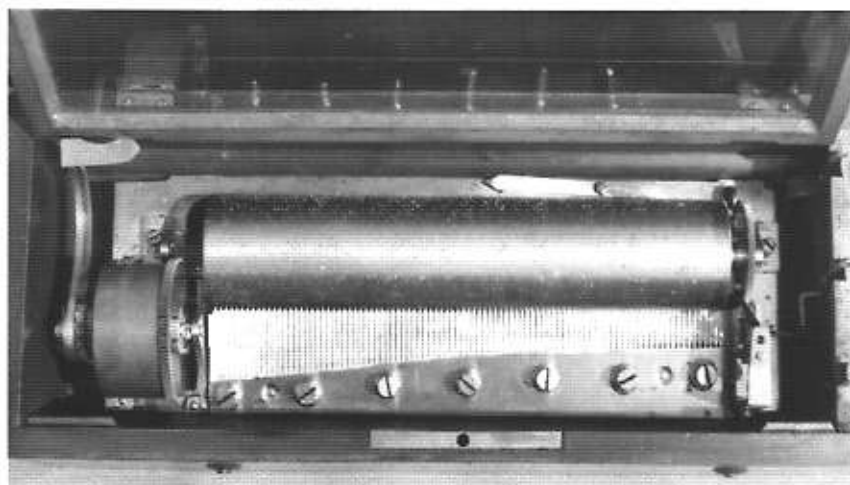


Fig 2. *LeCoultre movement.*

It is quite natural when writing about musical boxes to choose the exotic or finer examples, but we must not forget what many refer to as "standard boxes." The countless numbers of 6 and 8 air boxes must never be forgotten or dismissed as unimportant but must be enjoyed and preserved like any fine overture box. With this in mind the illustrations chosen for this edition of Register News picks out one of these boxes which to my mind is just as valuable and interesting as any Grand Format.

The box illustrated here was made by Lecoultre and is an example of an early period lever wind with the end of the lever being turned back over the motor. The tunes must have been popular at the time but are completely unknown today. They include, Love Launched a fairy boat, The Men of Merry England, I'm leaving thee and Nothing More. One wag suggested that the last tune would be the result of a severe run! The 23 cm cylinder plays on 95 teeth. The tune card is similar to that illustrated in

the Tune Sheet Book number 16 and has a small circular trade label attached informing us that "Charles Henry. Civet Cat, of 18, Market Street, Manchester" originally sold the box. In many ways this could be described as a "standard box" fitted into a fine case, but thank goodness it has survived all this time. I hope that it will continue to survive for future generations to appreciate.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Collector's Showcase - A Novelty Organette

Details supplied by Mick Doswell

Those who remember the Rye Museum of Mechanical Music will also remember Mick as joint owner and guide. Since its closure a few years ago when the lease ran out, he still gets involved with the more serious side of collecting but, like many of us, is always tempted by the children's novelties. Thus it was, at one of our regular Chanctonbury Ring gatherings at Ted and Kay Brown's Old School that he brought along a child's organette, recently purchased on Ebay. Unfortunately, it was not in playing condition although, to coin a pun, it was 'a bit of a wheeze', somewhat lacking puff.

One of the members offered to investigate and record this unusual toy and he readily agreed. Made in plastic by Selcol, an English company, it measures 8.5ins wide x 9ins high and 4.5ins deep. It is presumed to be circa 50s-60s. Although patented, the number is not recorded on the instrument. The front is relief moulded with trumpet-blowing cherubs and foliate decoration

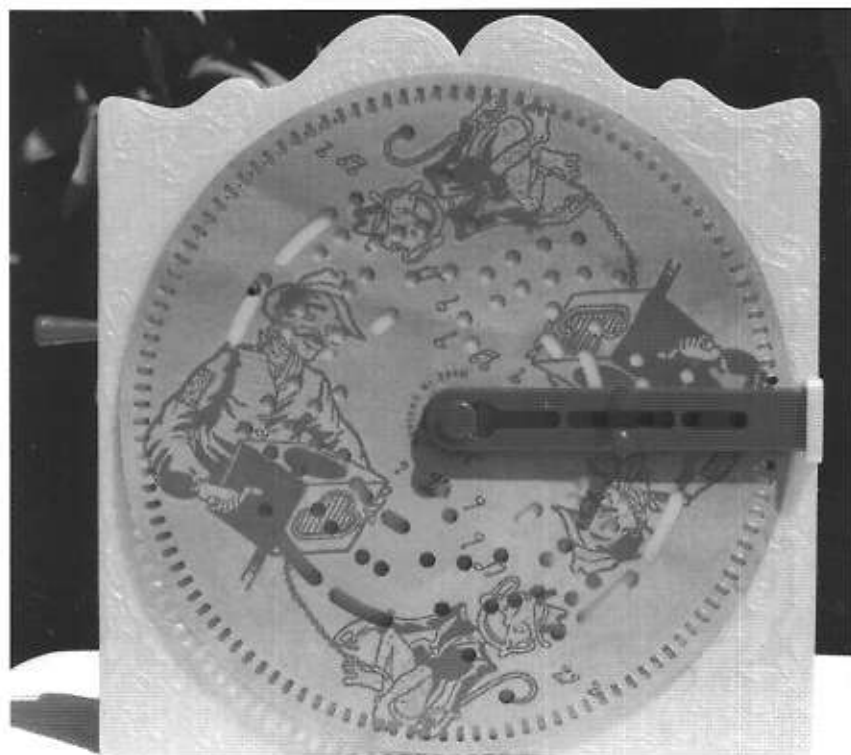


Fig 1. LeCoultre case

in yellow plastic. Red plastic forms other parts of the case, strap and pressure bar. The 8-inch card discs vary in colour but not in design, carrying the image of an Italian organ grinder facing his monkey. The discs are brown with two-colour print, either green, red,

brown or purple, (See fig. 1). Although an organette, Selcol calls it a Hurdy Gurdy which, of course, it is not. Fig. 2 shows the instrument with disc and pressure bar removed.

The mechanism is a typical three-throw crank acting

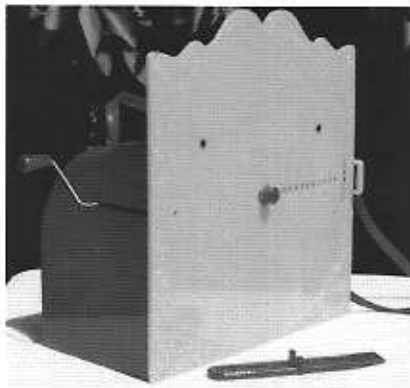


Fig 2. Pressure bar removed.

on bellows but there is no pressure reservoir. The discs, with holes as valves, are kept against the ten reed openings by the plastic slide-on-off pressure bar. The bellows are moulded from a rubber-like substance, probably neoprene and the crank links are moulded into the bellows. The bellows have internal valves, all of which had failed and were un-accessible without radical and risky surgery. Three small palette valves provided an easily reversible and successful solution. These were stuck on with bicycle tyre repair solution, fig. 3. Fig. 4 shows the label of the original box.

Fig. 3 also shows the badly worn plastic gear drive. The wear was caused by a broken plastic bearing. This could not be refitted as it too had missing pieces but two panel pins and quick-set Araldite made a passable repair. The worn gear-teeth that engage with a brass drive gear fortunately still work. The only solution, if the teeth eventually fail, is to make a replacement 75-toothed annular gear ring – not an easy task. The reason for the failure is a design weakness because there is no end-movement restraint on the crank shaft. Thus a blow on the handle caused the brass gear to move to the left, wrenching the drive gear and

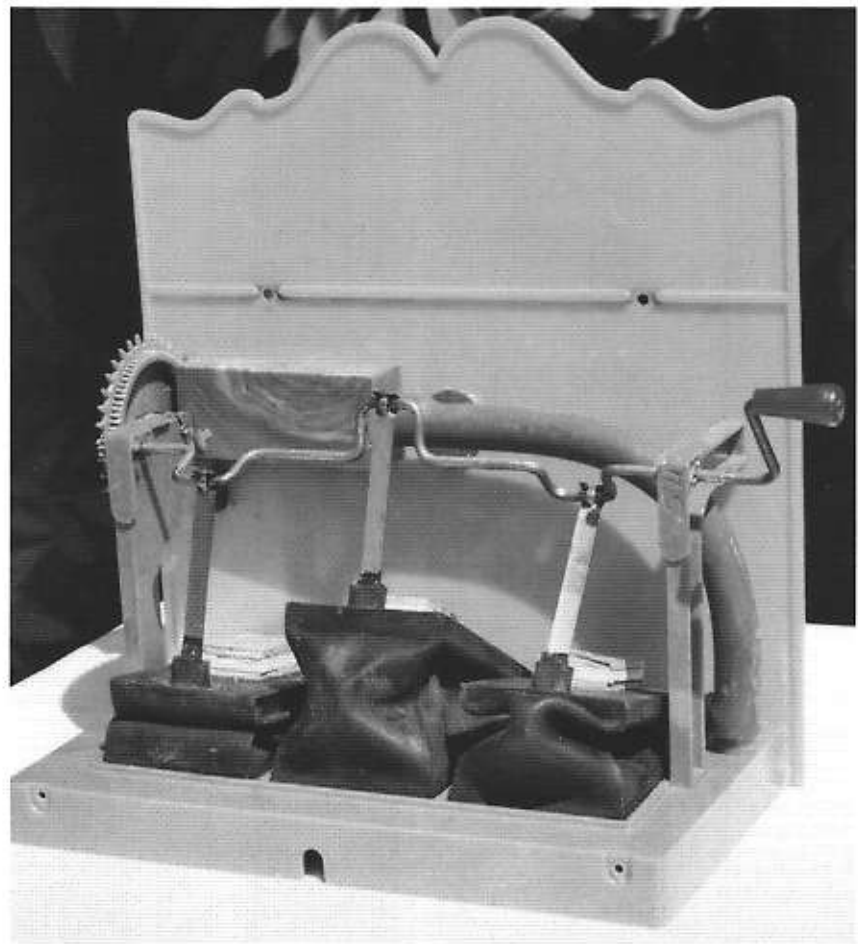


Fig 3. The business end.

breaking its bearing. A simple pin (far right of fig. 3) was fitted through a hole drilled in the shaft to provide restraint.

With care, this little instrument should last many more years. Like many modern mechanical toys it is worth recording and preserving them for posterity. After all, the musical box started life as a novelty

and the Victorian children's toy musical manivelles are highly collectible.

For those who want to know more about organettes, there are still a few available of the limited edition MBSGB Anniversary book, *The Organette Book* by Kevin McElhone.



