

Volume 24 Number 5 Spring 2010

The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



In this issue:

- Scanner for Pinned Barrels
- Glazed front musical box
- Brethby Art Pottery
- Making a Musical Box

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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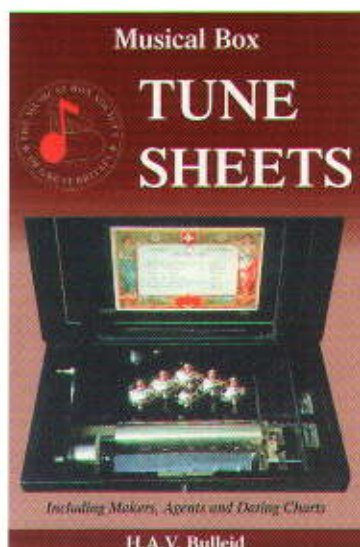
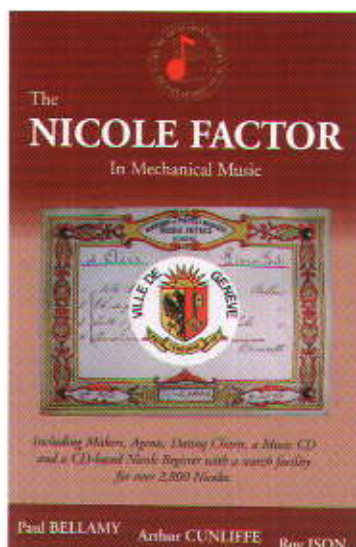
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From the Editors' Desk

Having collected both barrel organs and barrel pianos over the years it was with great excitement that I read about the Italian scheme for scanning pinned barrels. We congratulate Leonardo Perretti and his team for instigating such an imaginative project and for putting it together. Musicologists are beginning to really appreciate the 'hard copy' of music on barrels – we witness this regularly when they come round the Nickelodeon – and this method of re-creating the original music is fantastic. The ability of the program to deal with even damaged barrels is amazing. We want to thank Alan Pratt for editing the article and bringing it to our attention.

John Natrass has asked for your help. In the article on page 438 he describes how he has re-cased an orphaned Adler disc box movement. From the pictures it appears he has done a fabulous job and certainly given the instrument a new lease of life. His dilemma now is what to call it! Read about it and then see if you can help. We will willingly pass on suggestions if you send them to us.

The Restoration Project makes a sound start with suggestions for basic good maintenance of your collection. The team reminds us that we are merely custodians of our instruments and that we should act responsibly in ensuring their safety and well-being. The team asks you to fill in a simple questionnaire to help their future direction. You will find it on page 425 amongst other places, like the back of your membership renewal form. Please copy it and send completed forms to the address at the bottom of the form.

We are bowled over by your response to our President's request that we should have a 'Letters to the Editor' section. You have responded in style! Thank you. In this issue we have three pages of letters! I am sure the Committee will be as pleased as we are. We really want

to build on this feature, so help us do it – write/right away!

In response to an earlier query we have an article on the Bretby Art Pottery. This (together with a letter we received on the same subject) has certainly opened my eyes to an interesting corner of collecting. Thank you to both contributors and to the original questioners.

Alec Reid's article on his rare Oriental organ box is another eye opener. A glazed room for the dolls? I don't think I have seen one before. Don Busby continues painstakingly taking us through his work making a new musical box, this issue covering the drilling of damper holes, and John Farmer continues to give us a welcome précis of what other societies have in their journals.

It was with amazement and a huge lump in the throat that we received the final, final Oddments. I am sure Anthony would have approved of Arthur and Ted's handling of the notes he left.

As I write this I am looking at the sunshine on the snow-capped mountains and the realisation that it is almost spring. Those of you who have seen anything of the Winter Olympics will have some idea of the beauty of British Columbia. Most of you will have had more snow than us this winter. What a topsy turvy world we live in!

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

Any contribution is accepted on the understanding that its author is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in it and the publication of such contributions does not necessarily imply that any such opinions therein are those of the Society or its Editors.

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In conclusion I am sure you will join with us in wishing our President a speedy recovery from surgery and we hope that Alan Pratt, the Music Box's previous editor, will also have recovered from his health scare.

such contributions. No representations, warranties or endorsements of any product or information contained herein are given or intended and full verification of all products and information appearing in this Journal must be sought from the appropriate contributor.

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The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 24 Number 5 Spring 2010

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Dates for your Diary

2010

Chanctonbury Ring

Sunday 28th February 2010

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Lunch provided

Please contact Ted Brown on
01403823533

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting

Saturday 13th March 2010

1.30 start

Please contact John Phillips on
01584 78 1118

Spring Meeting 2010

Tavistock - Devon

Friday 16th April - 18th April 2010

Don't forget to book !

Chanctonbury Ring 50th Meeting

Sunday 9th May 2010

BOOK EARLY!

10.30 coffee for an 11am start

Lunch provided

Please contact Ted Brown on
01403823533

Essex Meeting

Saturday 22nd May 2010

10am -4pm

At the Parish Rooms,

Holy Trinity Church

Rayleigh, Essex

Bring your own lunch -
coffee & tea provided by us
Why not bring along your own
favourite musical item to show

Please phone Bruce Allen -
01702 23 2040

Annual General Meeting & Society Auction

Saturday 5th June 2010

Road Village Hall

Near Northampton

11a.m. Start -

Buffet lunch - midday

Society Auction 2p.m.

President's Message No. 15

The late Anthony Bulleid was kind enough to leave most of his written work to the Society to keep in our archives. It will be there for serious researchers to use in the future once it has been fully catalogued. Having been lucky enough to have a brief preview of some of his material, I am amazed at the depth of his understanding and research into the topics he was investigating. He pursued a subject with a dogged determination.

Among Anthony's papers was a set of uncompleted "Oddments" which he was planning to use in the future. A second envelope headed "Snippets" contained brief notes about topics that had caught his interest in the past. Ted Brown and I have taken the liberty of combining these papers and have produced a final set of "Oddments" which is published elsewhere in this Journal. We hope that Anthony would have approved.

As reported in the last President's Message, the Committee is working very actively in the best interests of the Society and has established some Sub-Committees to look at various aspects of Society life. The Publications Sub-Committee is working alongside Kevin McElhone to produce our next publication. This is to be a definitive work on Disc Boxes which should take our understanding of these instruments forward to a marked degree. A great deal of work has gone on already but the project is not quite complete. It is better to get all the proof reading, layouts and printing tasks completed and correct before going ahead.

Looking forward to our 50th Anniversary year in 2012, a Sub-Committee has been formed to plan for those events. Some special occasions have been thought about and already initial planning is underway. It looks as though 2012

will be a very special year as far as we are concerned and, whilst not wishing my life away, I am really looking forward to the celebrations.

The Committee has taken the "Restoration Project" forward by leaps and bounds. The scheme has been designed to be ongoing and initially be within the pages of our Journal. It is also envisaged that it could be the basis of another publication to produce a new and up to date manual on restoring musical boxes and other mechanical devices that play music. Most of our existing books on restoring musical boxes were written many years ago and, whilst being very good, are now showing signs of age. Advances in technology, skills and understanding also mean that new techniques, materials and insights are now available. These should now be shared.

Only the other day one site on the Internet published information about a musical box maker that we now know to be incorrect. The well meaning contributor had based his advice on certain early well known books which cannot any longer be regarded as being in the forefront of restoration techniques.

I find all this very encouraging and my only concern is the fact that, in spite of everything we do, our membership numbers along with those of other Societies give the impression of being in decline. The present generation seem to have little interest in anything outside electronics and football. Hobbies and socialising appear to be a thing of the past. If you know anybody who has a love of mechanical music and a desire to enjoy the company of other like minded people, please persuade them to join the Society. In the meantime, our Committee continues to actively explore all avenues to improve our membership.

Arthur Cunliffe

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting

Saturday 19th June 2010

1.30 Start

**Please contact John Phillips on
01584 78 1118**

Autumn Meeting 2010

Lincolnshire

**Host David O'Conner &
Gill Maxim**

*Friday 10th September –
12th September 2010*

Details in next Journal

Teme Valley Winders

Saturday 25th September 2010

1.30 start

**Please contact John Phillips on
01584 78 1118**

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting

Saturday 4th December 2010

12 noon start

Including Buffet Lunch

**Please contact John Phillips on
01584 78 1118**

Chanctonbury Ring

**Meeting Dates will be available
in our next Journal**

2012

Advance Notice

In 2012 the Musical Box Society of Great Britain will be celebrating it's 50th Diamond Anniversary. Celebrations will start in April 2012 and take place in the South East of England.

More details in the next Journal

Chanctonbury Ring Open Day Meeting

4th October 2009 – By Alan K Clark

The usual large number of members attended Ted and Kay's latest meeting held at the Old School Bucks Green. The date of the first meeting in 2010 had been chosen as Sunday 28th February. The topics covered by these meetings can vary widely, and quite frequently those assembled are asked to help a member with some technical or mechanical difficulty. This time the help was requested by Daphne to overcome her "conundrum". She circulated photos of 5 inch disc box movement, which she had removed from what was obviously its original case. The movement and box were anonymous, but discussions with some American members suggested it may be an Arion. The conundrum concerned the stop mechanism. One of the wheels had a hole for the tail of the stop lever to enter when the disc reached the end of its tune and if you pushed the lever towards the hole at the correct time, it would indeed stop. The stop lever looked to be complete, and there were no obvious holes or slots in which a return spring may have been fitted. Some of these movements have been seen in musical photograph albums, so they may have had a stop lever linked directly to the opening clasp. However Daphne's case had no place for a return spring either. Following various ideas your writer suggested that perhaps the stop lever originally had a cut out tongue which acted as the spring, in the same way as the stop levers on early tabatiere movements.

Ted then read some notes from a period book detailing the painting of magic lantern slides. This information was eagerly received by some of our members

who collect magic lanterns. His further reading of the processing of horn, to form clear sheets, (that could be used to make the internal covers for snuff boxes), explained just what a complicated process it was. Our next in depth discussion and demonstration concerned the use of bells in musical boxes. In the past there was the belief among many society members that very few high class musical boxes were made with bells, and therefore most bell boxes were bound to be of poor quality. This view was certainly prevalent when your writer joined the society many years ago. Ted's aim was to show just how wrong that belief was. Yes there were the cheap three bell boxes in which the bells were un-tuned, and badly timed, but even this three bell type was also made with correctly tuned and timed bells. Following a quick demonstration of these two basic types of boxes, the topic was explored in depth with the demonstration of all types of high class bell, and bell and drum boxes, by a variety of makers including L'Épée, Nicole, LeCoultre, Ducommun Girod, Bremond, and Rivenc. Altogether nine bell boxes from various members were demonstrated. The general opinion was that all the bell arrangements added considerably to the music. The members' views of those with drum accompaniment, especially where the drum could not be silenced, were predictably less enthusiastic.

Once we had eaten our sandwiches, and consumed all Ted and Kay's sweets, the meeting continued with a brief request for suggestions from members for the designs of table favours for the society's 50th celebration meeting to be passed

to the committee. We then heard music played on Mohan's 11 inch centre drive Regina. This was a special machine believed to have been made for a US exhibition. The moulded oak veneered case had a carving of Columbus on the lid, and a double comb movement. Ted compared the sound of this with an 11 inch double comb Polyphon. Next we heard the contrasting sound of organettes with tunes played on a 14 note Mechanical OrguINETTE, followed by some on a 14 note double reeded Drapers organette. This was followed by advice from Ted on how to safely remove the backs of photo albums in order to repair the catches etc.

The main talk of the afternoon was by Paul Baker, who is famous for his talks on phonographs and gramophones. This well researched talk was on the Edison Concert Phonograph, which plays a wax cylinder 5 inches in diameter. The history was fully detailed, very interesting, and sadly far too long to include in this short article. The highlight was the demonstration of a few of these rare concert cylinders on an Edison Concert machine, plus for comparison, some of the standard sized cylinders played on a normal machine. The afternoon was brought to an end with "The Trumpet Voluntary" by J Clark played on the Aeolian Orchestrelle. This roll was hand marked and cut by your writer, as it was understood to have never been cut originally by the Aeolian Company. This was followed by some tunes on the Steck Piano, before we made our farewells, thanking Ted, Kay, and the members wives and other helpers for ensuring the success of the meeting.

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting - 5th December 2009

The Winders' ranks swelled to 38 for this Christmas flavoured meeting, with a substantial contingent of Clock Winders, and John Phillips' son, Martin and his family, and they all enjoyed a packed programme. So packed, in fact, that John had produced a programme of events (subtly improved for display on the projector by grandson Benjamin Phillips), to make sure everything was fitted in.

The event started with a sumptuous cold buffet provided by Hilda and helpers and once everyone was replete, John called the group to order. We were especially fortunate that John is currently looking after son Martin's Viscount 3-manual and pedal electronic pipe organ, and we had two experienced organists in Martin himself, and Teme valley resident Jason Fisher. Jason, a Winders regular and organist at Stockton church, started off the afternoon with several well played classical pieces, after which John pointed out that Jason had not seen the organ until the day before !

Eyes then turned to the front of the hall where John Phillips and Terry Longhurst took it in turn to demonstrate two Organocleide cylinder boxes. Terry's is believed to be by Bremond, from around 1875, and has 2 combs in the usual layout. John Phillips' box was by Charles LeCoultré (recently restored by Alan Godier), and has the addition of a "Piccolo" comb. Both machines played beautifully. Next up was Nicholas Simons with his recently acquired, ex-John Nixon, street barrel organ, a Meloton by Varetto of Manchester, dating from between 1909 and 1925. It is a 26 key, double-reeded instrument, and had required quite a number of minor repairs and adjustments. The tunes were a mixture of Scottish folk tunes



Fig 1. Nicholas demonstrating the video system

together with Home Sweet Home, Onward Christian Soldiers, and Old Hundredth. Nicholas played 5 tunes and the instrument performed well for its age.

A cylinder box was next, being John Phillips' Langdorff, playing a number of Scottish tunes plus Rule Britannia. The piano picture at the top of the tune sheet confirms the Langdorff origin. There being no other cylinder boxes brought along we moved on to "oddments", starting with Laurence Talbot's bracket clock, from about 1850. This clock is unusual in that it has two keys, but only one key hole, one key being much larger than the other. One winds clock wise, and the other anti-clockwise. There is just one spring barrel, but two great wheels, one each end. Laurence surmises that there is just one spring, wound from both ends, suggesting this was an experimental clock. It runs for just 30 hours. The mechanism has not been dismantled to prove its method of operation.