Fig 1. LeCoultré case

Getting Organised - Making a Few Notes

by Gordon Bartlett

The conception

It all started at the splendid MBSGB meetings held at Ted and Kay Brown's establishment. Those who brought along their street organs at the summer organ grinds seemed such happy people that I resolved not to be left out of this branch of mechanical music. Moreover, I set myself the task of building one. This, then, is the story of a first effort at organ building, including the trials and tribulations along the way. I am well aware of my own lack of experience. Hopefully the technical bits, although quite basic, might be helpful to those even less experienced than me.

The Design

My design criteria were 1. Simplicity. 2. Ease of construction and maintenance. 3. Use of readily available paper music rolls. 4. Case dimensions to fit into the back of an average estate car, and 5. A good scale and range of notes, going down to a reasonably low pitch. I looked for available design data. For a variety of technical details covering a range of street organs I found 'Waldkirch Street and Fairground Organs' by Dr Herbert Juttermann to be invaluable. Also, 'Small Barrel Organ Building Instructions' by Johan de Vries and published by the Utrecht Museum has many excellent drawings and a very detailed text. I liked the simplicity of a single rank of pipes, but it failed to satisfy criterion 3, having a mechanical key frame requiring card music punched to the Dutch 36 or 38 note scale. This book warns about the cost of new card music, which seems to work out at around 3 times the cost of an equivalent length of paper rolls as well as being much heavier. Luckily a good English translation is available for both this and the Waldkirch book.



Fig 1. The complete instrument

There are also the popular John Smith designs. Those who have made the 20-note organ certainly have a simple machine that can play well, although the performance is restricted by the music paper acting as the main air valve and by the 20-note scale. The next step up is the John Smith 26 note design, with a tracker bar and tonal quality enhanced by multiple ranks of pipes. However I was already hooked on the Dutch design. A single rank would do very nicely for a first attempt. The additional space would make it easier to fit larger pipes with a lower pitch. I just had to adapt it to play paper roll music.

My own design would be something of a hybrid, incorporating ideas from different sources, and picking as many brains as possible. This could be termed either my own original effort or a dog's dinner of other people's ideas, whichever way you wish to look at it. I was encouraged to find that the final basic design ended up similar to that used by some of the professional

organ builders. 31 notes were chosen as giving a good musical range. I stopped short of the next common 45-note scale. As is revealed later, the key in which the organ plays was dictated by the dimensions of a Fiat estate car!

MBSGB members had already provided plenty of help, in the tradition of comradeship that makes membership of the Society such a pleasure. Why not, they said, contact Ian Alderman who lived not far from me in West Dorset? This developed into a valued friendship and led to an enormous amount of help and encouragement, without which the whole project may well have foundered. Thank you, Ian, for putting me right in many instances, for supplying some fine music rolls, and for letting me in on a number of trade secrets!

The Bellows

These follow the convention of a pair of double acting feeders supplying air to a large reservoir. Air pressure in the reservoir at 5" water gauge

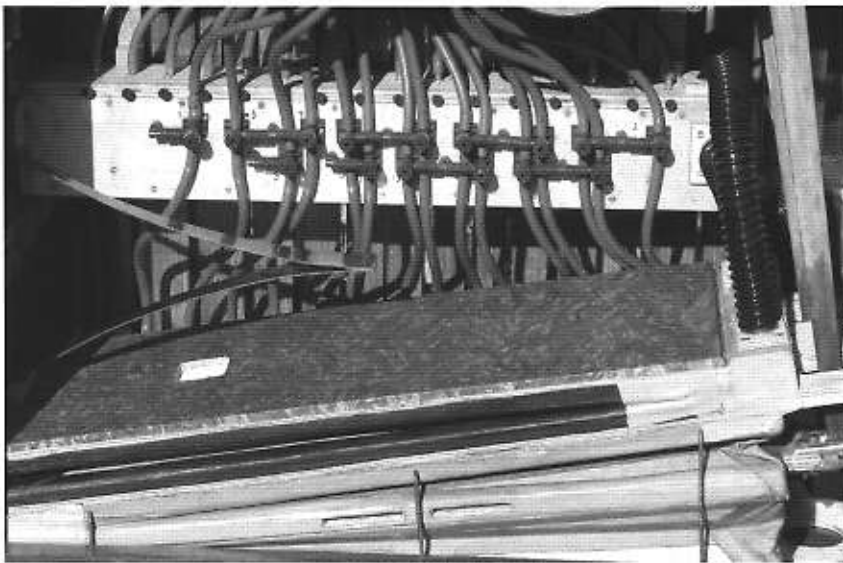


Fig 2. The main bellows, reservoir and pressure spring.

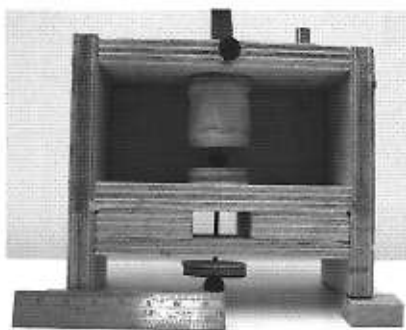


Fig 3. Pill box valve design.

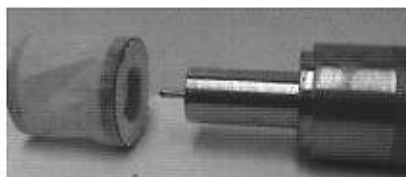


Fig 4. Pill box pouch alignment tool.



Fig 5. The tool in use.

is controlled by a gull wing spring, giving a very constant force over its working range. I was anticipating a reduction in wind pressure as the reservoir collapses and the spring relaxes. In fact, the wind pressure goes up. The reason for this provides a neat mental exercise.

Leather for the feeders is grey and for the reservoir blue. White would, perhaps, look better, but the blue and grey colours result from a visit to a local (Yeovil) leather stockist; a throwback to the ancient glove making industry. Stiffeners are formed from 1/16" ply, sold in model aircraft shops. To improve air tightness in the bellows and elsewhere a coating of dilute wood glue is effective (50% pva emulsion: 50% water). For gaskets, instead of leather I found the aerated plastic material commonly wrapped around refrigerators etc. to be ideal (purists look away here).

The Music Transport System

Hopefully the photographs will clarify how this works. The paper music roll runs over a pressurised tracker bar, requiring a grooved roller to hold the paper down. Holes in the paper give a release of pressure in the primary air system, sending a signal to a bank of pillbox-type pneumatic relay valves in the wind chests.

The belt drive from the crankshaft to the take-up spool gives a 1:4½ reduction. A fairly large diameter for the take-up spool (somewhat over 3") ensures that this does not vary too much as the paper is wound on. A second belt from the take-up spool shaft to the music spool shaft gives a further 1:3½ reduction. This second belt is needed for fast forward (not really necessary) plus the drive to Cedric (see later). A final drive from the music spool shaft to the fast rewind/Cedric shaft is by a third belt giving a 1:3 reduction (or increase when in rewind mode).

These drives are by hollow round plastic belting. When this is cut to length it can be joined by a small double mushroom. All belts have tensioning idlers. A system of sliding clutches and latching plates selects the required drive function, although it is still necessary to disengage certain belts from their pulleys during rewind. Perhaps this could have been avoided by a more sophisticated design, but in practice the whole system has proved simple and reliable.

The Wind Chests

There are two wind chests, one containing a row of 15 pillbox relay valves feeding the bass pipes, and one with the remaining 16 valves feeding the treble pipes. I make no distinction between melody, bass, and accompaniment. The workings of these pillbox valves can be seen on the photos of a valve located in a test box. These, on contraction, open a pallet valve to feed the main secondary air from the wind chest to each pipe. As the main pallet valve opens, the lower exhaust or dump valve closes. The purpose of this lower valve is to ensure that there is no residual air preventing a clean cut-off, plus exhausting any leakage through the main valve which might otherwise cause the pipe to sound. The bottom of the pill box valve usually forms the main air valve pallet. A more positive closure could possibly

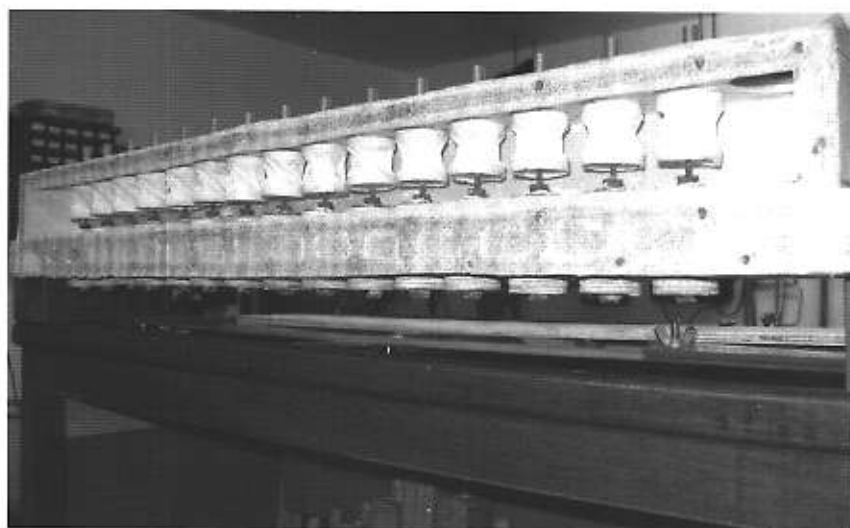


Fig 6. Pill box pouches assembled.

be achieved by a separate pallet suspended below the pillbox. The pallet could even have a larger diameter. In fact, it proved difficult to get a reliable seal unless this suspended pallet was fairly loose on its suspension rod. To ensure that the rod did not pull itself through the pallet it was located by a plastic adjusting button on top and a tiny rubber washer underneath. The dump valve pallet has just a lower adjusting button. It would have been tempting to use commercial studding for the suspension rods, but to achieve a greater depth of thread and coarser pitch I used rods with a rolled thread.

Once a note has sounded the primary air pressure must be recharged to allow the pillbox to inflate again. This is done via an air bleed which is regulated to avoid neither too large a bleed creating unwanted pressure when the note is sounding nor too small a bleed hindering a sharp cut-off. The adjustment is quite critical and the heads of the treble regulating screws can be seen along the top of the treble wind chest. As with the valve suspension rods, a coarser thread and better sealing was required than could be achieved by setscrews in tapped holes. I found that drywall screws from any DIY shop are ideal, having sharply pointed ends.

However, my design had created a problem. Access to the bass bleed screws would be obstructed by the bellows assembly immediately behind. The solution was to take the bass bleed air from the treble wind chest via valves intended to regulate air supply to aquariums. These were inserted half way along the tubes leading from the bass wind chest to the tracker bar. This tubing is, incidentally, plastic from John Farmer, much more flexible and easier to use than transparent PVC tubing.

Forming the pillbox valves was greatly assisted by the use of a jig. One photo shows the valve being formed on the jig and the other shows the finished valve being removed. The ends of the valves are simply 1" diameter discs cut with a hole cutter from 4mm plywood. Zephyr skin is wound around the diameter.