The next "oddment" was Doug

Pell (sorry, Doug) and his singing stripper! This is a mechanical doll with an electronic song system, to which the doll dances and opens her cloak, all in the best possible taste... John Farmer then demonstrated some talking balloons. These are actually ordinary balloons, but with the addition of a thin plastic strip which has been embossed with a sound track. Sliding one's finger-nail down the strip causes the balloon to say "Merry Christmas" or "Happy New Year" (available from www.grand-illusions.com - note the hyphen). John Phillips was then presented with a Christmas present, by Bernard North, and this turned out to be a small musical biscuit tin complete with biscuits (courtesy of Aldi), and played a Christmas tune. Next was Kevin McElhone demonstrating a large and rare 46 note Syreno organette. This was, in effect, the table top version of Aeolian's 46 note reed organ, forerunner of the Orchestrelle. Terry Longhurst then returned to the front with a musical spinning top, but this one has to be wound up first, then only

plays when spun. David Henthorn followed with a small, modern manivelle playing a Christmas tune. Next was Thomas Phillips with his laughing dog. This delightful animal laughs and giggles to itself whist rolling back and forth. John Phillips also had on display a large brass mechanism thought to be from a large orchestrion (if you know of a large orchestrion with a piece missing, let us know). The last oddment was Doug Pell again who played some seasonal tunes on his self-playing concertina.

Moving on to Disc Boxes, Kevin had brought along a selection of new 15 1/2" Christmassy discs, some being re-cuts of old tunes and some tunes not previously available on 15 1/2" discs, which he played on John's table Polyphon. John Harrold played some lesser known carols from Germany on both his 15 1/2" double comb Criterion, and for comparison played some 15 1/2" Polyphon discs of similar carols on John Phillips' double comb Polyphon. This was to demonstrate the different styles of arrangement. More 19 5/8 discs followed, from Doug Pell and Alan Pratt, the last being Alan's "Ave Maria", perhaps

John Phillips' favourite tune, which John then played on his 48 note Piano Melodico.

It was now time for the attendees to sing for their supper (well, lunch, anyway), with Nicholas Simons pedalling on the Weber Duo-Art piano with a number of Christmas word-rolls. John Phillips had set up a video camera to capture the words on the rolls and display them on the big screen, thus no-one had an excuse not to sing. We don't think that even the PPG have done this yet?

It was now time for tea, coffee, mince pies and fruit cake, all of which quickly disappeared, whilst Angie and John Harrold played Christmas tunes on John Phillips' Pell street organ. Once everyone had finished eating, John invited his son Martin to demonstrate his Viscount organ, played earlier by Jason. Martin played several classical pieces in differing styles which well demonstrated the organ's capabilities and finished off with The Liberty Bell March by Sousa (i.e. the well know Monty Python theme). Martin is an accomplished organist who plays

regularly at a church in Chichester. He has been playing for 34 years and learnt, partly, at Chichester cathedral.

To round off the afternoon, Ros and Terry Longhurst treated us to an old-time slide show using Terry's Biunial magic lantern. This lantern has two sets of optics enabling it to dissolve between pictures and display other special effects. Ros narrated a Christmas tale whilst Terry illustrated it with a series of coloured slides, some animated, and some providing a back-lighting effect to change the appearance of the slides, as well as dissolving from one slide to the next. An enjoyable old-fashioned finish to the afternoon. Finally, Bernard Weeks, on everyone's behalf, thanked John, and especially Hilda (and her helpers), for their excellent hospitality.

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Winders will be on Saturday 13th March, 2010, starting at 1:30 p.m. prompt. Those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm and get directions if required. Any instruments, clocks or items of interest are welcome.



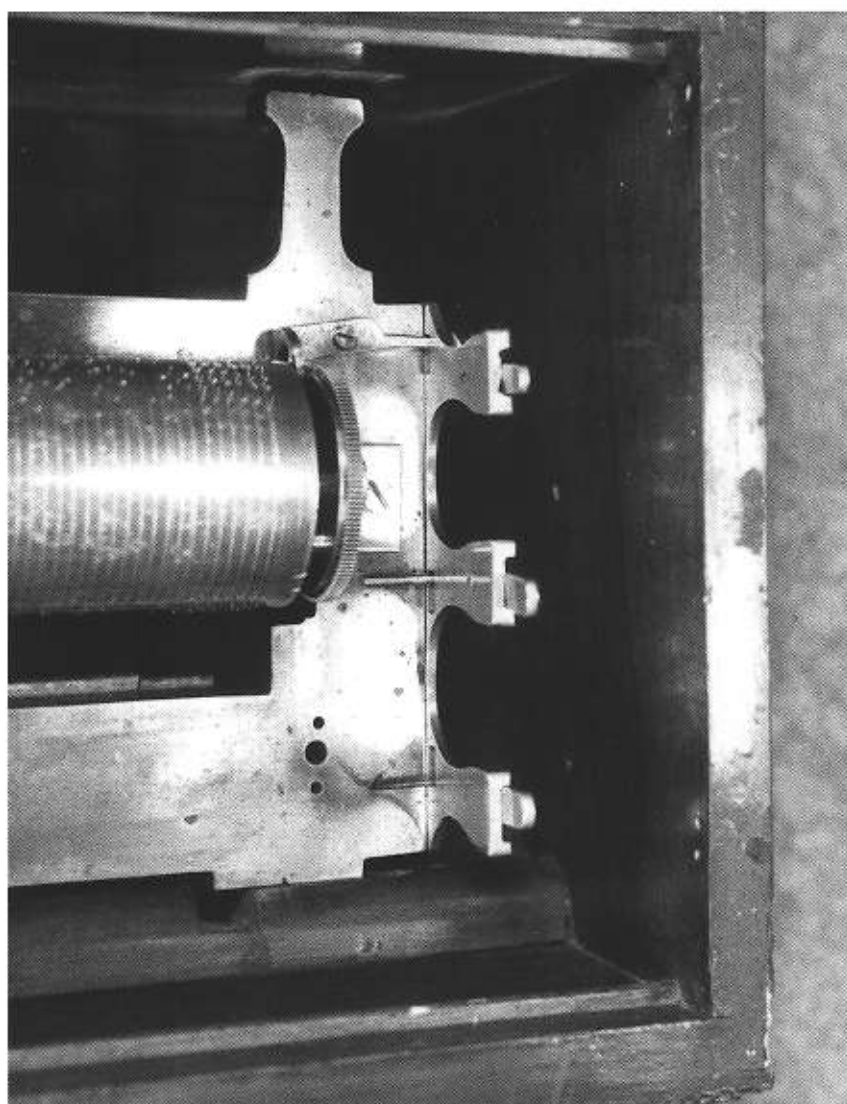
Fig 2. Terry Longhurst and John Phillips compare organocleides

Register News No: 66

The number of registered boxes has now reached the 8,700 mark but unfortunately the number of requests for new boxes to be registered has declined. I hope we will eventually be able to reach the number 10,000.

Whilst I am enjoying a breathing space, I have taken the opportunity to improve and update the Register further. Obvious mistakes and typing errors have been discovered and put right but more importantly, the sorting of information has been refined with new areas being created. Apart from the initial advantages for research and security, it has been possible to gather much more from the records to provide more information on many cylinder boxes. For example, it is now possible to produce lists on the following:-

- By cataloguing the various tunes played on boxes, lists of tunes have been compiled along with the names of the composers and the date they were published. This has not been an easy task as there is not always agreement on these matters. Books can give different dates for publication and first performances and sometimes raise questions as to who was actually the composer.
- The Register can usually identify which boxes have been through the hands of the major auction houses and say in which year that was. Often the lot number can be quoted. It is even possible to say how many musical boxes a particular auction house sold in a specific year!
- Another part of the Register database establishes the boxes that were once owned by prominent members of our Society who have long since passed away. Frequently these were members



L'Epee design of cranked tune change/repeat lever

who were able to collect the cream from the multitude of boxes that were available in those early days. It adds a little to the history and provenance of a box when it has been through the hands the like of Dr. Burnett, Cyril De Vere Green or Roy Mickelburgh.

- Yet another list has identified the boxes that have a social history attached to them either in the form of a plaque or written message. These are now part of the history of the box and should never be removed. An example can be found in R-5788, which is a P.V.F. box. It has two silver plaques one of which is written in English and the other in German.

They inform us that the box was given to "Issac Blackburn on his coming of age. 18th November 1879."

- Of course the database can provide a series of facts and figures relating to the Register as an entity. For instance out of the 8,700 boxes no less than 456 are forte-piano. They come from a multitude of makers or agents with by far the most numerous coming from the house of Nicole.

The above are just a few of the possibilities for finding out information from the Register. For many years it was just a matter of

feeding in facts and figures and nothing was obvious. Only now with the powerful search facilities of a computer can all this information be sorted and organised into a meaningful outcome.

Right from the start the Register has been used to note any stolen boxes and there have been cases where this information has helped the police to recover stolen items. This has assisted not only society members but also the general public. There are shortcomings appearing in the way stolen boxes have been recorded in the Register in the past and now is the time to update and refine the way this issue is tackled. One of the problems has been that when a stolen box was recovered, no one ever reported the fact back to the Registrar so the box remained on the list as still un-recovered. Other people got paid out for their loss and had no further interest in the matter. The original layout of the computer file was broadly satisfactory at

the time, but now could be better designed to take account of modern developments in crime protection. There is a need to include facts like crime reference numbers and names of police officers in charge of investigating these thefts. Another fairly recent development has been that some major auction houses now wish to link with the Register so that at a very early stage they can check electronically to see if any new items that have been brought in for sale are suspicious or require further investigation.

The result of all these developments and the possibility of establishing our own "Neighbourhood Watch" system really mean that the "Stolen Boxes" file system has to be re-designed again from scratch to bring it up to date and make it more effective. This will take time to make sure the system is successful right from the start. If anyone feels they could have an input into the designing of such a computer file, please contact

me and share your thoughts and ideas. Basically I need to have a list of fields containing the required information that link the loss to the true owner in a secure manner. It is essential that the name and address of anyone suffering a theft is not disclosed to the general public but known only to those who should know.

To conclude on a happier note! The maker L'Epee made a rather unusual bell crank type tune changer that seem to have been mainly fitted to their drum and bell boxes. They were added on to the end of the bedplate and must have increased the production costs considerably. Certainly they are not seen very often and an example is to be found on serial number 12439. It has a gamme number 2108 and is registered R-1760. I know others are about so please report them if you spot this very pleasing design of tune changer.

Arthur Cunliffe

Essex Meeting - 31st October 2009

from Don Busby

Attendance of twenty-two at this seventh gathering was one more than our previous best. Several friends came from Chancetonbury Ring and we welcomed a new member, Jonathan Hills. Illness or commitments elsewhere kept a few away.

Design and build of governor and run-arrest units, and measurement of power to drive these and to commission the latter were the topic of Don Busby's opening talk.

Alan Clark followed with a French barrel organ (c.1850) which he had renovated and brought back into tune by comparing its output with Ted Brown's similar instrument. His

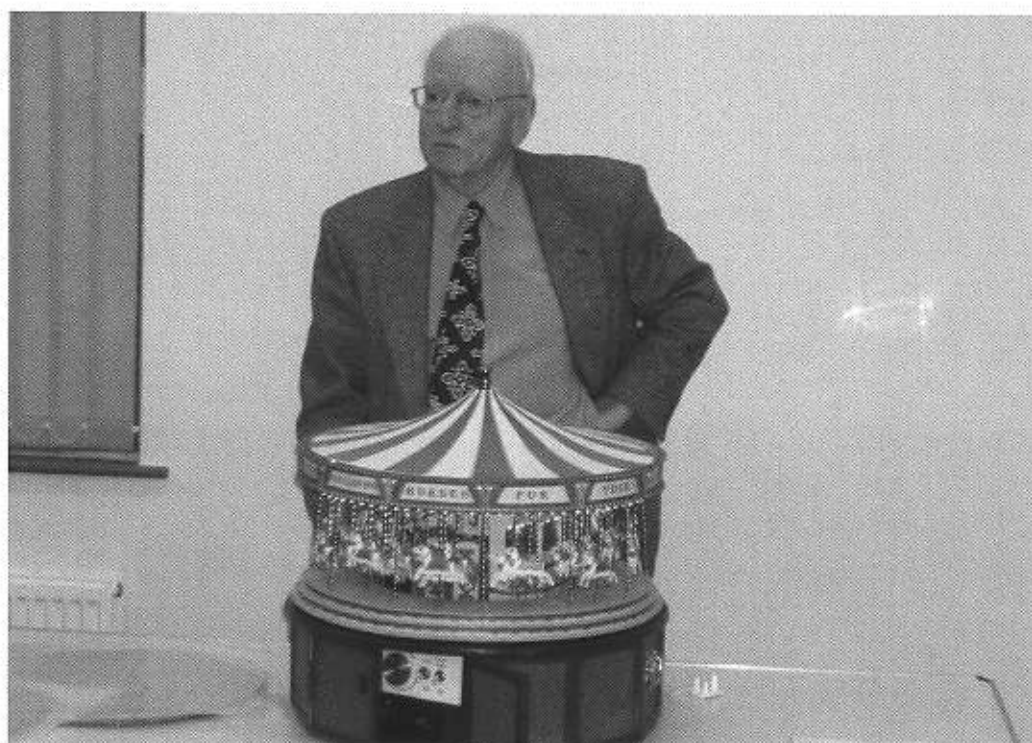
second display was a Lecoulre musical box, without a tune sheet, for which identification of one of its four tunes is needed.

Novelty players shown by Roger Booty included a "Tipu's Tiger", bought as a self-assembly card kit; a battery driven drumming soldier which he compared with a trumpeter of the same ilk and; a wooden chalet fronted by performing accordion player, dancers and cows drinking.

Making Orchestrelle rolls was the topic of Kevin McElhone who explained how, since most notes of 65-track piano roll tunes fall within the 58-note scale of an Orchestrelle, rolls of the former can be adapted

by trimming each side to fit the latter machine. Kevin concluded by explaining how he translates sheet music onto a new roll, working mechanistically by associating treble and clef staves with lines and spaces along the roll length, with bars separated by lines across the roll.