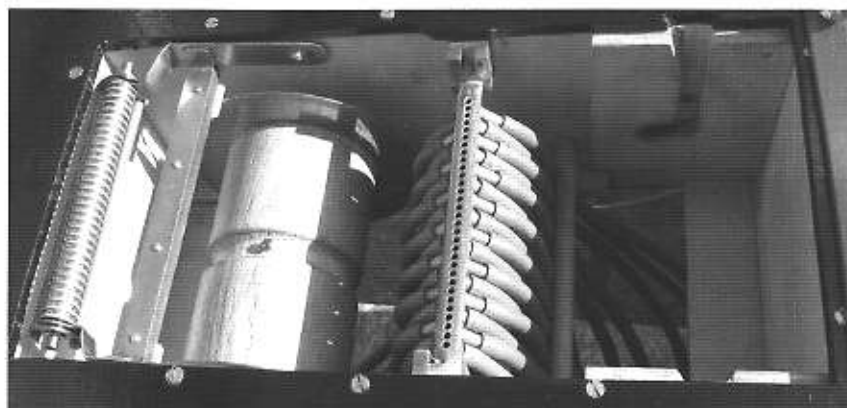


Fig 7. Roll box exposed.

This is derived, they tell me, from a sheep's intestines. A twist of the finished valve gives pleats to ease contraction without crumpling. Evo Stick impact glue was used here. I realise that this is frowned upon for restoration projects, but for this application its reliability and quick action make it ideal.

Extensive use was made of birch ply for the wind chests and elsewhere in the organ. So much easier to work than any other variety of plywood.

The Pipes

The dimensions of the pipes plus advice on voicing and tuning were obtained from Johan de Vries' book. Some 6mm thick well-seasoned ash was used which had become surplus from a batch prepared by my local woodworking shop for a boat repair project.

Being an engineer and not an artist I had no intention of trying to emulate the fine decoration that is such a feature of many organ cases. The pipes themselves form the decoration and all are on view. The bass pipes are in front, in a V formation with the treble pipes behind, on top of the bellows, in an inverted V. With the case dimensions limited by my car (and now I can't buy a smaller one!) I found that a bottom Bb (or A# as I was getting used to calling it) could be mitred 90° across the top of the case to meet the next one, C (also mitred), near the centre. With the next two pipes mitred inwards, all the others are straight.

I am using conventional concert pitch note notation here, by the way, where A = 440Hz. I have not got used to the perverse way of organ builders using their own notation. The Dutch book, for instance, refers to 440Hz as F#. Beware also of the German habit of using H for B and B for Bb. There is clearly a grand conspiracy to baffle the unwary.

A note on forming mitres. Any error in the angle of cut either side of 45° is doubled when the two parts are reconnected!

The Cart

This also had to fit in my car, alongside the organ. To achieve a traditional appearance, wooden wheels were bought in. To avoid the organ being shaken to bits when running over rough ground a form of suspension was adopted. Being a Morgan enthusiast this was based on stub axles mounted on sliding pillars controlled by coil springs. This avoided having axles across the cart, releasing the box section body for storage. One end contains music rolls and the other end contains a sliding drawer plus - the Monkey!

Cedric

I was lucky to find in my local auction house one of the monkey automata made around 60 years ago by Fife Engineering. He was in a fairly rough condition, but complete, including an electric motor driving a bank of seven cams through a lovely double worm gear box giving a 1:1,600 reduction. The motor and gearbox were dispensed with, and the drive taken to the camshaft via a dog clutch. He became known as Cedric. Having left the shady world of commerce (he was, I believe, a shop window display advertising Peter Pan Scotch Oats) he no longer needed his rather tatty pyjamas. A smart costume was made, more in keeping with his new life in the world of entertainment.

The combined drive belt reductions give an overall reduction of almost 1:50 between crank shaft and monkey

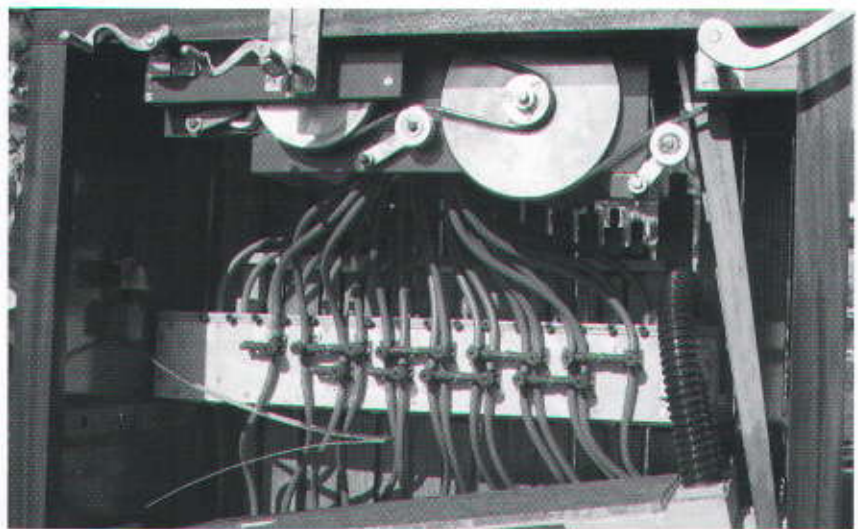


Fig 8. Roll box drive arrangement.

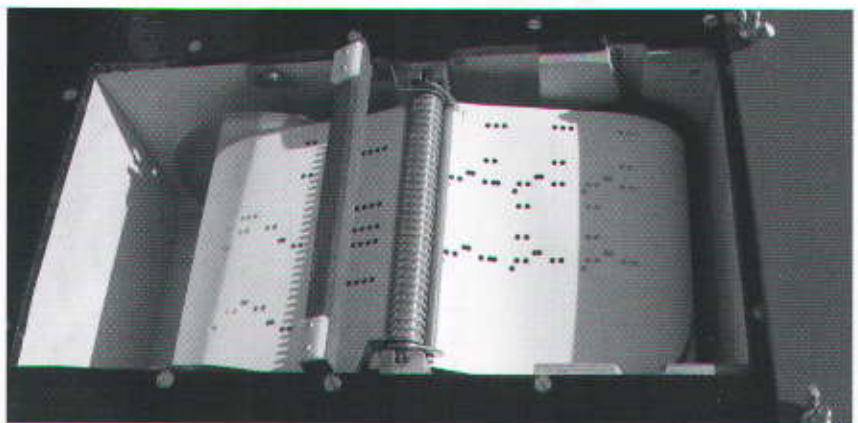


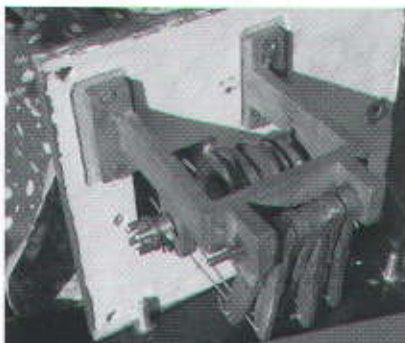
Fig 9. The roll box.

which seems to give an acceptable rate of movement. This includes eyes, mouth, head and both arms. I get more comments about Cedric than any other aspect of the organ!

In Conclusion

I hope that this has been of interest and may encourage others to have a go. It does not require any special skills; only a lot of determination and persistence. For me the end result has

certainly been worth it. I have tried to point out the pitfalls, but if there are further queries or information on the sources of specialised materials please do not hesitate to contact me via <gordonbartlet@onetel.com>.



Figs 10 & 11. Cedric and his operating cams.



Nicholas Simons treats Teme Valley Winders to a roll on John Phillips' Weber Duo Art piano. See article on Page 312



Left: The instruction sheet for the paper strip-playing xylophone - see article on Page 331.

Below left: Brian Chapman demonstrates a fine small organ at the Eastham Grange meeting.

Below: The Selcon Hurdy Gurdy - see article on Page 315.



*Gordon Bartlett's street organ,
complete with 'Cedric' -
see article on Page 317*



*A fine Le-Coultrre musical box -
see Register News on Page 317.*



Making a Musical Box

by Don Busby

Milling Teeth Part 1-Tip and Damper Anvil Slots

"Comb Design", the opening article of this series, defined materials and gave design parameters for making a musical box comb. Jigs and operations for milling the comb are considered in Part 1 of this second article, which deals with tooth tip and damper wire slots. Part 2 will describe milling of the slot between lead platform and teeth roots.

Work carried out to specifications given in "Comb Design" will have resulted in 5 work pieces of ground flat stock (GFS), each measuring 76.2x60x2.38. Dimensions throughout this paper are in millimetres. If a polished upper surface for your comb is required this work should be carried out before milling is started.

Slots need to be milled in the underside of the comb before teeth are sawn. It will be necessary to establish a jig for holding each segment of the comb whilst work is carried out on the lathe. The jig described below was designed specifically for a Chester UK "Model B Super" machine and will serve both milling and slitting operations. Jig design might need to be modified for other types of machine.

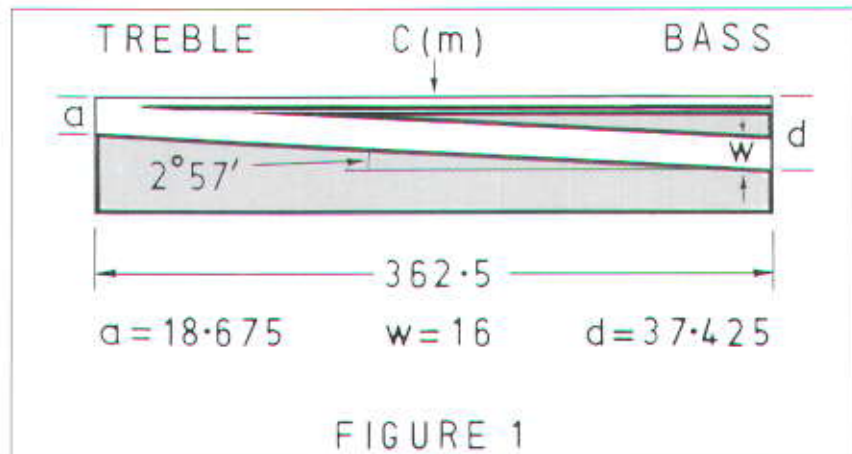


FIGURE 1

Areas under comb to be milled

Before milling can commence it is necessary to define where and how deep to cut. Figure 1 shows the line of teeth roots seen from underneath the comb as described in "Comb Design": this runs from treble to bass where teeth lengths are "a" and "d" respectively.

The areas outlined in blue are those parts of the comb which are to remain at full thickness; other areas will be milled down to thicknesses of 0.5mm or 0.62mm as shown in figs 2 and 3. Fig 2 is a larger scale representation of the centre segment embracing Middle C, whilst fig 3 shows a cross-section of the comb at the centre of Middle C.