Straddling lunch break, Paul Bellamy presented a potpourri of novelty musical automata which included some items belonging to John Odgers. We saw a cigarette box topped by a whistling boy; a French ebonised wood cigar dispenser with panels which opened and closed as the device rotated; a humidor producing a cigar through a slot and, an Art Deco



David Pilgrim demonstrates his musical carousel

wooden musical box inside the lid of which was a ceramic cigarette dish and a boy and girl on a seesaw. An early 20th Century spirits cabinet in the form of an upright organ surprised onlookers when its top and double front doors popped open in sequence with the music. The original two spirit flasks and eight drinking cups were missing, replacements have been fabricated in copper by Paul, and finished by having them gold-plated. Paul was pleased to have found a desk inkstand, complete with perpetual calendar, feather quill and two glass inkwells. This was in the form of an upright piano and of the same genre as the previous item. A self-built automaton picture of a cat winding a barrel organ, with two cats and a girl dancing had been prompted by one seen at Longiano. Finally, we listened to several tunes which Paul had cut into card for his 14-note Organette.

Daphne Ladell explained how a rare 44-note Chordophon, a mechanical zither (1895-1917),

found in America, had been returned with difficulty to playing condition. Its 20 discs have double tracks to switch dampers "on" and "off".

Musical box wooden case development between 1830 and 1855 was explained by Terry Longhurst who showed four boxes all about 12"x5"x5". The first was a plain case with a simple lid. The next three progressed to give a divider for storing a key, an end flap to cover controls and finally, a lipped lid to fully protect the movement.

A musical roundabout with taped music was shown in motion by David Pilgrim. An electrical fault had prevented its display at the last meeting.

A 15 ½" Polyphon, catalogued as an "Excelsior Piccolo", was played by Bruce Allen. Although it played well, members agreed that the leads were probably deteriorating, producing higher pitch than intended. Bruce showed a musical clock bought in France at a knock-down price:

he explained that nowadays old mechanical musical instruments are extremely expensive in northern France.

John Nattrass provided an entertaining discourse on how, in spite of his wife's veto, he had bought a coin-operated Symphonion one-bay. On arrival it was found to be riddled with woodworm, ornamentation was missing and the mainspring was off its arbor. After expensive repairs and a lot of his own handiwork it produces a nice sound, but the stopping mechanism doesn't operate. John's table model musical box with bells, found at an antiques fair, had needed comb repairs and cylinder re-pinning. Advice from the audience was that re-dampering would improve performance.

Again, a full programme arranged by Bruce Allen made for an interesting and pleasant day. The next meeting will be on 22nd May 2010 at Rayleigh. Members are encouraged to bring along and demonstrate a favourite instrument or two.

Chanctonbury Ring Christmas Meeting

28th November 2009 – By Alan K Clark

Forty eight members attended Ted's 2009 Christmas Meeting, and yet again he had been very busy with his Christmas decorations and lights. A new member who was attending his first meeting, Mr Waddell, was introduced, and two members whose names were famous in the society just a few years ago, Patch Pierce, and Bob Trender also joined our happy meeting. It was very nice to see and talk to them again.

The festivities, (and Christmas madness), started with the infra-red coupled band, which never fails to amuse. This was followed by a serious bit of tune identification during which all eight tunes from a cylinder box were recognised by our members. This must be a first, and did not indicate that the tunes were at all common, just that we have some very knowledgeable people in our society. Following the playing of a manivelle we moved on to a talk and demonstration by Rowland of his organ box. This fine machine was probably made by Baker Troll in about 1875. Rowland's rebuilding of this box started about two years ago, and only now was he happy that it was fit for us to enjoy. It was a delight to listen to, and the volume of the music produced by the organ section integrated with the music from the combs very well. His tasks had included completely recovering the bellows, making new stiffeners, fitting 20 new bridges, repairing the wind chest to remove air leaks, and many more. He had discovered that many of the tasks he had to master were not included in any of the reference books.

Our next Christmas music was a comparison of Silent Night as arranged by Polyphon and

Regina for their 15 1/2 inch discs, and played on the appropriate machines. The serious part of the day was a comparison and demonstration of a range of hymn and sacred aria cylinder boxes. The talk was lead by David Worrall who had researched the different classes of boxes found, the type of music they played, and the type of clientele they were originally aimed at. He suggested that the music they played fell into three broad groups; Oratorio arias and choruses; Hymns for general use, and Gospel Songs of the Sankey and Moody type. Some musical box makers chose not to mix the tune types, but even Nicole Frères sometimes made the occasional 'hybrid' type, such as the first one demonstrated. This forte-piano box had 5 oratorio arias and choruses, and 5 hymns. Selected tunes from a further five more boxes were then played to show examples of all three categories of box. Luckily some of the same tunes were pinned on different boxes, and these made very interesting comparisons.

Following our usual excellent lunches, supplied by Ted and Kay, we moved on to more tune identification. This was followed by the demonstration by Lesley Worrall of a Poupée, or Marotte doll which she had rebuilt with a new head, and completely re-dressed in period looking attire. Following some more Christmas novelties Paul Baker gave a short talk on the UK makers of piano rolls. Aeolian dominated the market for piano and organ rolls and their chief competitor was the Perforated Music Company, who sold rolls under various names such as, Imperial, Gamages, etc. The Perforated Music Company had a serious fire in 1918, and closed in 1920. Paul had recently

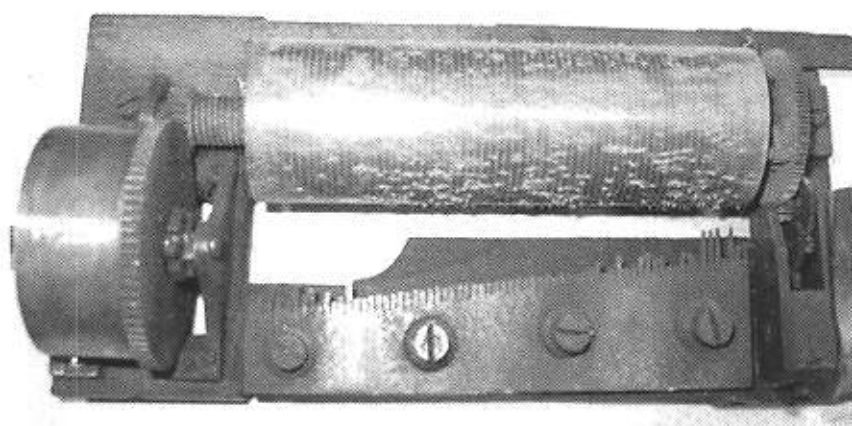
come across an example of a so far unique brand of roll bearing the Nicole name and apparently sold by the Brixton Music Roll Exchange. It was then time for two tunes on the Aeolian Orchestrelle, first Kevin played Nessun Dorma, from Puccini's Turandot, on a roll specially arranged for Kevin by Roland Lee. Then we heard O Holy Night by Adolphe Adam. Next came two tunes from La Sonnambula played on the 15 1/2" Regina, quickly followed by more Christmas tunes on a range of smaller disc boxes including Symphonion, Troubador and 11" Polyphon. The entertaining day finished with a polonaise from Mignon played on the 15 1/2" Regina. Yet again the day would not have been such a success without the efforts of all those who took items for demonstration, prepared and researched talks, and assisted with the food preparation, cooking and serving etc, not to mention all the washing up.

Have you paid your subscription yet?

MBSGB Members' 2010 subscriptions were due on January 1st. If you have not paid yours yet, please contact Richard Kerridge (Phone 0118 957 7453), richardkerridge@edwinsmith.co.uk or by post to
32 Queens Road, Reading,
Berks RG1 4BA.

Restoration project – Update

Winter 2009



A suitable case for treatment?

Kindly contributed by
Kevin McElhone

Following the initial announcement of this project in the Spring 2009 Music Box, the project group have begun to develop the approach and feel it is time to give members further details, and encourage their participation.

Whilst the Society recommends that members have any restoration work carried out by experienced restorers, we are also mindful that the pool of such experts will reduce over the coming years, and that many low value instruments cannot justify professional attention on cost grounds. Thus the intention of the project is firstly to encourage appropriately skilled individuals to educate themselves to the level where they can be considered as professional restorers, and hence add to the pool of experts, and secondly to try to ensure that amateurs who do decide to tackle their own restoration, understand the skills required, the correct procedures and materials to use, and have access to the necessary technical information, so that their restoration work is sound, and does not detract from the value of the instrument.

We have some concern that a fully-fledged restoration manual covering all types of mechanical music will require a great deal of work to compile, and may have a very limited audience. We therefore

added a short questionnaire to the reverse of the annual subscription form included in the last issue of *The Music Box*, but didn't draw members' attention to it. If you still have the questionnaire, please make the effort to answer the questions. If you don't have the questionnaire, we have printed the questions at the bottom of this notice and encourage you to write or e-mail us with your answers, or if you have additional comments to make, or would like to contribute to the project in any way, including writing about your own restoration experiences, good and bad.

In this issue we kick off with the first of a series of articles giving advice about basic maintenance tasks which any collector should be able to carry out in order to keep their instruments in good order. If there are particular instruments, or problems you would like us to address in this series, please add them to the questionnaire.

If this "phase one" approach proves popular, and the questionnaire indicates sufficient interest, we hope to publish further material of a more advanced technical nature, aimed at the more experienced, and would-be professional. This is likely to consist of individual booklets, or loose-leaf pages, designed to create a workshop

manual, and there may be a charge for these.

The range of instruments we hope to cover are those listed in the questionnaire, below. We would also hope to include suppliers of relevant services, parts and materials.

Much of the information may have already been published, either in *The Music Box* or elsewhere, but our aim will be to bring all relevant information together and update it where appropriate, whilst retaining alternative approaches to similar problems. We will, of course, ensure that necessary permissions are sought, and acknowledgements given where source material is copyrighted.

We are also considering holding workshops on specific subjects, which could be filmed for future dissemination, and will be looking at various educational establishments to see if mechanical music can be introduced as course modules in appropriate cases.

We hope you, the membership, feel this is a worthwhile project, but if you don't, please say so on the questionnaire with your reasons. If you do, please add any ideas you have which will make the outcome more useful to you and the Society in general.

The Questionnaire:-

Would you be interested in a booklet on basic maintenance of Musical Boxes and Organettes? **Y / N**

Would you be prepared to purchase parts of what would be a complete workshop manual giving suggestions on best practice? **Y / N**

What instruments do you collect? Please Tick:-

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Cartel Musical Boxes <input type="checkbox"/> | Tabatieres& Snuff Boxes <input type="checkbox"/> | Sur-Plateaumovements <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disc Musical Boxes <input type="checkbox"/> | Organettes <input type="checkbox"/> | Barrel Organs <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Street and Fair Organs <input type="checkbox"/> | Singing Birds & Whistlers <input type="checkbox"/> | Automata <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toys & Novelties <input type="checkbox"/> | Manivelles <input type="checkbox"/> | Pneumatic Pianos <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mechanical Pianos <input type="checkbox"/> | Player Reed Organs <input type="checkbox"/> | Orchestrions <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Miscellaneous Instruments <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Would you be prepared to help by giving information on:-

Restorers and Suppliers ☐ Workshop Techniques ☐ Workshop Demonstrations ☐ (to be recorded)

Send your replies, marked "Restoration Project", to the correspondence secretary, Robert Ducat-Brown, MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn, AL6 0WY, e-mail Robert.ducat-brown@virgin.net

Restoration matters!

1 -A Code of Practice for repair and restoration

(Based on the Restorer's code by John Hammond – The Music Box V8-1-24).

This, and future articles and publications, will give advice on the maintenance and restoration of various types of mechanical musical instruments. But before we embark on the detail, a few general words of advice.

We should all remember that we are only custodians of these instruments and, whilst enjoying them ourselves, our aim should be to ensure that future generations could enjoy them too. This starts with the basics of making sure the instruments are kept in an acceptable environment – not too dry, and not damp. (ideally between 40% and 60% relative humidity), operated correctly and sensibly, cleaned and lubricated regularly, and protected from damage and corrosion. Never leave clockwork fully wound for long periods, disconnect electrically powered items when not in use, and

never leave instruments stopped in the middle of a tune. It is also suggested that you keep associated items, instructions, keys, music media, etc. with the instrument, or at least fully labelled with the identity of their parent instrument. When moving wind-up instruments, e.g. musical boxes, make sure they are wound down, at rest at the end of a tune with the stop engaged, and set to single tune (not repeat). Lock the air brake with a small roll of paper and set the instant stop, if there is one, all in order to avoid the mechanism running out of control and causing damage. With cylinder boxes also insert a wedge of cork or plastic foam between the cylinder end and the spring barrel (to stop the cylinder "bouncing"), and with disc boxes always remove the disc.

When an instrument stops working properly, it is best taken to an experienced restorer to return it to good working order, bearing in mind that quality restoration work doesn't come cheap! Only if you are fully aware of the instrument's requirements, and are competent

in the necessary skills, should you consider doing restoration yourself. If any doubt exists, seek advice from other members who have similar instruments.

The aim should always be to restore correct operation of the instrument with minimal intervention.

Parts should only be replaced if they are no longer serviceable, and then only with identical replacements. Any removed significant parts should be retained with the instrument for future reference and research. Modifications or additions to the original design should be avoided (but if carried out should be fully reversible). In no circumstances should an instrument be altered to appear to be something it is not.

Particular care should be taken with instruments that are known to be unique, or have particular historic significance. In such cases seek advice from experienced collectors, restorers and specialist museums before deciding on appropriate action.