Key to figures 2 & 3

- Non-blue areas are milled down to thickness t or T
- AB=5 / $t=0.5$ / Tooth tips
- BC=1 / Damper anvil
- CD=2.5 / $t=0.5$ / Damper slot
- AE=12.05
- EF=16 / $T=0.62$ / Root slot
- AF=28.05 / Length (L) of Middle C
- AG=60
- AE and AF differ between the 5 segments: values for all will be tabulated in Part 2 of this article
- DE is the lead platform for centre tooth
- FG is balance of segment plate beyond centre tooth root

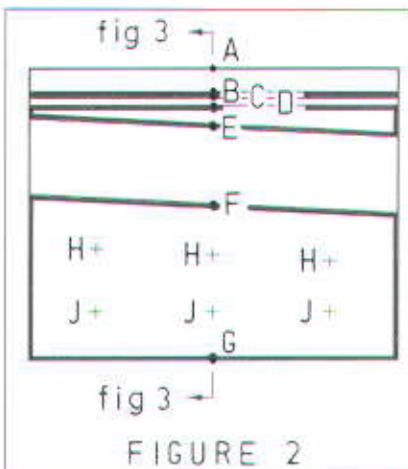


FIGURE 2

Middle C segment milling details

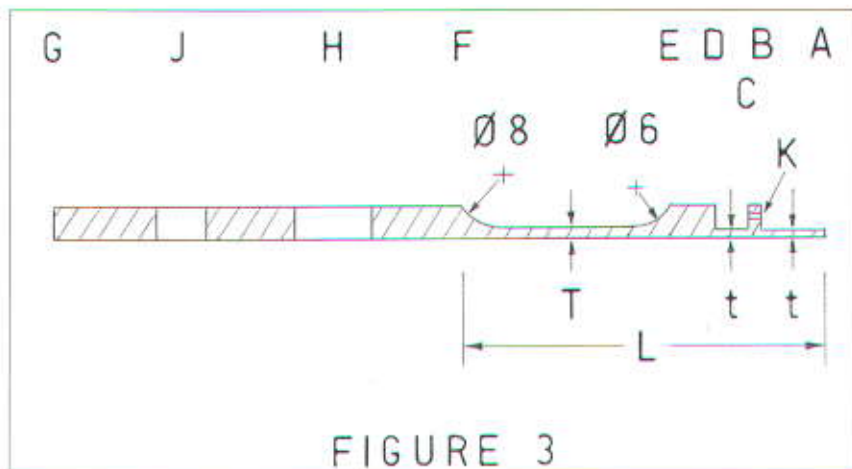


FIGURE 3

Cross section of comb at centre of Middle C

- K (fig 3 only) is damper wire hole location
- H are centres for 6 dia. screw holes for fixing segments to bed plate
- J are centres for 4 dia. screw holes for fixing segments to jigs

The next step is to establish means of holding blank comb segments for milling. A jig for this is shown in figs 4 and 5 where it can be seen that the blank will be well above the cross bed of the lathe. The reason for this is to bring the work piece to the correct height for slit-sawing, thus allowing the jig to serve both functions. For the milling operation, focus should be on the flat rectangular platform from which 3 M4 screws protrude as seen in fig 5. Note also the 3 M4 tapped holes forward of the screws. The screws are parallel to the lathe bed, the holes are at an angle of $2^{\circ} 57'$ to the bed. The former hold the work piece whilst milling parallel to tooth tips, the latter when forming the root slot. The various slots and slits around the platform are part of the sawing aids and can be ignored for now. More details of the jig can be viewed on

www.chesteruk.net/store/customer-projects.htm

which is linked with the Society's website.

Although the sequence of milling operations is not important, it is recommended that tooth tip and damper pin slots be completed first, finishing with the root slot. Fig 6 shows a work piece with the first two slots in the process of being milled.

Slots were milled using end mills. Tips, AB in fig 2, were cut with a 12mm dia. mill, CD, the damper slot, with a 2.5mm dia. tool. Before re-positioning the work piece on the jig for cutting the root slot, it is worthwhile replacing the mill with a 1 dia. drill bit and pop-marking points E and F at the segment centre. For the Middle C segment these are 12.05mm and 28.05mm from A respectively, see fig 2. The value and use of these marks will be explained in the next part of this article.

In this first part of the article we have completed milling in the area of tooth tips. The finished work is shown in fig 7. Part 2 will continue with details of milling the slot between the lead platform and teeth roots. Later articles will deal with slitting of teeth and drilling of damper wire holes, all of which must precede hardening and tempering of the GFS.



Fig 4 Model B lathe and jig

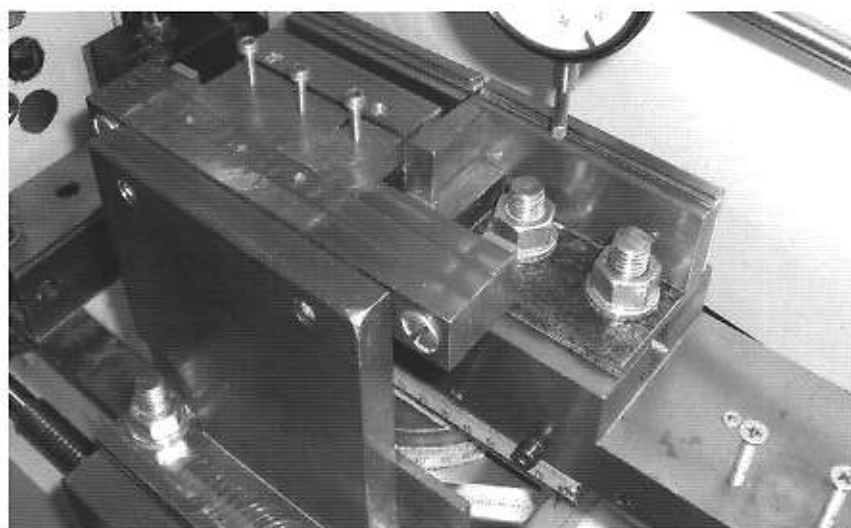
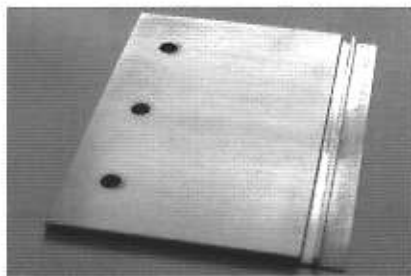


Fig 5 Milling and slitting jig



Fig 6 Segment with tip and damper slots being milled

Fig 7 Finished tip and damper anvil slots



News from Other Societies

from John Farmer

Mechanical Music, Vol. 54, No.6, November/December 2008

Larry Karp updates his previous article on musical chairs (Vol.52, No.2), with two examples of children's chairs. The first, a rather plain painted example, is fitted with a Reuge movement and a stop arrangement that just starts and stops the movement as the seat is depressed and released (potentially damaging for the movement). The second is a rocker with a movement mounted on the upper surface of one of the rockers, and has a wooden peg, activated by rocking, which operates the ratchet winding mechanism similar to those fitted to squeeze dolls.

Siegfried Wendel writes about the history and products of the Karl Griesbaum Singing Bird workshop in Triberg (originally published in *Das Mechanische Musikinstrument*). He was an instrument maker, but in 1905 was asked by the jewellers, Rosenau Brothers, to make a copy of a singing bird box. Evidence suggests a Bontems bird box was used as the pattern. The article includes many pictures, prices lists and drawings, and also covers the "Whistlers" in their various guises.

Coulson and Chet's "Treasures" in this issue are several items from Fred Zimbalist, a Cleveland dealer who imported from India a number of handmade brass decorative items, usually silver or nickel plated, then fitted them with contemporary Thorens or Reuge movements. The first is a 34" tall model of the Taj Mahal, fitted with 15 cylinder movements in its base, each being individually wound and played. Then comes an ornate radio speaker fitted with 6 Thorens movements, an ornate box like a phonograph, with a 4 1/2" Thorens disc movement, and several other items found on the Internet.

Mechanical Music, Vol. 55, No.1, January/February 2009

(See also www.mbsi.org)

This issue opens with an update on the Music Trade Review project. These journals, almost complete issues for 1890 – 1940, were gifted to the MBSI by Q. David Bowers. The Society has agreed that they could be scanned by NAMM (now International Music Products Association), with MBSI receiving copies of all files. This has now been done and the Museum Committee is looking at ways of making the materials available to members, bearing in mind that only around 2% of the content is related to Mechanical Music.

Dan Robinson issues a follow up to his May/June, 2008 article on the Wurlitzer 165 Band Organs, having received information from several members. He provides new or additional information on 5 organs. Paul Bellamy tells the story of his acquisition and subsequent restoration of a musical clock picture. This particular example has two cylinder movements, one clearly marked as Ducommun-Girod, the other unmarked. Paul proposes that this movement is also by the same manufacturer.

Beatrice Farmer and Luuk Goldhoorn detail their research on a rarely seen instrument – a Scraphon, in the form of a pedestal-mounted sewing box. Under the sewing tray is a barrel reed organ, the barrel being turned by a hand-operated ratchet mechanism, and wind being provided by two foot pedals (originally missing, but now restored). It was built by Ch. F Pietschmann & Sons of Berlin.

Part 1 of Tom Meijer's series "Dutch Street Organs and Popular Music", is reprinted with

permission from Het Pierement, October 1997. Craig Smith tells about the "restored" Gavioli barrel organ he acquired a few years ago, and the work he carried out to restore it properly, with particular detail of the last items made, a set of brass hinges for the top cover.

The Key Frame (Issue KF3&4/08)

(See also www.fops.org)

In "Mechanical in London's Little Italy", Raymond Elliott covers some of the history of this area, otherwise the Clerkenwell Road, Holborn, and home of Chiappa Ltd. He also covers the 20th July 2008 "Procession of our Lady of Carmel", an annual event in the area since Victorian times, at which various organs and a barrel piano were present.

The Deans of Bristol write in this issue with Richard telling of his 14 year old son, Thomas's debut at arranging with 4 tunes for the 90 keyless "Silver Belle", played at the GDSF, and Mike Dean writing his recollections of the organ business of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Another builder, David Leach, gives details of 3 organs he has built which are not generally seen by the public.

Events reviewed in this issue are the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam and Vintage weekend (11th & 12th October 2008), and the Fair Organ and Vintage Rally at Widnes (27th & 28th September 2008). In Fair Organs on the Internet Michael Morris and Nicholas Simons inform members about YouTube, the Internet video site, which is being used increasingly by mechanical music Societies, most notably the Player Piano Group, to promote their instruments, and publicise their societies. Both stress the importance of ensuring any such videos are of good quality, otherwise

Antique Musical Box Repairs and Restoration

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they will harm rather than enhance the image of mechanical music. (Something for MBSGB committee to think about? – JF).