A Newly Developed Scanner for Pinned Barrels

By Leonardo Perretti

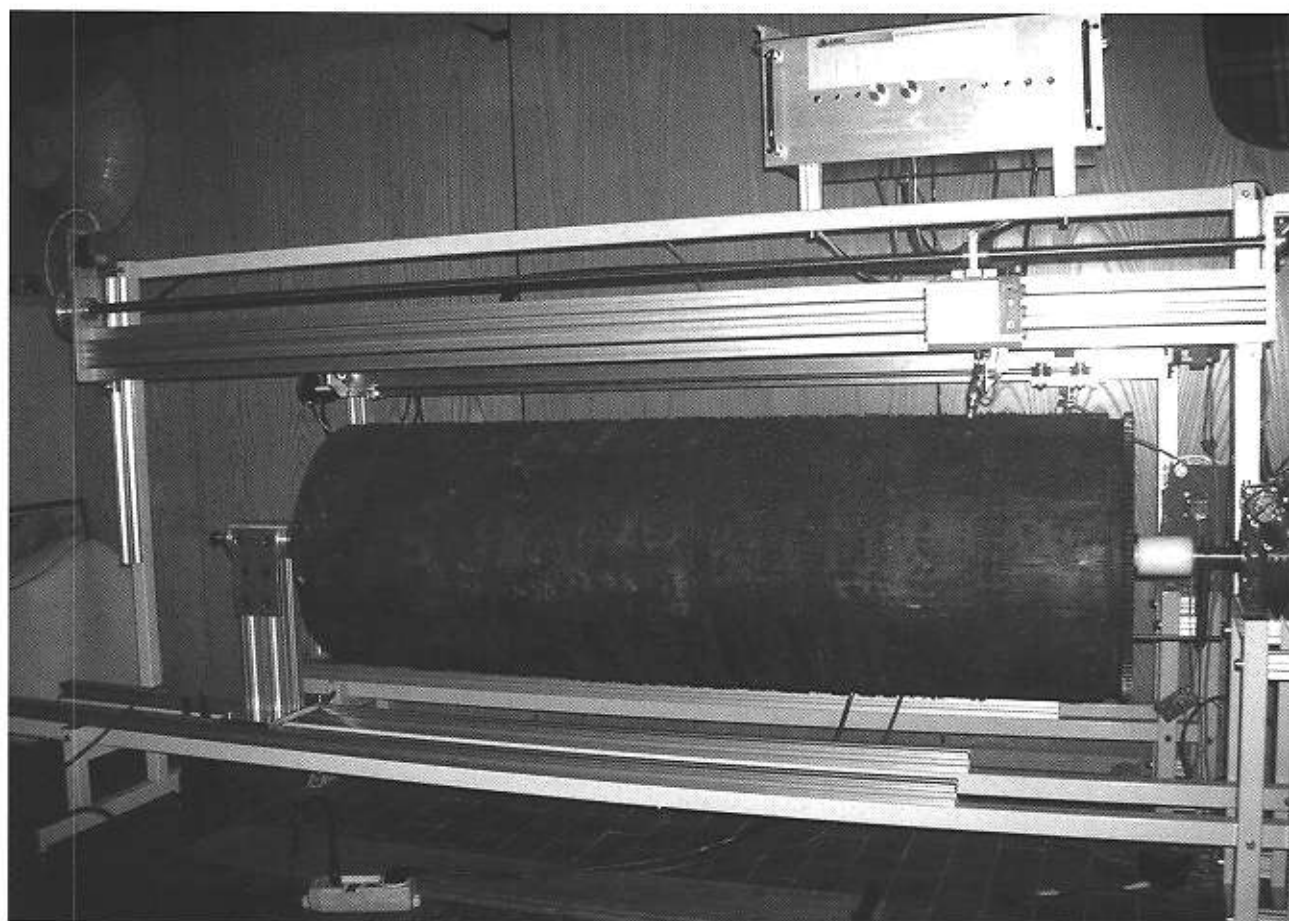


Fig 1. Overall view of the Barrel Scanner

Mechanical musical instruments are an invaluable source of knowledge about the musical culture from the past centuries; especially in their heyday, they were built in an incredible variety of models, types, subtypes etc, and spread in a wide variety of environments of the social life: organs playing in fairs, organs for the amusement of carousel users, barrel pianos and organs along the roads, huge organs in theatres and cinemas, organ clocks and barrel organs in private residences, and even at the European courts, intended for the amusement of the court and for impressing the visitors, and so on. According to the size and importance of the instruments, and to the public they were addressed, we find all grades of musical sophistication, from the simplest melodies in the small manivelles for kids, up to the

almost perfect performances of the greatest pianists in the rolls for the reproducing pianos.

The media that were devised over the time to contain the sequence of musical notes - pinned barrels, paper perforated rolls, cardboard books, paper and metal perforated discs and so on - bring to us their musical content in the same exact form the arranger and the noteur established when they made the object. In a sense, such media are somehow similar to digital media we currently use today. This concept is wonderfully expressed in the introduction of a manual for the notation of barrels, written in France by M.D.J. Engramelle in 1775; he says:

"The Music overall, made to raise the soul by the harmonious feelings

that it inspires, suffered unrecoverable losses. We could enjoy still today the performances of Lulli, Marchand and all great men who filled with admiration their contemporaries, should they have had a notation [i.e. a method for notating the barrels]: their best compositions, transmitted by themselves to the posterity on some unalterable cylinder, would have been preserved with all their expressive features, that we can know only by history" (note 1). (Fig 1)

Of course, not all of the mechanical music items are high-value pieces or sophisticated arrangements; many of them are mere repro-positions of the score, rigidly transferred to the instrument in a metronomic manner, with no trace of an even simple interpretation. On the other hand, a number of them were made with the insertion of a lot of

elements of musical interpretation, allowing us, as Engramelle said, to listen to such mechanical executions as if they were performed by a musician of that time, not to mention the rolls for reproducing pianos, that were made by recording the actual execution of the musician on a master roll working in a specially-made piano. The desire of recording the actual musical execution for a mechanical instrument is not an invention of recent times; it dates from the earliest times of mechanical music: the oldest known treatise of mechanical music, written in IX century in Baghdad by Ahmad Banu Musa (Note 2), reports a method for impressing the execution of a flautist on a wax tablet, to be transferred later on a sort of pinned cylinder for a flautist-automaton.

It should be clear, then, that an analytical study of the "recordings" pinned on mechanical musical instruments could give a help in improving our knowledge of antique musical interpretation, by "reverse-engineering" them. This field is still to be explored, at least from an analytical, scientific point of view, and we don't know how far it can lead, mainly as this perspective is somehow "oblique" with respect to the classic methods of the musicological research. Of course, I do not pretend that these kind of studies will lead to radical changes in musicology; I believe we will hardly find a sort of musicological "Rosetta Stone" from mechanical instruments, an item that could revolutionize musicology; nevertheless, a valuable contribution to the understanding of musical interpretation of the past is likely to come out from this direction, and I think it is worth the trouble.

But, how can we bring forth this ambitious task; what kind of tools and methods can we use?

There are various different ways for capturing the musical contents

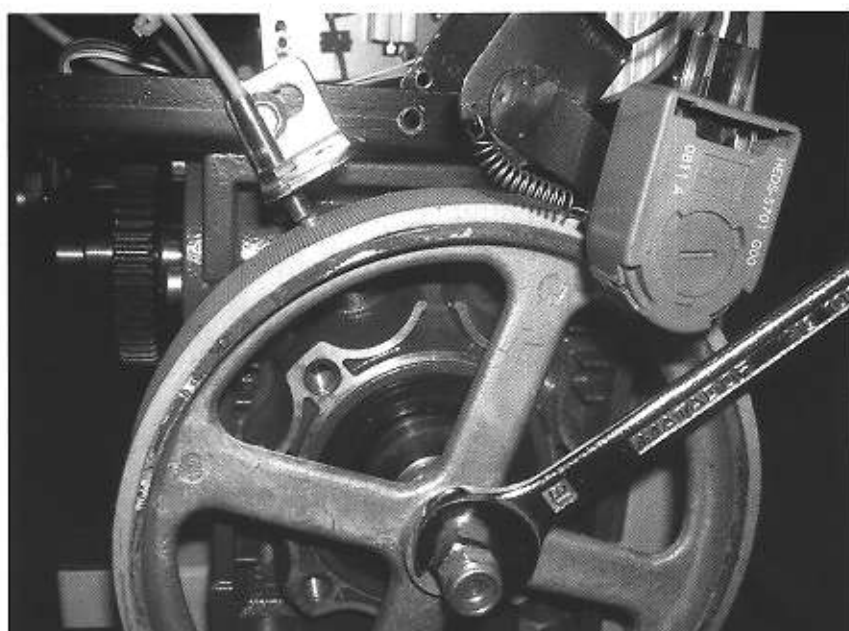


Fig 2. Rotation Motor with the Wheel and Encoder

from a mechanical instrument medium. The simplest and most obvious is to record the actual performance from the instrument on tape or on hard-disks with digital equipment; just to mention the simplest. Nowadays an ordinary portable computer with a good microphone could do the job in a satisfactory manner. But, generally speaking, direct recording might be unsatisfactory for our goal, in that the musical performance might be "polluted" by all possible defects of the instrument, and there is still a variety of cases when it is simply impossible to do the job. This happens, for example, when the object is "orphaned" from its instrument, or is in such a bad condition that it cannot undergo the stress of even a single performance. Furthermore, direct recording preserves the music, but, when it comes to musicological study, one would need to acquire the exact arrangement of the piece, so it would be desirable to develop a device for extracting the music from the medium directly, in the form of a sequence of musical events able to be evaluated by mathematical/scientific means, such as MIDI files or similar software.

In recent years, several such

systems have been devised; they are generally known as "scanners", for their similarity to the common devices intended to scan images. Great work has been done with scanners for perforated paper rolls; several kinds of them have been developed, the better ones based on optical scanning. A group is active on the internet, whose members have successfully scanned several thousands of rolls (see: <http://www.iammp.org>).

Another class of musical scanners is the one intended to scan pinned barrels, which is the object from which this paper originated.

My Involvement

I devoted my attention to this subject around thirteen years ago, while restoring a valuable organ-clock, for which it was needed to get the music from the barrel. I built a rudimentary scanner, that was precise enough for the job, but it was limited in that it had been tailored for that particular instrument, and could not be used for others with different size and features.

Some years later, I had been commissioned to restore the barrel organs belonging to the Royal Palace in Caserta. These instruments are a couple of wonderful automatic

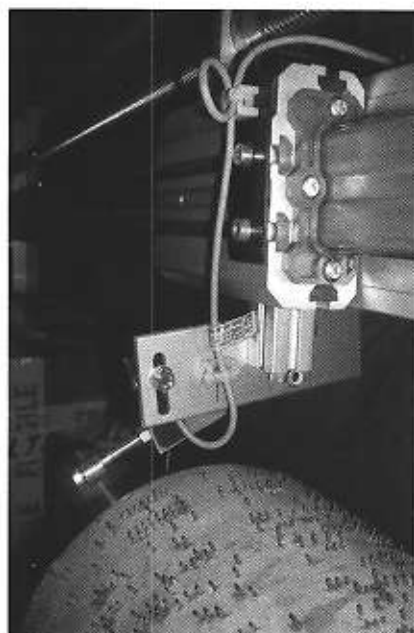


Fig 3. Barrel in Position with the Reading Head

pipe organs built in Vienna in 1820's; the amazing aspect is that they are endowed with a total of 89 barrels. In consideration of their top-quality material and musical features, I proposed to make a study of the music contained in the barrels, and resumed my previous project of a barrel scanner, now devised in such a way that it can read all kinds of barrels. I discussed

of it with Franco Severi, President of AMMI (the Italian Association for Mechanical Music) who greatly encouraged the project. I also started collaboration with Flavio Pedrazzini, a fellow AMMIer, who is an expert in industrial automation. Flavio took direction of the project and did most of the actual work; my role being that of collaborator and supervisor, and developer of a part of the software. Flavio also involved in the project two colleagues of his, Niccolò Perego, who is an expert in PLC, and Luigi Mastrosimone who is an expert in software development. The device was completed in January, 2009.

The scanner has been built using the components that are usually found in industrial servo-machines. It is essentially made with a special frame carrying the needed elements (Figure 1). At its right hand side a support is placed which bears the motor that rotates the barrel, with a wheel attached, and an optical encoder for measuring the rotation. (Figure 2) Another vertical rod, intended to support the opposite

edge of the barrel, is attached to the base of the frame, and can slide on a base rail, so that the correct distance from the motor can be adjusted, matching the length of the barrel. Above the barrel, there is a horizontal bar with a small carriage, which is moved laterally by a threaded bar with its stepper-motor, for precise positioning. The bar can be adjusted in height to match the correct position of the sensor with respect to the diameter of the barrel. The carriage carries the sensor, which currently is a simple lever, with a micro switch, imitating the usual key-frame keys; the pressure of the key can be regulated at will. (Figure 3) We are planning to add a laser sensor, as a future upgrade, so as to realize a contactless device. A metal box above the scanner head completes the scanner, and contains the PLC, the power supply, and the other electronic cards that manage the device. The machine can read barrels for pianos and organs up to a length of 150 cm. and a diameter of 50 cm. Due to the size of the sensor; it cannot read the smaller barrels for now. (Figure 4)