Also in this issue Fred Dahlinger, Jr. writes the 3rd. part of his Celebration of Gavioli Organs, Jory Bennett interviews Kevin Meayers, and Andy Hinds discusses the "Appropriateness" of certain arrangements of certain pieces of music for particular instruments.

The Key Frame (Issue KF1/09)
(See also www.fops.org)

David Leach writes about Digital Music for Mechanical Organs, and explains why the perception that making digital music is easy, is wrong. Digital music requires the same amount of work in arranging the music, and the same degree of understanding about the sounds and capabilities of the organ. It isn't just a matter of finding a MIDI file and punching music from it!!

Andy Hinds writes about the life and works of Berthold Heinrich Kaempfert (1923 – 1980), and Michael Morris presents his top 12 organs at the 2008 GDSF. Raymond Elliott gives a comprehensive obituary for Albert Chiappa (1935 – 2008), and Phillip Upchurch writes about the history of Fair Organ

Preservation in Great Britain. This issue of Key Frame is the first in the new A4 format, and includes the annual Organ Availability Register.

**Vox Humana –
Autumn/Winter 2008**
(See also www.moos.org.uk)

Joseph Bursens established his organ business in Hoboken in 1908, and on October 5th 2008 a commemorative plaque was unveiled. This was followed by a weekend of events organised by Belgian Society MechaMusica, chaired by Johnny Claes. In November, 2008, some 30 members visited the Eifel region of Germany, where they saw the new museum of Thomas Jansen and Ralf Scheffler, followed by trips into The Netherlands and Belgium visiting Johnny Verbeek, and Decap (Herentals), and on to Hoboken to meet Johnny Claes, hearing various organs on the way.

Saturday November 29th, 2008, saw the St. Albans Organ Theatre celebrate the return of the 122-key Decap dance organ "De Nethe", better known as "England's Pride", after a complete overhaul at the Gebroeders Decap factory in Antwerp. A reprint from "Old Motor" of 1968 covering Bioscopes completes this edition of Vox Humana.

**Reed Organ Society Quarterly,
Vol. XXVII, No.4, 2008**
(See also www.reedsoc.org)

Coleman Kimbrell shows what dedication and perseverance can achieve in his article describing the restoration of a 1908 Beckwith "Cabinet Grand", piano cased organ which, in his own words started out as a "hopeless case". The photo of the completed instrument is impressive!

Nancy J. Varner tells how her "Show and Tell" demonstrations at various local venues aimed to spread the word about reed organs, and, on a similar vein, Mark Jefford give details of the "Harmonium Day" held at the South Bank Centre in October 2008. Mark V. Herr tells how the "organ rescue squad" managed to save a rare Estey Phonorium in Philadelphia, Michael Hendron remembers the trip through France finding Harmoniums in the Provinces, and Charlie Robison recounts the 900 mile journey collecting 8 organs, including Estey Grand Salon No. 100,000. The centre of this issue has Cesar Franck's "Offertoire" No. 44.

**Organ Grinders News, No. 67,
Winter 2008**
(See also www.boga.co.uk)

The Chairman reported that John Harrold has stood down as President

of BOGA, and recorded a big "thank you" for John and Angie for the huge effort they have put in to making the association successful. The association is also developing "Articles of Association" to reflect its increase in size.

Frank Richmond from Florida, explains how he became an organ grinder, starting with his first purchase, a Nelson-Wiggen Orchestrion in 1948, various other instruments, including 20 and 26 note Molinari organs, 20 note Hofbauer Harmonipan and an organette. A number of modern instruments are illustrated to celebrate 20 successful years of Jager & Brommer, Maggie Morris reports on the Twinwoods organ weekend, and Roy Brice reports on the first organ Oktoberfest at Mizens Railway, Knaphill.

Future events are the 17th Little Downham Bygone and organ extravaganza on 28th March 2009, The BOGA annual gathering at the Steam Museum, Swindon on 9th & 10th May 2009, the BOGA Spring gathering at the Forest of Dean heritage centre on 11th – 17th May, 2009, and the Summer gathering at Barleylands, Billericay on 31st July – 9th August 2009.

Organ Grinders News, No. 68, Spring 2009

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

The Association Steering Group has drafted Articles of Association, which will be the subject of a vote at the Annual Gathering meeting in Swindon on 9th May 2009. They have previously avoided such formality. The Amateur Organ Builders took part in the St' Albans Organ Theatre Christmas concert with 10 builders taking part, playing their organs as well as entertaining with mouth organ, Jig Dolls, and recitations.

Derek Dean reports from Australia on his work to create a copy of a 1780 organ clock, in order to learn more about the clock before embarking on the restoration of the

original clock. The work included making thirteen gears and a dial, making and pinning the barrel with 6 tunes, and fashioning 10 pipes and an animated wooden bird.

Heather Hancock writes about a recent acquisition, a Manopan organette, and her efforts to punch her own card music books for it. Alan Pell tells what has been happening in Whaplode Drove, including the first "Magic Band" and "Magic Accordion", rebuilding a 65 key fair organ, plans for a new miniature 48 key reed organ and a new DVD – "The Secret Life of an Organ Builder".

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 189, December 2008

The 2009 PPG AGM will be held at Salomons, and will include a concert on the Welte Philharmonic organ. Christine Robinson writes on the life and rollography of Ervin Nyiregyhazi (born 1903 in Budapest), and lists his 12 Ampico rolls. He died in almost total obscurity in 1987. This is followed by a 1987 New York Times article by Harold Schonberg covering Nyiregyhazi's disappearance in 1920.

Adam Ramet considers the merits of rolls that were derived from orchestral music, and advises the best way to listen to them. Julian Dyer gets intensely technical when he explains his development of a Duo-Art expression simulator. Why would you want one? In Julian's case he already has the ability to modify and create piano rolls on computer before he punches them, but he wants to be able to hear the results before actually punching the paper. Thus he is developing the simulator which will read the computer version of the roll and play it through the computer's sound system, now also adding expression to the music, giving Julian confidence that he has it right before ever cutting the paper.

The Musical Museum and Friends Newsletter, issue 43, Spring 2009

(See also www.MusicalMuseum.co.uk)

The Friends' latest visit was to the London Coliseum, home of the English National Opera, where they were shown the main auditorium with its huge dome (originally open to let out tobacco smoke), backstage, the staff restaurant (which was previously the housing for a massive revolving stage machine), the orchestra pit, and finally the foyer (with a moustachioed lion at the bottom of the staircase).

Mike Messenger reminds us that Frank Holland, founder of the Musical Museum, also started the Player Piano Group, four years earlier, in 1959, hence the current "PPG50" celebrations of the group. Mike has also written an audio guide to the museum for visitors to use on days when there are no live demonstrations. A regular organist on the Wurlitzer in the former church building of the museum was William Dudley Savage, who died on 5th November 2008.

Phil Fortey gives a brief history of the Calliope after he discovered one on the "VIC32" steamboat in Scotland. This is an 8-note instrument taking its steam from the main boiler. Would-be calliopists are encouraged to try out their arrangements on the boat's piano before broadcasting at full volume on the Calliope. The Friends have funded the restoration of the Museum's Tomasso street piano, which is now back in the museum, and due to appear in the "ORGANiSed" event in Brentford on June 27th and 28th.

Mike Messenger also reports on the first of Richard Cole's roll recitals, the revival of a happy tradition which was held in Gallery 1 on 16th January, 2009, and follows with a brief history of Phonographs, Graphophones and Gramophones after his gaff (or should it be Gaph) in a previous article, picked up by Christopher Proudfoot.

Non-English journals

Het Pierement – January 2009
(See also www.draaiorgel.org)

Highlights:-

- 56 key Limonaire
“Klok van Neleman”
- Oscar Grymonprez
(1904 – 2008)
- Restoration of the 68 key
Duitse Limonaire
- Bursens and companions
- Street organs in Japan (1)
- Hermann Leopoldi
(1888 – 1959)

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes –
4th. Quarter, 2008
(See also www.aaimm.org)

Highlights:-

- Mechanical Music and Films
- Mechanical Treasures in
Les Gets
- Orphea, an interchangeable musical
box with hidden gear train
- Alexandra, an interchangeable
with light-weight cylinders
- Happy Noel (Music to punch)

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes –
1st. Quarter, 2009
(See also www.ammi-italia.com)

Highlights:-

- Three Passions in One (Mechanical
Music, Napoleon and Clocks)
- The Piano and the Limonaire –
a Musical Fable
- Bursens – organ maker in Hoboken
- What is Musical value?
- A Siderophone inside a
small disc box
- A family portrait of
various sounds
- A festival for an
instrument (poem)
- Favre and the Sanza, a fiction
- A tale of the Musical Saw

Other Journals Received:-

Nieuwsbrief from MechaMusica
(Belgian Society). February, 2009
(See also www.mechamusica.be)

Musical Box Oddments No. 121

By H. A. V. Bulleid.



Fig. 1. Geo. Bendon tune sheet serial 3 801. A typical good assortment with four pre-1800 "classics" nos. 5, 7, 8 and 9, and two "hits" of the 1840s at nos. 1 and 10, then more up-to-date items, latest probably no. 2, 1873, some now forgotten. The absence of Sullivan tunes adds to the likelihood of this tune sheet being pre-1875.

Batch production of cylinder musical boxes in Ste. Croix.

There is now enough evidence on record to show that, as early as the 1870s, some agents were ordering batches of identical boxes from the makers. It might have been an initiative of the makers, because they all had experiences of certain boxes with certain tune lists standing out in popularity. But it was certainly very good for the agents who sent batches of their tune sheets for the makers to use.

A good example has just been reported by Rod Cornelius from New Zealand. It involves the well-known agent Geo. Bendon and has his well-known tune sheet, (like no. 194 in our series) see Fig. 1. Rod bought that box at an auction in New Zealand in 2001. Then in June 2008 a customer brought in for repair a similar box which had started life in England; it turned out to be identical and with consecutive serial number on nearly identical tune sheet as part shown in Fig. 2. I am quite sure these two boxes are from a batch, and of course I hope serial no. 3804 or 05 may soon turn up! Meanwhile another strong hint at batch production is in our series at no. 425 listing no. 8 of a series of tunes used by Cuendet. Batches must have become quite common with the masses of short-cylinder boxes made after 1890; L'Épée serial 80604, 3.5" cylinder, six airs, made in 1909, was in a batch of fifteen.