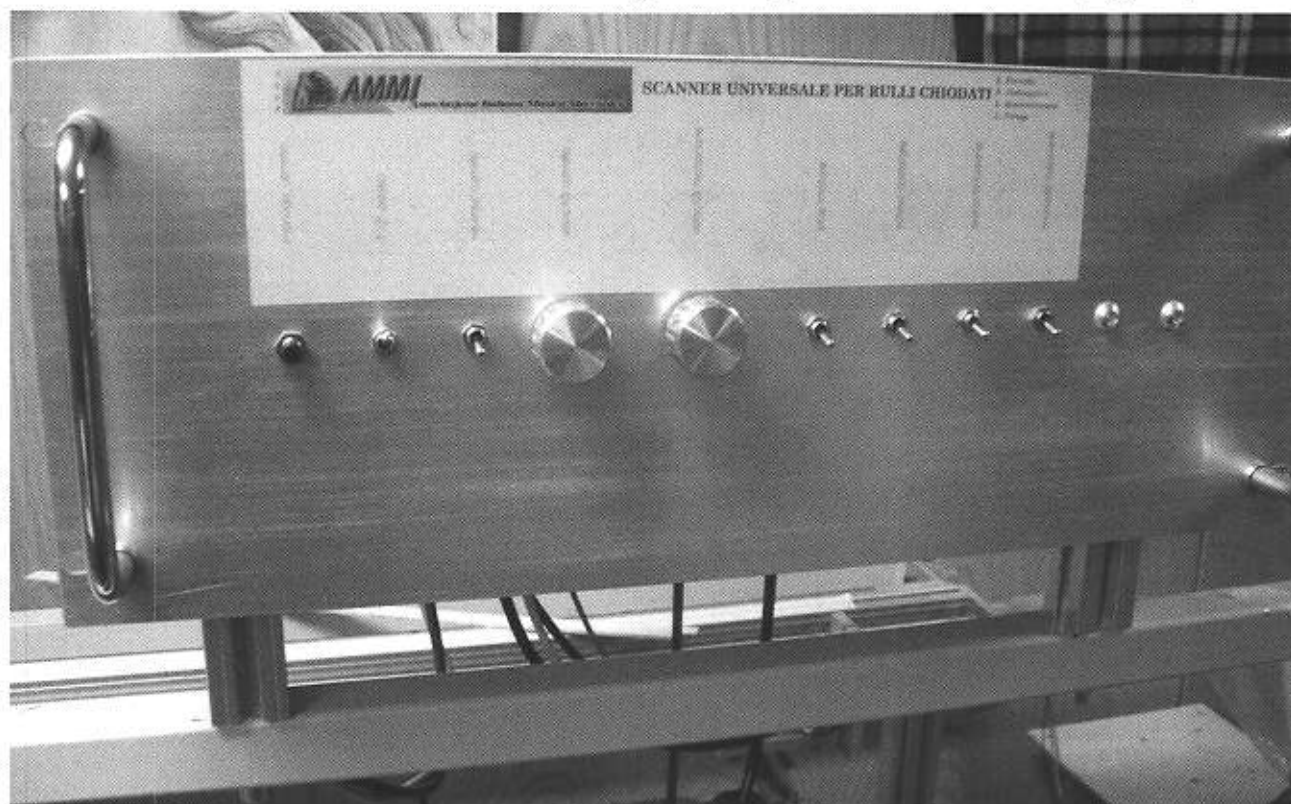


Fig 4. The Control Panel

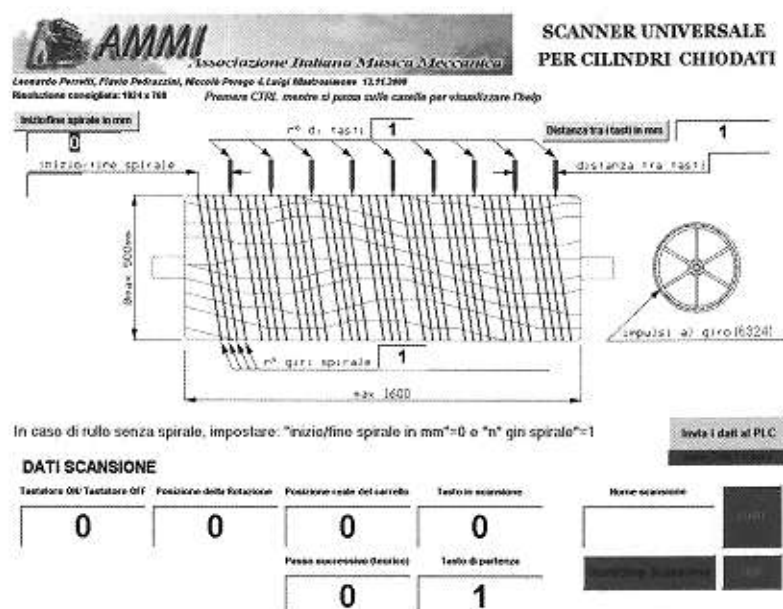


Fig 5. The Computer Control Screen

The core of the machine is a PLC, working by a specially written program developed by Niccolò Perego. According to the instructions received from the computer, the PLC manages the motors, continuously checking the angular position of the barrel, and the state of the sensor, and sends to the computer the data related to pins. The computer software, written in Visual Basic by Luigi Mastro Simone, dialogues with the PLC, and collects the data, that are finally issued as a text file. Notes on the barrel are scanned one line at a time, so the operation requires one barrel revolution for each key (or the number of spiral rounds for spiral barrels). The passage from one key to the next is accomplished automatically according to the settings for the specific barrel, supplied at beginning of the process. The device supports both linear and spiral barrels; reading of spiral barrels is accomplished by gradually moving the carriage laterally, by small amounts, synchronously with the barrel rotation. (Figure 5)

The output of the scanner, as said, is a text file containing the data related to pins in a raw form, according to a predefined scheme. Conversion to MIDI is made by

a software converter developed by me, based on an Excel sheet with special macros. Pins data are imported into a table, sorted according to time, and then converted to MIDI and distributed in separate tracks according to the structure of the instrument. Simple instruments with just one section, such as, for example, a simple barrel piano, require just a single track, but complex instruments, such as orchestrions, need one track for each pipe rank, percussions, piano section and so on. Addressing of notes of the barrel to the correct tracks is made

according to configuration tables stored in separate files, specifying the features of each instrument, in a predefined scheme.

A short demonstration of the scanner at work can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=IT&hl=it&v=LvBxip2xC48>

Preservation

Finally, some more additions related to the use of scanners, and a short example of application.

I have described above the importance of the conversion to digital for the purpose of musicological research, but surely this is not the only field of application. Another very important and perhaps more obvious field of application is Preservation. Generally speaking, pinned barrels are deteriorated by worms, moisture and careless handling; the paper of perforated rolls becomes more and more fragile, while entire collections of rolls or discs are thrown away because they are regarded as "outdated" or "low technology" items and precious mechanical instruments are stripped from their cases, which in turn are then sold as mere bar-furniture! So, translation to digital form can give a great help



Fig 6. Reading a Cracked Barrel



Fig 7. The scanner with the team: left to right: Franco Severi, President of AMMI; Luigi Mastrosimone; Niccolò Perego; Leonardo Perretti; Flavio Pedrazzini.

in preserving the music from destruction, although durability of digital media (hard disks, CDs, DVDs etc.) is debated today.

Conversion to digital can also help for rebuilding damaged or unusable items. Here is an example of a possible application that we are currently working on. (Figure 6)

A beautiful barrel piano, belonging to the Museum of Villa Silvia, has been restored recently. Its barrel, containing ten scores, is affected by cracks and deformations, and cannot be recovered to a normal use, so it has been decided to make a copy. By the use of the barrel scanner, we have picked, pin by pin, the exact scores; at present (May 2009) all songs have been scanned. The scores, converted to MIDI, are being amended, by our friend Marco Gianotto, from the errors due to deformations and other defects of the barrel, so as to rebuild the exact original "noteur sheet"; it will be checked against

the original barrel, and then used by Marco to make the new barrel. This way we are able to make an exact copy, pin by pin, of the barrel; it is easy to understand that a similar job, without the use of the scanner, might be accomplished only at cost of long and painful alternative processes.

Final Thoughts

The scanner was officially presented at the Festival of Mechanical Music of Longiano, in September, 2009, and will constitute a part of an integrated system called SISAR, designed to scan all kinds of mechanical music media. The SISAR will be operative at the Museum of Villa Silvia in Cesena, that is also the headquarters of AMMI, in a dedicated space. At present it includes the barrel scanner described here, a scanner for cardboard books and rolls for Racca's Piano Melodico, and a reader for perforated paper rolls, designed for the rolls of Barbieri's automatic organs, which match the specifications of standard rolls. We are planning to extend the abilities of SISAR as widely as possible by the

addition of new devices, as time and resources will permit (Fig 7).

Leonardo Perretti

Notes

Note 1: - M. D. J. Engramelle: "La Tonotechnie, ou l'art de noter les cylindres" Delaguet, Paris 1775 - Avertissement, II. English translation is mine.

Note 2: - (Ahmad ?) Banu Musa: ÇáÇáÇÉÇáÊíÊÖãÑÊãÝÓãÇ ("The instrument which plays by itself"), IX century; English translation in H. G. Farmer "The organ of the ancients, from eastern sources", Hinrichsen, London 1931 - p. 88

This article was first published in L'Antico Organetto the journal of AMMI, and subsequently in Carousel Organ of America. Our thanks to both organisations for their kind permission to reproduce in The Music box.

Edited for the Music Box by Alan Pratt

Bonhams - Fine Mechanical Music and Scientific Instruments

Sale report – 10 November 2009 by Laurence Fisher

The last of five sales containing mechanical music at Bonhams in 2009, saw a good attendance of MBSGB members, but it also saw in seven people as new-comers who all expressed interest in the lots. Of the seven, six bought one box each and post-sale feedback tells me that these boxes have each found a good home. No doubt they have taken up roles as new members of the MBSGB, or they will soon become members to fully enjoy their new hobby.

This Knightsbridge sale included the usual spread of lots covering the established sections from early wireless through to disc musical boxes.

With a bustling gallery with standing-room only, the first section kicked off with the remainder of the catalin wireless collection, bought mainly by the US. Highlights here included a stunning mottled amber Motorola 50XC for £1,680 and a frightfully rare Emerson five-plus-one 375 in blue for £2,160.

On to automata and oiseaux chantants, the eye-catching singing bird in orange tree found a UK collector for £4,800 against an estimate of £2,500-3,500, and previously advertised gold, enamel and diamond encrusted fusee bird box by Charles Bruguier for the relatively conservative bid of £45,600. The outstanding work found on that box, coupled with the materials used, will not be matched in recent times at auction. It was simply the best box of its type offered at Bonhams and those who were lucky enough to view it closely were silenced with adoration.

The remainder of the singing bird boxes were picked over between interest on the phone and the room and it was nice that the better

pieces were mostly purchased by the UK. The money seems to be back! The very fine silver-gilt and enamel example by Bruguier from circa 1820 (lot 31) was pushed to £24,000, followed by the plain but rather beautiful tortoiseshell Rochat (lot 32) at £10,800. Something of an unseen (lot 34), this circular silver, silver-gilt and enamel fusee box was sold this time around for a mid-estimate £22,800.

The majority of the remainder of the singing bird boxes were bought by people post-sale for mid-estimate prices.

The spring sale saw me travel a long way to grab a rather amazing magician automaton clock, however following that sale, the vendor of a better one came to me with lot 38. Made by Bossu in around 1860, this wonderful timepiece had an advanced magician mechanism where the table really was floating, making the tricks performed even more magical. Although the room did not have quite sufficient bids to secure a buy during the auction, it was bought post-sale for a mid-estimate sum. I wonder how many more there are to come out of the woodwork?

The start of the cylinder musical boxes was, as ever, with the small and gentle. Lot 41 was a rather tatty but restorable snuffbox with impressed Apollo portrait on the lid. Someone thought this could be dealt with easily and so bought it at £865, against an estimate of £250-350. Lot 43 was the earliest cylinder musical box offered at Bonhams. Made in the dark and mysterious transitional period between 1819-1823, this three-air lidless box was inscribed on the underside 'Brillianto Notonail'. The mainspring had lost tension and the

great wheel was so worn, it was almost polished. A careful manual recording of the box was done prior to the viewing and it was quite amusing to see members view the box with one hand whilst hearing the music from a tape recorder in the other! It was restorable, but not for the faint-hearted. It made £4,080.

Moving on through the cylinder selection with the remainder of the key-winds, the best being a superb blue tunesheet piano-forte four sacred air box (lot 44), going to the best bidder for £1,920 against a bottom estimate of £1,200. It was worth every penny, and others agreed, some more.

Constant and fast bidding in the room secured every lot but three musical boxes, with the key-wind two-per-turn clock movement base (lot 48) making £540, a Bremond hidden bells (lot 53) making a very reasonable £960, a massive Nicole Frères quatre longe-marche interchangeable (lot 55) for £2,160 even though it only had one cylinder, the never before-seen exhibition-quality interchangeable secretaire à abundant-le-stande by George Baker (lot 56) for £9,600, and one of the two interchangeables on tables getting to £3,360 (lot 58). The remainder of the cylinder selection included a bells-drum-visible by Paillard (lot 61), a Ducommun Girod playing eight airs (lot 64) and a rather handy collection of re-print tunesheets, keys and spare case (lot 66). They fetched £1,920, £720 and £120 respectively, proving that whether you live nearer Knowle or London, it is now best to visit both locations for more choice.

Lot 62, a rather standard and simple Tremolo-Piccolo by Langdorff, startled many when, by pure mistake,

the results on the Bonhams site showed this to go for £7,200. An extra digit had been accidentally added and the true figure is of course £720 against the £600-900 estimate.

On the home run with disc musical boxes, the selection was small but interesting. The ready-to-go 24 5/8-inch Polyphon (lot 67), formally restored by Keith Harding made £4,800 and the common 19 1/4-inch Symphonion (lot 68) without pediment, £1,680. Take a 19 5/8-inch Polyphone table movement, mount it vertically then pack out the gap with painted plywood. Bolt into a bookcase, then mount that onto cupboard with similar carving, have a panel made for the front of an organ grinder, ebonise the whole case and you have lot 69 - The ultimate 'bitza' of the entire sale, if not the decade! Estimated for the movement only, it made £660 against a £400-600 estimate. Someone out there is brave if wanting to display this next to a Grand Format.

Finally, the coin-operated machines, mostly jukeboxes, made a punchy exit with the 1015 bubbler Wurlitzer hammered down at £6,000 and the equally likeable 1100 by the same factory for £2,880. Both needed restoration.

The comments on the day were positive. With lots of meets made throughout the viewing hours and of course on sale day, Knightsbridge and London continue to be the perfect social occasion.

For your diary, the 2010 sale dates are:

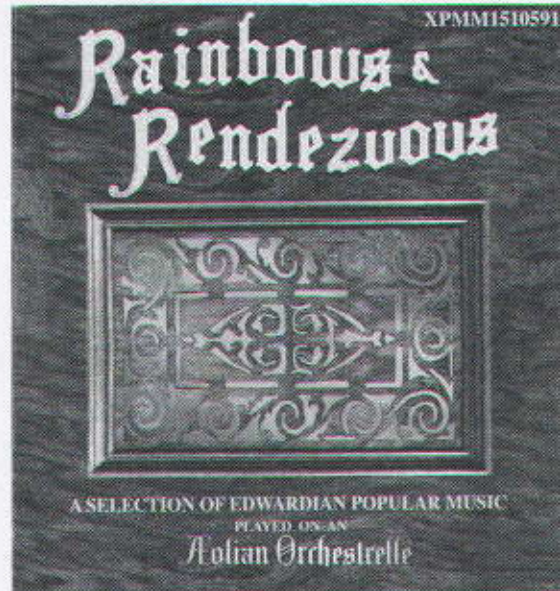
Knowle: 18 May, 7 December (popular mechanical music)

Knightsbridge: 28 April and 3 November (fine mechanical music)

I join other members by welcoming you all to both venues and look forward to seeing you at the start of both views for a MBSGB sale talk and reception.

CD Review

By Kevin McElhone



Paul Morris has recently produced another excellent CD called "Rainbows and Rendezvous".

This is played on a model "V" Aeolian Orchestrelle which is pressure-operated roll-playing reed organ playing 58 note paper music rolls. This model has 361 reeds set in six ranks which by the clever use of Helmholtz tone-modification chambers are able to give a sound which is very close to some pipe organs. The ranks are mostly of 8 foot pitch - French Horn, Eolian Harp, Bassoon, and Trumpet. There is a 4 foot pitch Flute rank which may also be modified by the use of the Vox Humana, a large rotating fan which causes the sound to waver like a Cinema Organ using a tremulant. There is also a short 13 note Sub-Bass rank using large 16 foot pitch reeds. The instrument also has swell shutters to allow for full control of soft or loud playing and a knee lever for crescendo or full organ. When new this model of instrument cost £350, the cost of around three houses at the time!

These are rewarding instruments to play giving the chance to have the notes played automatically but for the rest of the performance to be at the command of the musician sitting on

the stool.

The Title refers to two of the pieces of music Rainbow Dance by George Rosey and Rendezvous by Aletter, two typical pieces of Edwardian entertainment. There is a wide selection of music played by Paul and well-recorded with no noticeable background noise on a fully restored instrument with excellent repetition. The lighter tunes include Little Duchess March, The Belle of New York, A Coon Band Contest, Creole Belles [The piece of music which got me interested in these instruments 25 years ago when I first heard it], The Bullfinch and Zophiel Intermezzo. Classical pieces include The Funeral March of a Marionette, used by Alfred Hitchcock in films, String Quartette in G by Grieg, Concert Overture by Alfred Hollins, Lohengrin Prelude to Act 3, Grand Offertoire de Cecilia and Maritana Wallace - There are a total of 15 pieces of music. It cannot be easy to choose what goes on a recording when there were 6,952 titles originally made by Aeolian - Paul plays them all very well.

If you have never heard one of these instruments I suggest you buy this one soon from Paul at musicurio@yahoo.co.uk.



John Natrass'ss Adler- or should it be Dilemma? See article on page 438



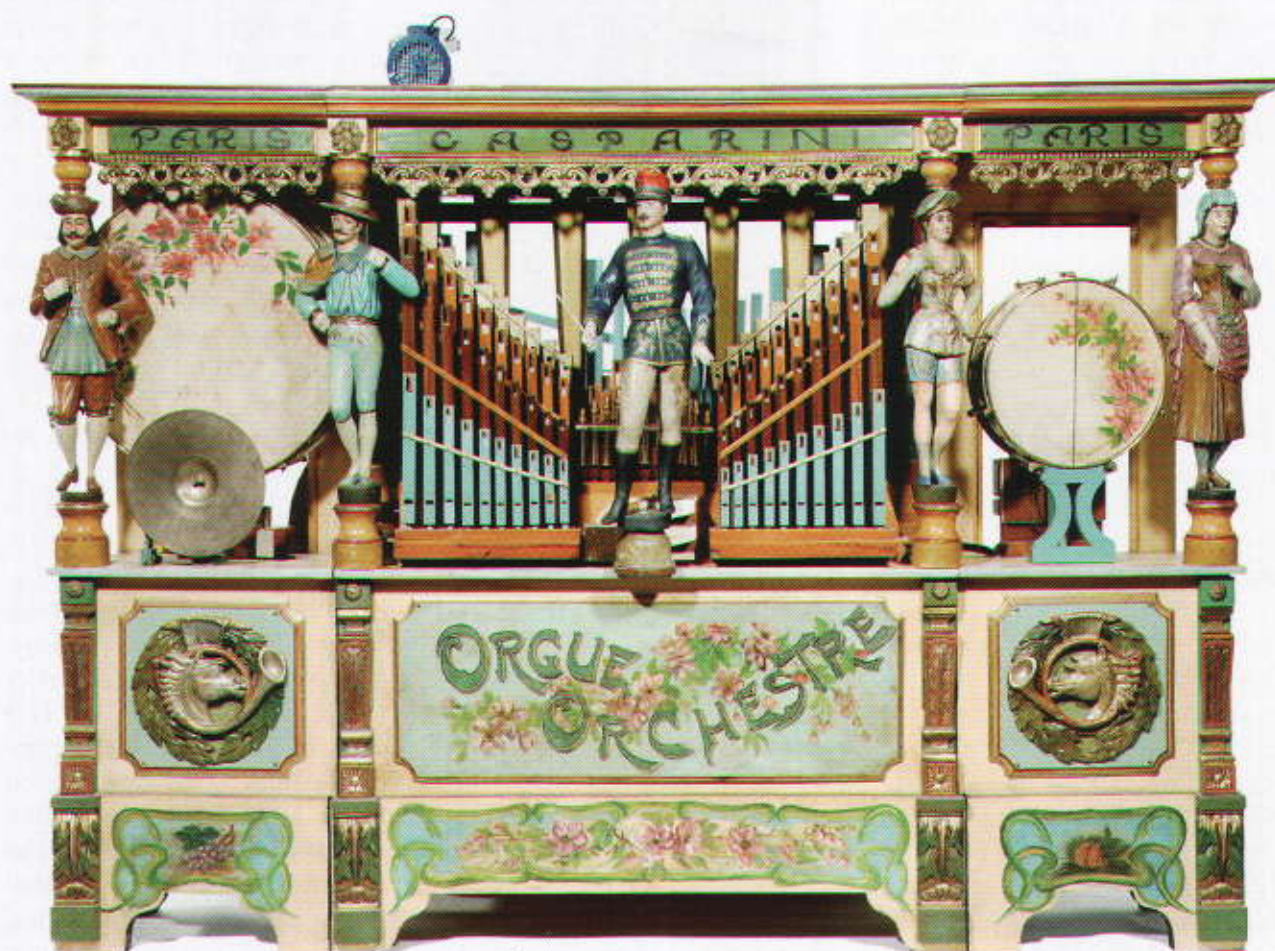
Examples of Brethby Art Pottery - see article on page 439



David Pilgrim's automaton roundabout - see report on page 421



Alec Reid's fine Oriental market organ box with dancing dolls. See article on page 437



Gasparini fairground organ, sold by Auction Team Breker - see report on page 435

Auction Team Breker

Sale report – 21 November 2009 from Nick Hawkins

Rare vintage technology was the focus of Auction Team Breker's sale on 21 November 2009 in Cologne, Germany. Diversity is something of a trademark at Breker's sales. There is one auction, but many audiences, making the preview a relaxed and sociable event for collectors, with the opportunity to see (and hear) more than six hundred lots of typewriters, telegraphs, telephones, microscopes, musical boxes and mechanical toys. The auction was conducted bilingually in English and German by auctioneer Marco Kroeger.

The day's top lot was an historically important 10-rotor **Enigma ciphering machine** (lot 33), which sold to an American bidder for €34,430 (£30,650). Continuing in the theme of encoded messages, an attractive **Edison stock ticker telegraph** (lot 39) fetched €3,940 (£3,500), and a rare French ciphering machine, the **Ideal Codigraph** (lot 30), brought €2,830 (£2,520).

Cylinder boxes and pneumatic instruments remain as popular as ever, especially in Europe where early examples are particularly sought-after. A petite key-wind **Lecoultré box** (lot 421), with restrained rosewood case and an unusual single-composer program of four airs by Verdi, brought €1,970 (£2,625). At the other end of the scale when it came to size and volume, a late 19th century **Gasparini fairground organ** (lot 410) with elaborate polychrome-painted facade featuring five semi-articulated figures fetched €15,370 (£13,680), while a well-preserved **longcase flute-clock movement** from the early 19th century (lot 413) brought €9,840 (£8,760).



22 1/2" Polyphon

In another surprising result, a **Black Forest picture clock** with cuckoo automaton and dog and cat with moving metal eyes (lot 362), was propelled to €5,325 (£4,740), more than twenty times its pre-sale estimate, by an internet bidder. An attractive magician automaton by Renou (lot 423) sold for €13,526 (£12,000). A 22 1/2-inch upright **Polyphon disc musical box** with saucer bells (lot 437) brought €7,132 (£6,350), while a rare, albeit non-musical, production by the same company, the 1903 **Polygraph typewriter** (lot 186), was bought by an

American collector in the room for €12,300 (£10,950).

Phonographs also fared well. The evolution of the Lioret *système* is an interesting example of the confluence of two separate industries. Henri Lioret was a French clockmaker who entered the phonograph market by accident at the age of forty-five. It was the Parisian doll-maker Jumeau's request that Lioret produce a speaking mechanism for his *bébés* that inspired him to take out his preliminary patents for a phonograph in 1893. Lioret's smallest model, "Le Merveilleux", appeared as a talking machine in its own right in 1895, the dolls having proved too expensive and unreliable to sell in large numbers. Since Lioret phonographs rarely come up for sale, it was a double bonus for collectors to find not only a **Lioret No. 2** in Cologne, but one that was in near-mint condition (lot 414). Presented in the factory travelling case, still with its card horn and four celluloid cylinders in their cartons, it sold for €13,945 (£12,400).

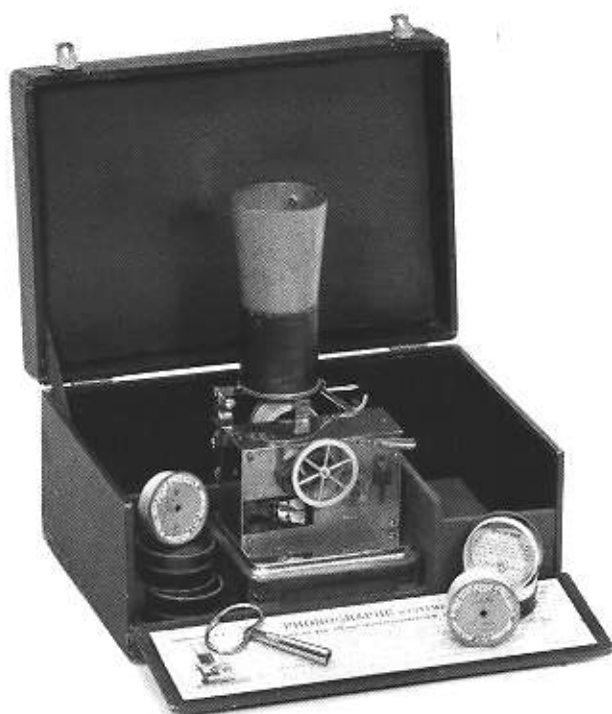
Classic scientific instruments appeal to a different kind of audience, and Breker's auction contained the characteristic assortment of viewing devices, navigational tools and laboratory demonstration apparatus to draw in the buyers. The top-seller in the category was a fine **18th Century chest-type microscope compendium** (lot 276) signed *Tiedemann, Stuttgart*, which realised €14,760 (£13,150). The extensive accessories included six objectives, a magnifier, Lieberkuhn, cross-table, bone specimen-holders, forceps and numerous early microscopic

preparations preserved in their original green paper-covered boxes.

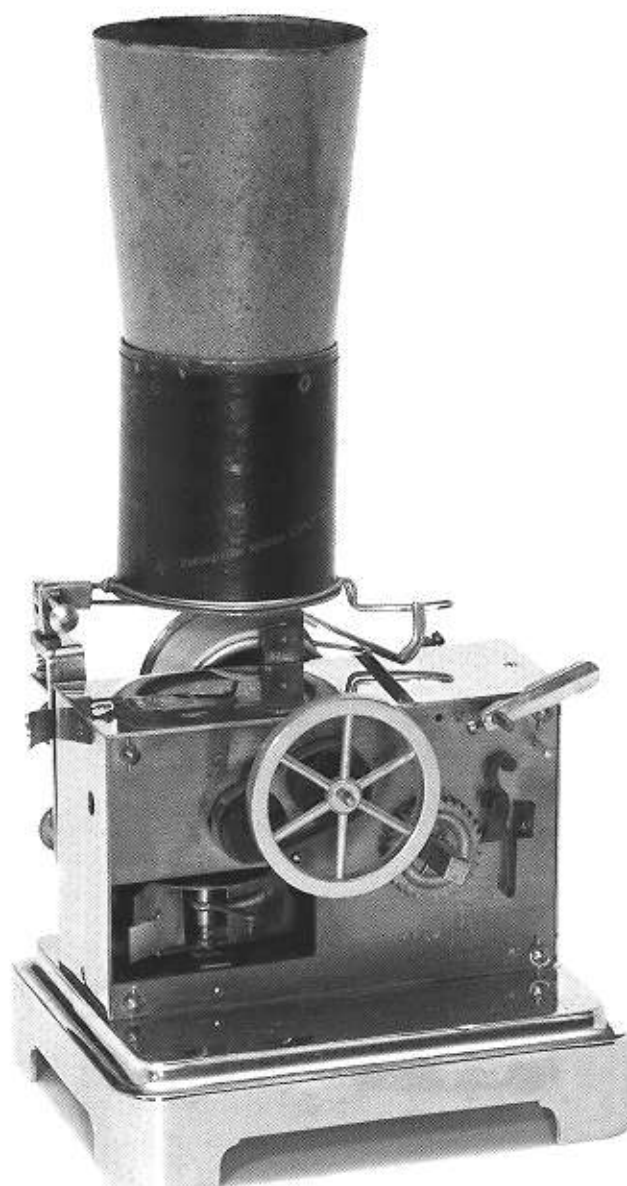
The afternoon session continued with antique and collectable toys, including a comprehensive group of L.G.B. (Lehmann Gross Bahn) locomotives and rolling stock. Two early tin automotive toys are worth mentioning, as much for their presentation as their scarcity. Lot

502 was an early production by the German firm **Rock & Graner**, a fine hand-painted horse-drawn sled with two well-dressed passengers and attendant postillion, which brought €2,460 (£2,190). The second (lot 504), a whimsical airship carousel by Nuremberg-based **Müller & Kaderer**, featuring gilt-striped gondolas with rotating propellers suspended from balloons, fetched €6,763 (£6,020).