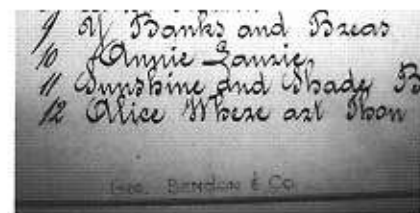


Fig. 2. Part of tune sheet serial 3800 with agent's name rather curiously written under the tune list. There are a few minor differences in the two tune lists, as in tune 9, but as usual the calligraphy is very good except for the lower-case letter r which I find extraordinarily irritating - just look at Where art (Alice) in tune 12.



Fig. 3. Part of A. Soualle's tune sheet on serial 4697. Some enthusiast has added three additional tune sheet pins, one in each side border and one at top centre which effectively masks the character between the A and S. (The one thing we really wanted to know.)

Last days of musical box making in Geneva.

The problems in accurately naming "new" tune sheets for the series, which has now reached no. 430, are getting worse as more are coming from later boxes. Also, production of cartels in Geneva really seems to have been well on the way out by 1898, but late boxes by Geneva makers (particularly Baker Troll) keep turning up. So I thought it would be worth listing known relevant facts....

- 1 Nicole was the first to stop Geneva production and take supplies from Paillard, - in 1891, and one (- only one?) in 1879 from Cuendet.
- 2 The presence of a Paillard tune sheet on a box in Baker Troll's approximately 1890 catalogue shows that they also were taking some Paillard supplies, probably from about 1885 or even earlier.
- 3 Cuendet at L'Auberson were making blanks and combs by 1890 as well as their notoriously large output of complete boxes and petites musiques.
- 4 Blanks and combs had been available from Karrer since about 1880.
- 5 Only four Geneva makers turned up at the Geneva International Exhibition in 1896. They were Geo. Baker, Conchon who closed in 1898, Allard, and Langdorff who merged and I think virtually closed in 1902.
- 6 F. C. Lecoultre handed over in 1871 to Perrelet who closed about 1899.
- 7 L. A. Grosclaude was last heard of at the 1896 Exhibition.

A. Soualle.

"Good music and made in Paris" describes a modest 4-air Soualle box with 5" (13cm) cylinder and a useful 70 teeth. Its tune sheet is very similar to our nos. 69 and 164 except that the V is missing from the usual ASV in the top cartouche, as shown in Fig. 3. It also has an attached plaque as shown in Fig 4.

The serial number is 4697, later than our two examples, and the plaque shows that it must have been made in or before 1862. Therefore our two examples should have been dated about 1860, certainly not 1872. Sorry about that, I should have stuck closer to Ord Hume's dating.

Alternative stop arm.

Tim Reed sent in Fig. 5 thinking it was unusual, and I couldn't even see how it worked, so I got help

from Alan Godier. It is on a typical Czechoslovakian movement with 4.5" (11 cm) cylinder playing two airs, 85-tooth comb.

The long, straight stop arm has a hole for fixing a control cord just beyond the governor. But a curved extension has been added for finger operation. Next along the stop arm comes the robust spring pushing it up and its tail end down with pin into the stop slot in the great wheel. The added feature is a small peg at the end of the stop arm, seen resting against a bar pivoted from the cylinder bearing. This bar springs under the peg and so holds it in the play position - until well before the end-of-tune when another pin on the great wheel knocks it out of the way.

If the cord is very promptly released the pin could drop again into the slot and thereby infuriate the operator by not starting. That might be the reason why they fitted the extra gubbins.

Metert and Langdorff tune sheets.

Noel Gale kindly sent the tune sheet for Fig. 6. It is on a super-mandoline box with 13.3" (34cm) cylinder and only four tunes, which allows 188 teeth - plenty in groups of eight.

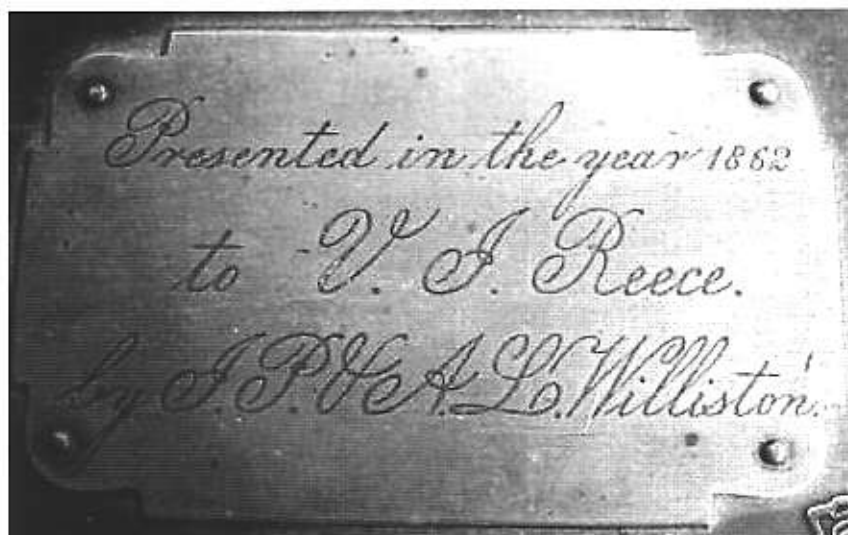


Fig. 4. Presentation plaque on Soualle serial 4697, probably made in 1861. Good choice for a presentation - it could stay with the family for at least three generations, this one perhaps for 147 years.

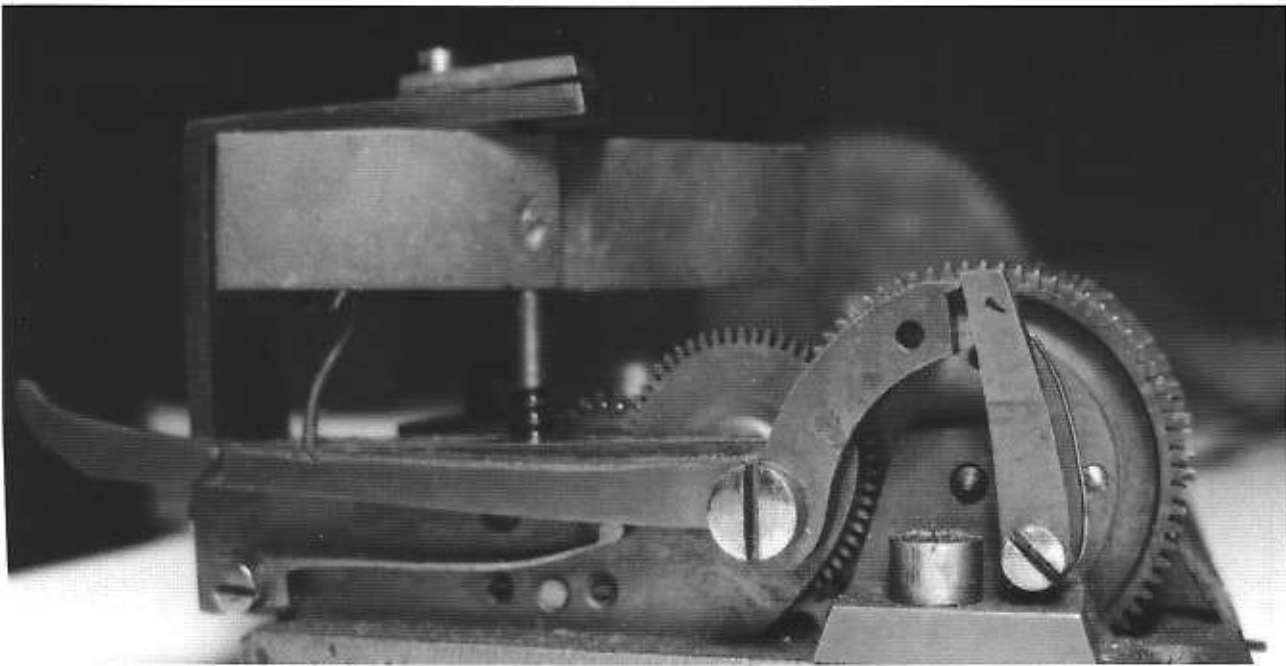


Fig. 5. Fairly common type of pull-cord stop/play control on a typical Prague movement. The brass extension to the stop arm can just be seen, then the pin (here, strangely, curved) stopping the governor wing, then the very robust spring, and the black end of the stop pin in its slot on the great wheel. A small peg protrudes from the end of the stop arm and is seen resting against a bar pivoted on the cylinder bearing bracket. When the stop arm is pressed down this peg is lifted and the sprung bar clicks in and supports the stop arm in play position

There are already six of these tune sheets in the series and I really could not inflict another merely for spelling mistakes. But I think it is worth noting again their weird inability to get the names of their fourteen composers correctly spelled. In Fig.

6, nos. 3 and 4 on the left side and nos. 2 and 6 on the right have their typical spelling howlers.

Lanner was displaced by Strauss as Vienna's waltz king in the 1840s and Langdorff dropped him in

favour of Verdi on serial 6882 in 1852. But he is back again in 1863 as Fig. 6 proves! They took it in turns, it seems, until Langdorff finally dropped the old tune sheet design. Other examples are in my second book, page 182, Fig. 6-3.

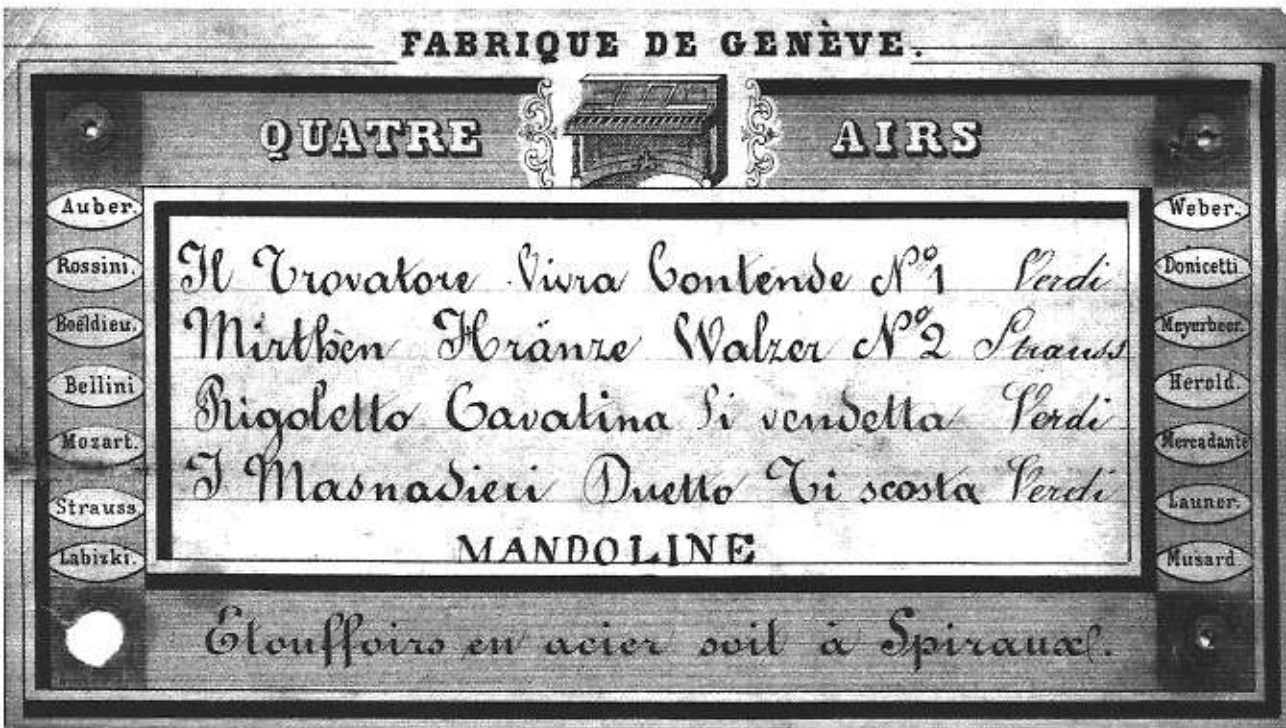


Fig. 6. Langdorff 13664, made in 1863, gamme 81/63. Mandoline in capitals with deplorable calligraphy. Verdi off the border design but tripled on the tune list.

Attention... Music

a predecessor of the Pling Plong

Most inventions don't appear out of the blue, but are combinations of earlier discoveries. A beautiful example in our hobby is Favre's musical box. All the parts already existed, but Favre combined them, and brought us musical boxes.

That was 1796, but for this subject we don't have to go so far back in history.

Let us start about seventy years ago, in the year 1936. A Paris based company, called Editions Bias, patented a songbook with pictures combined with a xylophone. The idea was that a book with song texts and musical scores needed the help of an instrument (and its player) to enjoy completely what was presented. Therefore they developed a book which a xylophone. Better than words, Figure 1 explains the idea. It was approved and accepted by the French patent office and published on the 18th of February 1937 under number 808930. This type of book was actually made, as an MBSI member in the US owns one.

It seems that the idea was picked up again in 1952, which resulted in a French patent number 1056379. The inventor was a man called Robert Marie Charles Huot de Longchamp residing in Monaco. The invention combined two long existing parts: the xylophone and the perforated paper band. So nothing new under the sun.

Longchamp sold his invention to a French company, called Editions Volumétrie, and they manufactured it.

A book with 6 children's songs in printed form as well in perforated strips combined with a xylophone was made. (Fig. 2). The working is explained in figure 3.

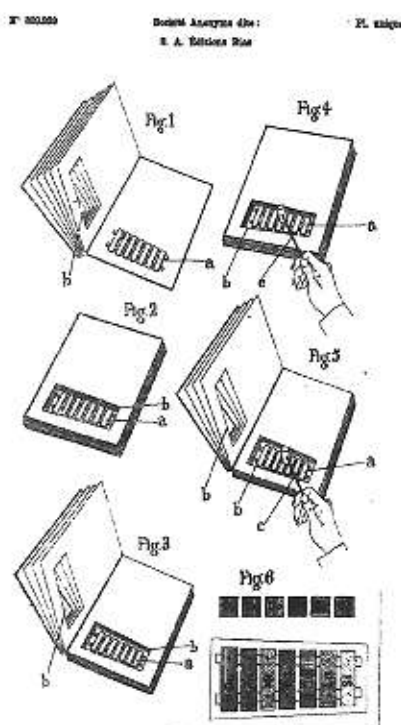


Fig. 1 The drawing belonging to the patent of 1936

The 8 bars are tuned to the C-scale, but the scores in the book are printed in other scales, or in other words the original scores are transposed to the C-scale.

The strips are 28 cm long and 18 cm wide. The inventor made it



Fig. 2 The front cover of the book

possible to perforate two songs on one strip. The perforations on the reverse are shifted half the distance between two holes on the front as clearly can be seen on Figure 4.

Figure 5 is a copy of one band. The holes marked 1 to 8 are the notes, which are played when the strip is inserted and pulled through with the first side up. Now if the strip is turned over, the holes A through H are in the position to play the second melody.

There are no starwheels but only plastic parts (see patent figure 1, number 8).

Six songs are in the book:

Frères Jacques (Brother John)

Savez-vous planter les choux
(Do You Know How to Plant Cabbages)

Au clair de la lune
(Under the Moonlight)

Dansons les capucines
(Let us Dance the Capucine)

Mon père m'a donné un mari
(My Father Gave Me a Husband)

Meunier tu dors
(Miller, You Are Sleeping)

Each song, along with the score and text, is printed on the left page, and a bigger, colourful picture on the right page illustrates the song (figure 6 and 7). The book itself measures 27 x 22.5 cm; the xylophone blades are 1.8 cm wide. The book was packed in a box with the same print on it as the book cover.

How to use this toy was clearly written in the Instructions (Fig. 8) In translation it reads:

Place the book open on the side of a table letting the lowest part be free.

Insert carefully the perforated strip in the crack; let it pass

N° 1.066.579

M. Haot de Longchamps

Pl. unique

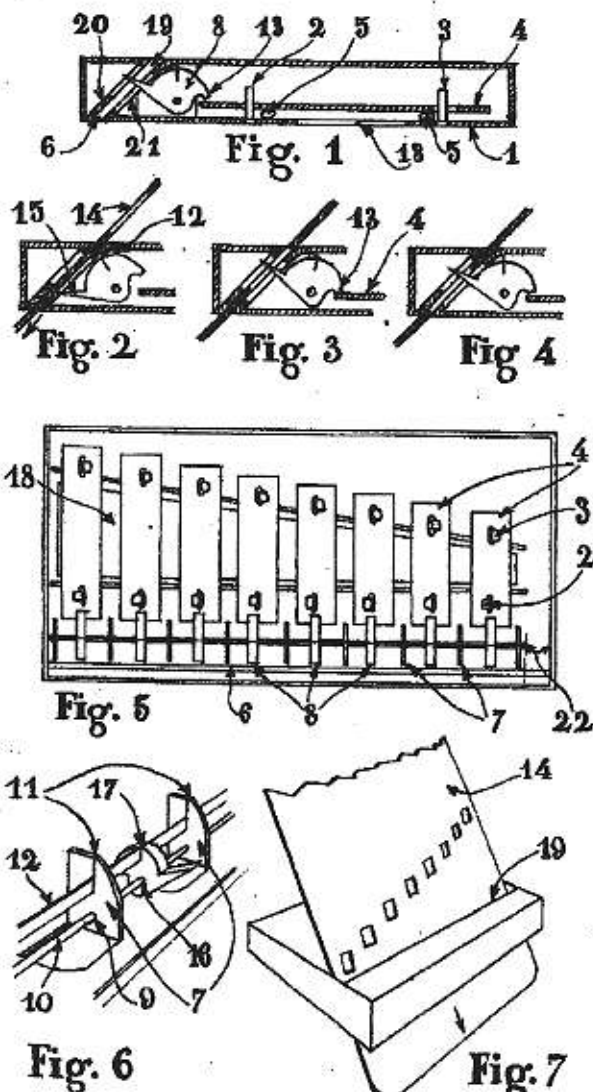


Fig. 3 The working of the mechanism as depicted in the patent of 1952

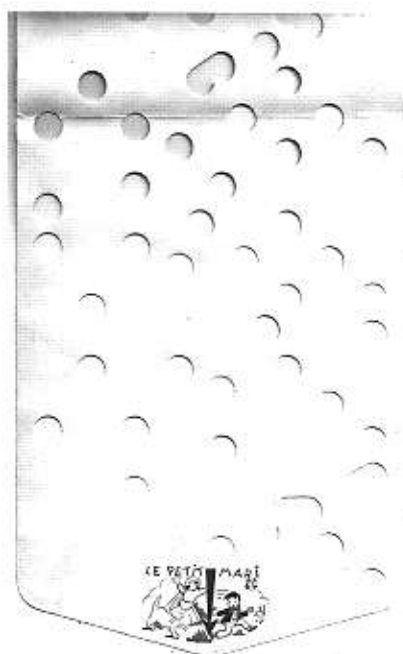


Fig. 4 The strip

about 2 cm out of the back of the book, than pull this part slowly and regularly in the direction you inserted the strip while keeping the book at its upper side.

Don't press on the part of the book in which the mechanism is housed (lower part of the album)

To play another song turn the strip and start again.

Figure 9 shows the "ready to play" position.

Another 16 years elapsed before the Pling-Plong system was introduced by Mr. Komatsu

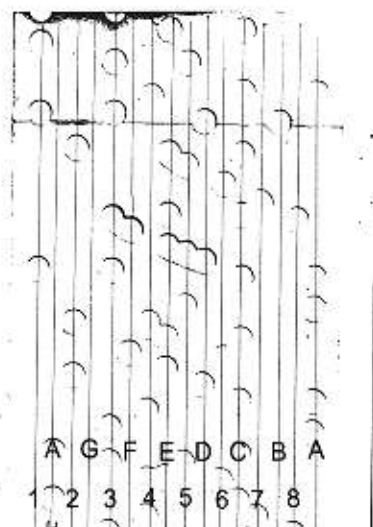


Fig 5 The strip with marked notes



Fig. 6 and 7. One of the songs

Fumito (who designed the movement) and Mr. Tashiro (responsible for the paper strip) both from Japan and working for Sankyo.

They first introduced a model powered with an electric motor but that turned out to be a failure and soon afterwards a manivelle was introduced.

The early ones have a 20 note-mechanism. Much later a 15-note version was introduced.

The big advantage of the Pling-Plong system is the possibility of arranging your own compositions by using the included punching device. However, if one had a punch of the right large size, the Longchamp strips could also be made by the owner.