The full results can be viewed online at www.Breker.com. The next Mechanical Music auction takes place on **29 May 2010, closing for entries on 30 March**. For a free auction valuation or confidential advice on buying and selling at auction, Auction Team Breker can be contacted by telephone: 0049 2236 38 43 40, or e-mail: Auction@Breker.com



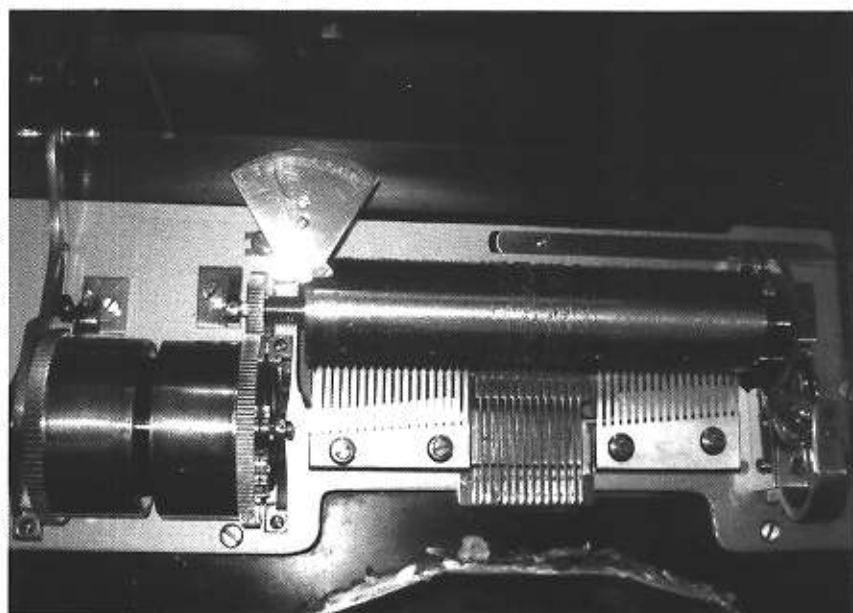
*Lioret No. 2 phonograph
(Boxed)*



Lioret No. 2 phonograph

A GLAZED-FRONT MUSICAL BOX WITH "ROOM-TO-VIEW" DANCERS

by Alec Reid



The movement, with the organ keys in between the two combs

There must have been quite a few "variations on a theme", in the heyday of musical box manufacture, some short-lived and lost to us now and others more familiar.

Since I wrote of my "Maroc" box (Vol 20 No 7), I have seen several with dancing dolls come and go on the market. Some with one doll, some with two dolls and rarely some with three or more. Station boxes and theatre boxes come to mind as well, but they are seldom seen.

However an ordinary type box having dancing dolls and with a "room to view" facility at the front is quite an interesting feature to come across.

Just such a box did come my way, not so long ago, and some of our members may like to hear about it.

Somehow, over the years, this rather large box, playing Oriental music, found its way to America

and into the Collection of (the now late) Albert Schlafmann of Turtle Lake, North Dakota. Some years later, after another transatlantic Grossing, it has now arrived in my collection.

A heavy 24" x 15 1/2" x 15 1/2" not including its crate, it thankfully arrived safely and thankfully was still in one piece, much to my relief.

It has a serial number of 5867 on several parts, including one of the tune change levers. The underside of the case is also stencilled with the number, but, sadly, the tune sheet is now lost.

The double spring barrel movement is nickel plated throughout and the bedplate has been silvered. So quite a late production, then, with a maker difficult to attribute.

My own feeling is that it could be Auguste Lassueur but further research is needed.

The cylinder is 9 1/4" long and there are 18 teeth combs either side of a now non-functioning 13 key organ.

Sadly, until this is repaired, its full potential cannot be appreciated. Even without the organ, though, and in spite of the teeth on both combs having lead weights (Bass teeth, or all of them??? Do you mean lead disease? Don't understand this comment - Ed), the sound still manages to be quite responsive.

The 12 lively tunes, pleasant enough, in spite of the occasional abrupt ending, will be even more enlivened when the organ is functioning again.

So I will not only be able to enjoy the music of the Orient in full splendour, but also have the delights of a "see front" box with "room to view" dancers, the pretty little dolls always there to charm at will.

I can smell the sea air already!

See colour picture on page 434 - Ed



Interior of the organ box

A DILEMMA

By John Nattrass

A few months ago I acquired a movement for a 13 1/2" Adler upright musical box. There was work to be done on the motor, and, to my unskilled eye, the combs looked OK; there are 39 teeth on each comb and the only marking I could find was a number 17178 on the centre drive wheel. I found, when stripping the works down, that the mainspring had come off its arbour in the spring barrel, and also that the female part of the Geneva stop was missing. After many attempts I managed to get the spring back on, so now I had to make the missing part. After looking through all the books that I have, I got some idea of what I had to make. It was only a small part, but it was about four weeks later that I finally made the one that I was happy with, and it works perfectly. I only have a small work shop, and if I get five hours a week in there I'm lucky! The next thing was the combs. There were no

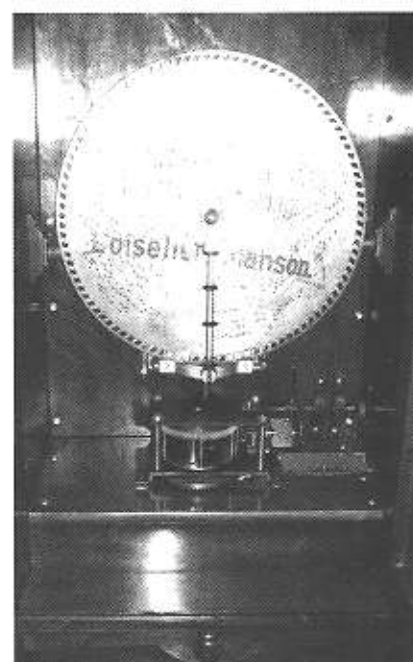
broken teeth or tips, and I knew that the only thing I would be able to do would be to strip it down and give it a good clean, which I did. When I say 'strip', that did not include the star wheel gantry. I decided to leave that well alone! After wrapping it in bubble wrap it was put in a box as finished.

I knew that finding the right cabinet for it was not going to happen, so the only thing was to try and make one myself, but I had no idea what the original cabinet looked like and after buying and repairing the movement I wanted to hear it play and hear the sound it made. I decided to try and make a case similar to other upright models, but I did not want it to look new, so I decided to use old wood. One day at the local auction rooms, my wife said that there was a small musical box against the wall, so off I went to have a look, but it was not the music box that caught my eye, it was the old music cabinet they had put it on. Straight away the Adler came to mind. I had wanted to make it out of old wood, so that the finished article would look right, and this was just the thing to start with. I am no carpenter, but I had to try (*You are being too modest, John - it looks amazing!* - Ed). I got the music cabinet for next to nothing, and used other bits and pieces of mahogany that I found on old furniture. I made a stop and start device, by copying the one in the Graham Webb book. The machine works well, it now stands 36 inches high, 21 inches wide, and 14 inches deep. The cabinet was about three inches wider than I wanted, so

I put a partition inside, on the sides and back, so that the disc would reach the steady rollers on the side walls, and by doing this I found that it has made the sound much louder. At last it is finished and I am quite pleased with the result, but now I wonder if I have made a dilemma, as it cannot truly be called an Adler, as it is not, at least I don't think it can. There must be many other musical boxes that have had a marriage, but this is not a marriage to another original part, and I am sure that it will still be around long after I'm gone, anyone searching for it in the encyclopaedia or any books on disc musical boxes just won't find it. Can anyone make a suggestion regarding its name? - *Why not keep it as a Dilemma? As far as I know, there is no machine called that. Lesley suggests Nadlerss, being part your name! Are you going to put its name on the cabinet?* - Ed



The original music cabinet



The 'new' Adler cabinet

The Brethby Art Pottery

by Keith Reedman

A Brethby teapot having a Gueissaz musical movement was featured in the Winter 2009 edition of the Music Box with a suggestion that more information might be forthcoming. Although I know nothing about the movement I have been collecting Brethby pottery for about forty years and know a little about the history and products of the firm. It was probably only twenty or so years ago when I first discovered that Brethby had produced items with musical movements. This was quite exciting for me as it unexpectedly brought together two of my hobbies.



Brethby tea pot

The Brethby Art Pottery of Woodville, south Derbyshire was founded in 1883 by Henry Tooth and William Ault. The latter left the partnership in 1887 to found his own pottery, Ault & Co in nearby Swadlincote. Tooth, a self-taught artist, worked in Drury Lane as a theatrical scene painter and had progressed to painting decorative murals in buildings when he was recruited by the famous designer Christopher Dresser to become artistic manager of the Linthorpe pottery near Middlesbrough. After four years at Linthorpe, Tooth was approached by William Ault who had been a manager at T.G. Green's pottery at Swadlincote, Derbyshire, with an offer of a partnership in a new business which became the Brethby Art Pottery. Brethby is the name of an attractive rural village only a few miles from Swadlincote's

coal and pottery district and the name was perhaps chosen for its bucolic connotations and to mentally separate it from the grime of industrial reality. Fieldings of Stoke-on-Trent probably did something similar by using the Crown Devon name.

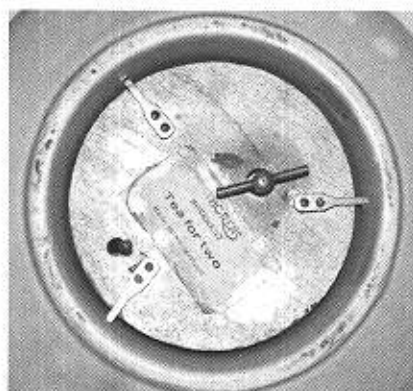
The Brethby Art Pottery under Tooth's leadership - especially after Ault's departure - produced a vast array of artistic pottery with an outstanding diversity of shapes, modelling and finishes. After Tooth's death in 1918 the family continued production until 1933 when the business was sold to Fred Parker in whose family the business continued until 1996 when production ceased. The office and showroom, a Grade II listed building is all that remains of the production site.

It appears that it was during the 1930's, under the ownership of Fred Parker that musical items were first introduced. Nearly all Brethby ware carries a shape number which is sometimes supplemented by a size letter when a shape is produced in more than one size. Unfortunately the teapot does not have a shape number and the only indication of

the maker is the small impressed mark of 'Brethby England'. My own teapot of identical shape to the one illustrated has different decoration and has a Thorens movement which plays, according to the tune sheet 'Tea for Two'. It is just recognisable. A tall Brethby jug which is impressed with the shape number 3462 and which also has a Thorens movement can be reliably dated to after 1933. My collection also includes two Toby-type jugs, also of 1930's date; both have Thorens movements. In the collecting world one Brethby musical piece is well-known: a commemorative mug carrying the modelled image of King Edward VIII which plays the National Anthem. There is a photograph showing one of these mugs on Adolph Hitler's desk.

It seems clear that only a handful of Brethby items were produced with musical movements and these were all produced between 1933 and the Second World War during which the pottery was closed. All the movements I have come across are Thorens so I have no explanation of the Gueissaz movement.

See also letters page -Ed



Making a Musical Box

by Don Busby

Drilling Damper Wire Holes

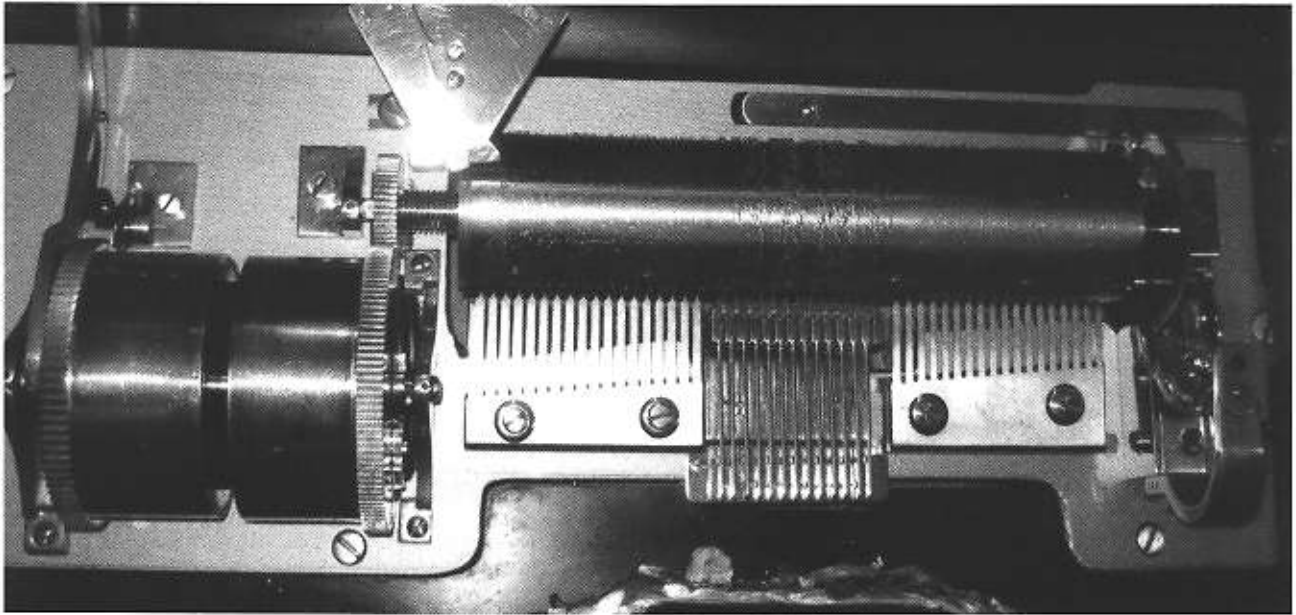


Fig 1. Jig for drilling damper wire holes

The final stage in making the comb before hardening and tempering is drilling of holes for damper wires. This paper describes how the jig on which teeth have been milled and sawn was modified for this task. Damper wires and tapered pins for securing them require very small holes to be drilled through damper anvils. A technique for holding teeth steady and drilling without a need for centre-punching was developed

Before work could start on drilling holes for damper wires it was necessary to determine what diameter they should be. After seeking advice and reading up on the subject it was decided to use damper wires 0.08, 0.10 and 0.12mm thick progressing from treble to bass end of comb. Taking account of availability of tapered pins, trial drillings were carried out to discover what size of holes would suit the various

combinations of damper wires and pins that might be used. These tests and the choice of wires and pins over the range of the comb will be part of the topic of adding dampers, the subject of a later article. In the meantime suffice to say that holes of 0.4, 0.5 and 0.6mm diameters were thought to be required.

Drilling holes of the chosen size in steel calls for a bit speed of around 12,000 rpm. The maximum spindle speed of the Chester Model B Super is 1360 rpm, so ways of achieving faster speeds were investigated; these are described later in this paper. Production of 0.4mm diameter holes proved most difficult so drilling was eventually limited to the two larger sizes, namely 0.5 and 0.6mm. The experienced reader might remark that it should be possible to drill the small hole with a hand-held Dremel or similar. However, with up to 140 holes to drill the author wished to adopt a mechanised system to achieve the aim.