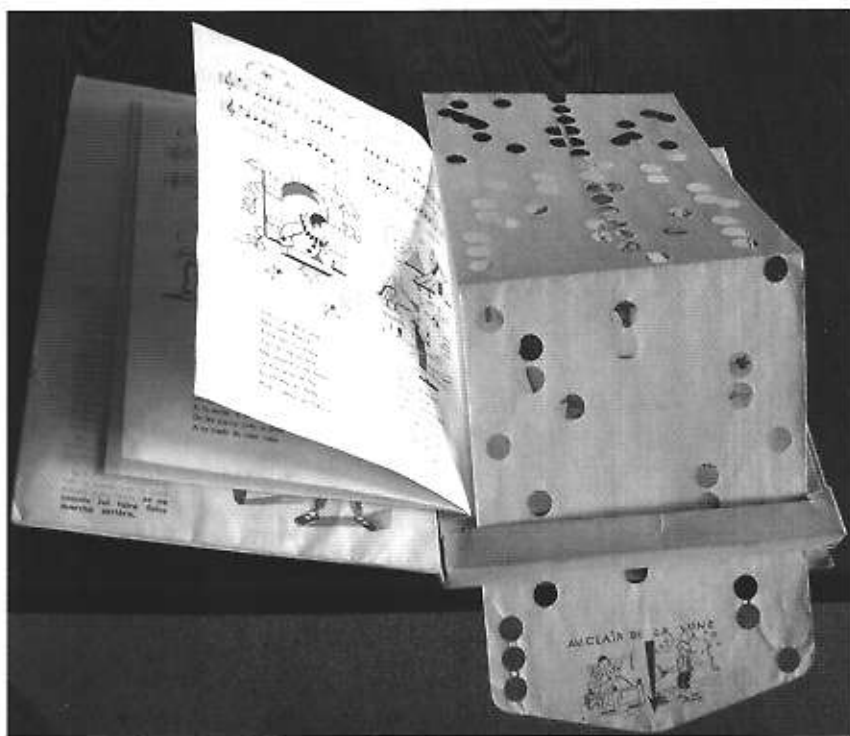


Fig. 9 Ready to play



Comparing the two toys, it seems unlikely that the Japanese inventors had known about the earlier inventions. Nevertheless, the paper strip musical box was introduced far before Sankyo invented its Pling Plong.

Fig. 8 The instructions

**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**



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A Musical Harp

by David Evans

Is there any other kind? I had the enclosed in for repair recently, and was struck by the remarkably substantial stop work for a 'snuff box' type movement. The movement (Fig. 1) is of the conventional snuff box size and construction and plays two airs (unlisted). I imagine it dates from post 1900. The only identification seems to be the 'IA Qualité Garantie' stamped into the governor plate (Fig. 2) and the letter R on the comb. I have not found a serial number on it. The stop work is illustrated in Fig. 3.

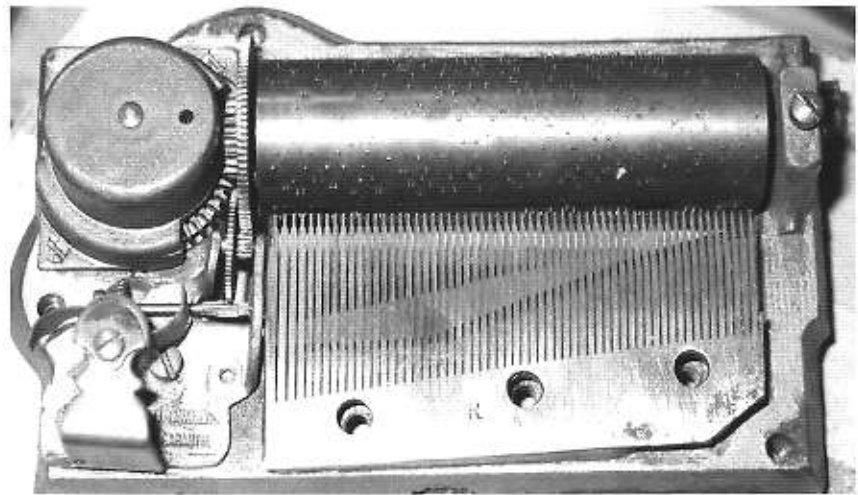


Fig. 1: The movement (comb screws removed).

The harp (Fig. 4) into which the movement fits was produced, or at least, sold, by the Ward – Stilson Company of New London, Ohio. They were suppliers of artefacts for the Independent Order of Oddfellows (IOOF), a fraternal order popular in the US, Canada and overseas too. The musical harp seems to be a part of one of their rituals. They all seem to have the number 9584 on their paper labels except for larger more elaborate examples that seem to have a different number, from which I assume it was a Ward-Stilson catalogue number. The harp is 22 1/2" tall and 10" wide at the top. The wood is a softwood suitably stained and polished. The decoration around the sound hole is a transfer.



Fig 2. The governor.

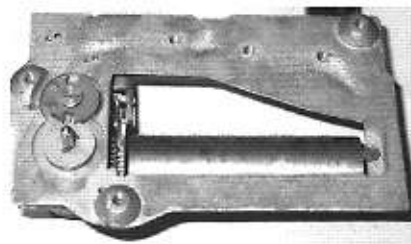


Fig 3. The stop work.



Fig 4. The harp.

Can anyone identify the maker of the movement?

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 look at the new members list or 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.

You will get far more out of your membership if you come along to a local or national meeting, you might make some new friends and hear wonderful instruments..... If you are not sure then just book in with our meetings organiser as a day visitor the first time.

3047 Troy Banarzi London 3048 John Berhout Netherlands 3049 Miss Caryne Ruck London

Letters to the Editor

From: Arthur Cunliffe.

Dear Sirs

It is always very pleasing to look in the journal and find interesting and informative photographs, but for me one of the most important I have ever seen appeared in the last issue. It was of that lovely, but slightly sad, picture of the child in the cancer ward of Addenbrookes Hospital enjoying the sound of the Polyphon.

To see one so young suffering from this dreadful illness is the sad part, but the smile showed us a ray of hope. Again, we know that the younger they are the more chance there is of making a full recovery. We are indeed so lucky to have avoided this fate. I am so pleased and proud to belong to a Society that realised that contributing to the well being of others is a very important part of life and that through our fund raising we were able to bring a little sunshine into the lives of these unfortunate children.

I believe that through the years, the Society has helped many good and deserving causes by raising money. Organ grinds and other collecting ideas have been a means of doing this with the latest being collecting for the Air Ambulance service, the Tenbury Wells Hospital and for obtaining new discs for the Polyphon at Addenbrookes. Long may we continue supporting such deserving and commendable causes.

From Noël Gale, Oxford.

Sir,

As an ordinary member of the society I should like to stress the great value of the MBSGB Register of musical boxes. This is a resource that I think is not possessed by any of the other musical box societies around the world. We owe its formation and continued existence to the great perspicacity, and continued hard work, of our President and Registrar, Arthur Cunliffe. Its range and utility depends also, of course, on active support by members in contributing to the Register as much detail as possible about their boxes. This information is recorded in the

Register completely anonymously as information solely about the box; neither the name or address of the owner appears in the Register nor is retained by the Registrar or MBSGB. However a unique Registry number is assigned to the box and given to its owner, who may inscribe it on the box, so providing records which may assist in the recovery of stolen boxes.

Apart from security the Register is invaluable in reconstructing the history of musical boxes and the characteristics and methods of particular makers. I have very recent experience of this for a particular cylinder box with various features (including its tunesheet) which pointed to two possible makers but which did not, from the published books by Ord-Hume, Webb, Bulleid, Clark, Tallis, Mosoriak, Chapuis, Piguët, etc., allow either to be identified positively as its maker. However information on the Register, when combined with the knowledge of the Registrar and one of Anthony Bulleid's invaluable Musical Box Oddments articles, taken together did uniquely identify the maker. Of course many significant research discoveries have been made from the records in the Register, and the important MBSGB publication "The Nicole Factor" relies heavily on information gleaned from the Register, which exists in three forms: 1) 8" x 5" record cards; 2) a Mini computer record and 3) a much more extended computer record including all details.

Members sending in records of their boxes should supply as much information as possible, such as: Makers name; serial number; gamme number; type of box (e.g. 4 air keywind, 4 air Forte-Piano, 6 air mandolin, etc.); cylinder length and diameter; comb(s), number of teeth in comb, marks on comb; brass or cast iron bedplate, foundry marks; copy of tune card; list of airs and their composers; marks on bedplate and governor cock; scribed marks on bass lead, or on cylinder end caps; photographs, etc. Forms for registering are available online on the MBSGB website, and should be returned with any photographs, tune

sheet photocopies, etc. to The Registrar, c/o MBSGB, P O Box 373, Welwyn, AL6 0WY. More details are published in The Music Box 15(4) [1991], 116-117, now available to all members on the recently issued DVD, on which you will also find many more entries about the Register listed in the subject index. My own recent experience of the great value of the Register prompts me to urge all members to find the time to record (in complete confidentiality) the details of their boxes on it, thereby increasing its value still further.

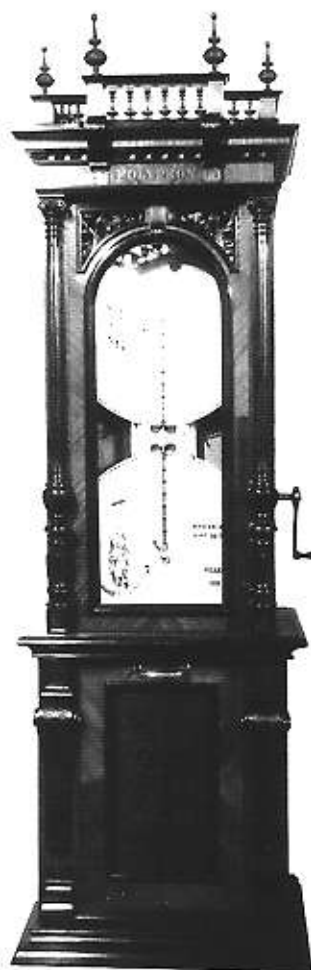
From: Alan K Clark.

Dear Editors,

I thought that I should write to remind members to try and register their musical boxes. The more of us that give the Registrar the useful details, the more information there is for us to get back. From memory the latest requests in the magazine seem to require us to give a considerable amount of information, and on some boxes even finding a gamme number can be impossible. What I would suggest is that we include as much detail as we can conveniently find. Especially the tunes if they are known. How many of us have identified all but one of our tunes on a tune-sheetless box? It is quite possible that a fellow member may have the same tune selection and that fact could be very useful.

Are you aware that the Registrar has produced a list of over 1200 tune titles, taken from musical boxes, and checked to prove their spelling etc? This list is available for members to use to check when they have abbreviated or badly written titles.

What most of you may not know is that the Registrar has been storing away all sorts of useful details for years. For example when I registered my latest box, he came back with details of when it was sold in auction many years ago. The auctioneer's description was useful to me as it used to have a flower transfer on the lid, (now lost by repolishing), so I can try and replace it. Who knows what details he may have waiting for you when you register your next box?



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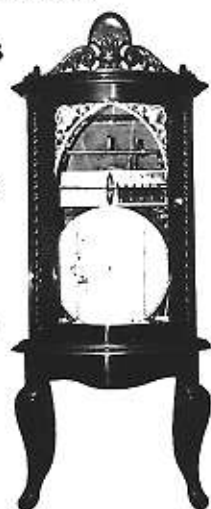
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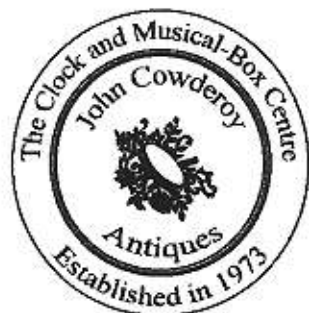
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