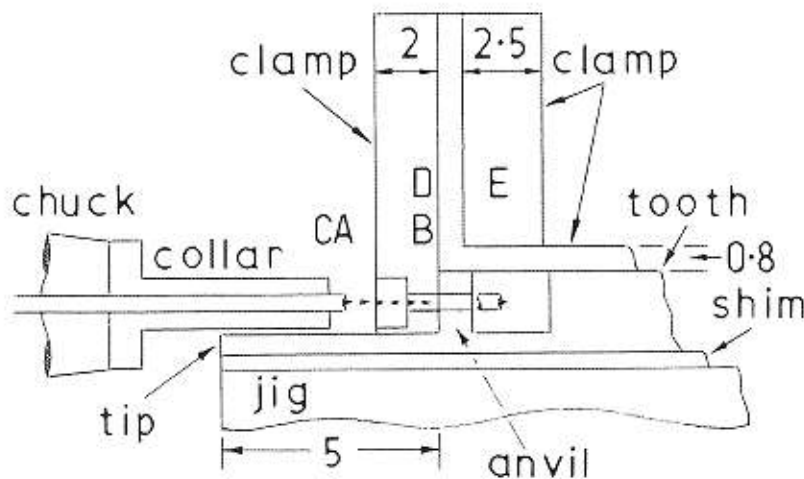


Fig 2. Cross-section of jig in use

A jig was set up as shown in fig 1 where it can be seen that the comb segment is bolted on a 15mm thick mild steel plate. This plate is supported by the cross bed part of the milling/sawing jig described in earlier articles; the vice part is not used. Miscellaneous steel and brass elements in the picture serve to clamp the teeth down whilst guiding and supporting the drill bit as it passes through the damper anvil. The long brass item was initially intended to carry 5 guide holes, which were to be slid along and locked in position, holding teeth down for 5 to be drilled before moving along the comb. The small brass assembly in the root slot had inserts which fitted the slits between teeth to prevent them moving sideways during drilling. In the end the small item was dispensed with and the now overlong clamp/guide was used in a fixed position with 25 guide holes along its length.

The principle of operation using the jig and clamp is best explained with reference to fig 2. This shows a cross-section of the clamp, which comprises three brass sections bolted together at their ends:

- * 10x2 bar
- * 8x8x0.8 angle
- * 7x2.5 bar

As the figure shows, the drill bit needs to traverse a distance of 5 across tooth tips to reach the anvil. To support the very flexible bit, a hollow collar of brass is fitted over it; the collar also prevents possible damage to the under-side of the tooth tip. The collar was turned from 4mm diameter brass rod before drilling out its centre, dimensions of the collar are:

- * 4mm o.d. 1 long
- * 1.6mm o.d. 6mm long
- * i.d. 0.5 or 0.6mm to suit drill bit

The jig was engineered to bring the centre of damper anvils up

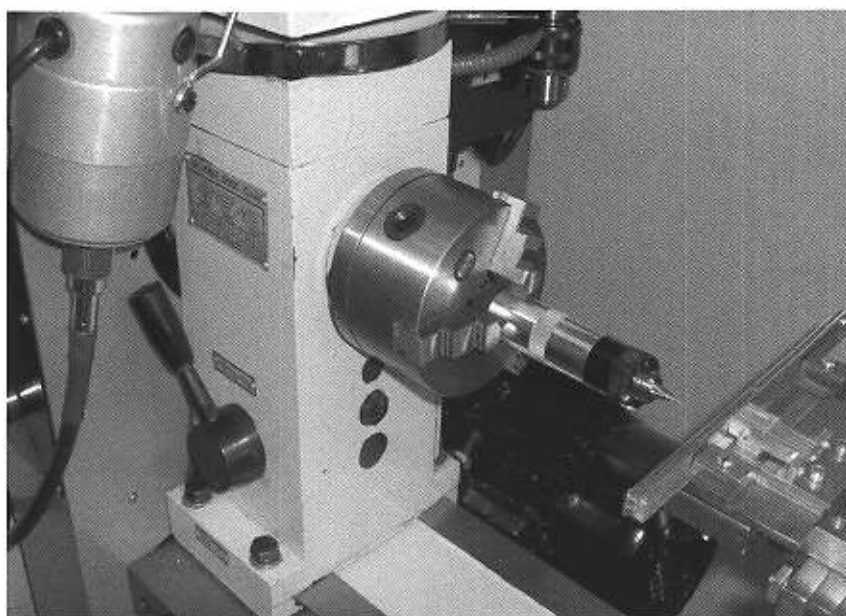


Fig 3. Trial of "Flexi Drive"

to the centre of the lathe spindle, final adjustments being made with shims. The first drilling sequence is to form guide holes in the brass clamp bar coincident with centres of damper anvils, both in height and width. A 1.6 diameter bit was fitted in the chuck, without a brass collar, and centred on the first tooth. A dummy traverse along the comb segment and return to first tooth confirmed accuracy of cross bed setting and operation. Using the lead screw, holes of 1.6mm diameter were drilled to a depth of 1mm at each tooth position, i.e. at 2.9mm centres.

To prepare for drilling the damper anvil hole, a drill bit 0.5 or 0.6mm diameter and associated brass collar was locked in the chuck with bit protruding 0.5mm from the collar. With extremely careful and slow feed of the lead screw the bit was brought into contact with the remaining thickness of the brass support bar and a hole commenced in it. By progressively increasing the protrusion of the bit from its collar, from A to B, the small hole was gradually drilled through the remaining 1mm thickness of the brass support, then through the damper anvil: CA=0.5, CB=3, approximately. D and E show where the end of the bit finishes on

the first and last pass, respectively. Whenever the bit is cutting, its collar has support from the larger hole in the brass bar. At the first tooth, it is worth checking that the jig has been shimmed to the correct level by stopping drilling when the protrusion of the bit is such that the first indent will have been cut in the damper anvil. Removal of the brass guide will allow inspection to ensure correct positioning of the hole before re-clamping and proceeding. Even if the first hole might be slightly misplaced, corrective action will ensure that the remaining 24 holes are at the centres of their anvils.

As mentioned earlier, ideal speed for drilling GFS with such small drill bits is around 12,000 rpm. At the available maximum speed of 1360 rpm 0.5 and 0.6mm diameter holes were cut with ease, subject to careful use of the lead screw. The smaller 0.4 diameter hole could not be drilled at this slow speed. Responding to enquiries about how to achieve faster speeds, the Sales Manager of Chester UK proposed the use of their "Flexi Drive" held in the chuck of the lathe: this would give a working speed of up to 14,000 rpm. His suggestion was tried out as shown in fig 3. The chuck of the "Flexi Drive" was

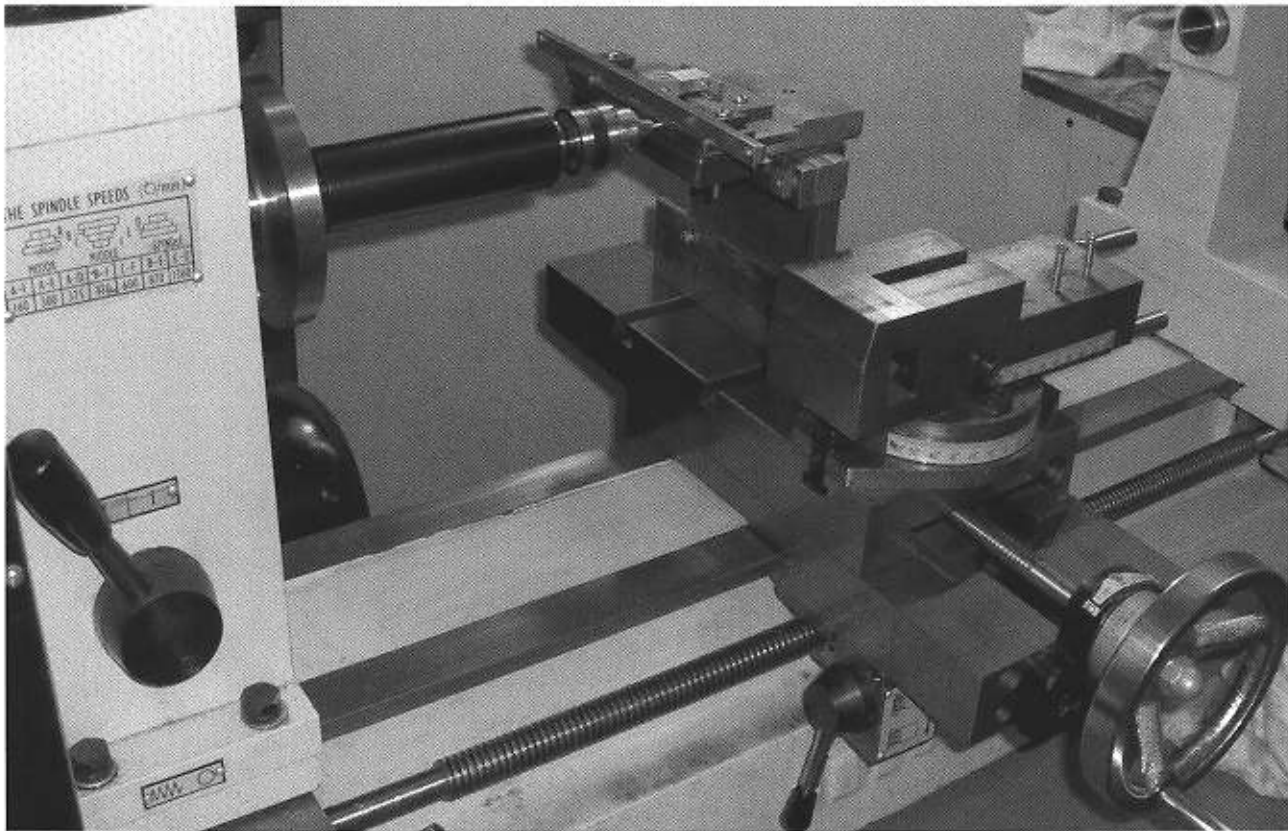


Fig 4. Extension arbor allows for viewing of drilling

clamped in the 3-jaw chuck of the lathe, with the flexible drive shaft passing through the lathe spindle to its motor and variable speed controller: lathe power was isolated for obvious reasons! Tests showed that 0.4mm diameter holes could be drilled, but only with a 50% success rate: 0.5 and 0.6mm holes were achievable with a faster cutting rate than given by the lower lathe speed. In the end a decision was made to discount 0.4 diameter holes and to

drill 0.5 and 0.6 holes using the lathe for two reasons. Firstly the "Flexi Drive" is not engineered for such use and lining up was cumbersome; secondly a more convenient working arrangement was given by use of an extension arbor to allow easier viewing of the drilling action, see fig 4.

The outcome of the whole exercise was that all 132 teeth were drilled with only 1 drill bit shearing.

However, there was a noticeable loss of 'keenness' towards the end of drilling 25 teeth so a new drill bit was used for each comb segment.

This final stage of preparing teeth to receive damper wires concludes fabrication of comb segments, which are now ready for hardening and tempering, the subject of a later article.

Antique Musical Box Repairs and Restoration

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

Musical Box Oddments No. 123

(This is a summary of the notes and papers that were found in Anthony Bulleid's study and archives after his death. They have been sorted and presented by Ted Brown and Arthur Cunliffe.)

"Trilles"

Some manufacturers of the later period headed their tune sheets, "Trilles". Several have been identified on the Register, so it would seem to be an obvious move to check if there were any similarities between these boxes and those described as "Piccolo", especially when examining the patterns of pinning and the grouping of teeth in the comb. Initially no obvious link has shown up, but as usual there is not enough evidence to hand to draw a firm conclusion. I hope that someone in the future will make notes and keep records of these boxes and how they were constructed.

The unknown maker of S/No: 6258 shows quite clearly that it was designed to play trills. (fig 1) The first 41 teeth have normal steel dampers with the next 5 having feather dampers. The last 16 teeth are used mainly for the trills and are without any dampers. There is an unused track at the treble end of the cylinder. (fig 1) and more unusually a track without pins at the bass end.

The groups of the last 15 teeth are as seen in (fig 2.) with 2 groups of 4 at the treble end followed by a single tooth which was necessary for the melody and then 3 groups of 2 teeth. In this picture the cylinder is at rest on tune 1.

(Anthony was becoming interested in the mechanics of pinning for trills and had begun to investigate if all manufacturers used the same basic techniques and/or copied from each other. T.B & A.D.C.)

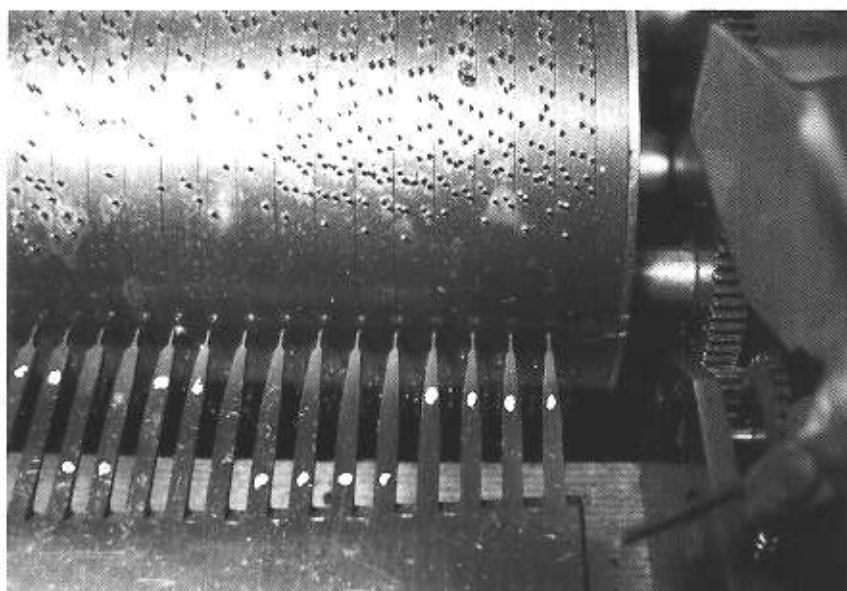


Fig 1. Treble teeth of Serial No. 6258, showing pinning for trills. The white marks show teeth tuned to the same pitch

A desperate appeal!

The trade mark in (fig 3) has appeared on tune sheets including serial number 44893 with the Register number R-8128. The maker is still unknown and previous appeals for it to be recognised and allocated to a maker or an agent have got nowhere. The tune sheet is to be found in the third supplement

book number 298 where it was used for another 10 air box.

This is a very formal trade mark of a lyre with a star burst around a 5 pointed star, with a crown showing 5 jewels and a support pattern printed in gold and black. It is on a prominent corner of the as yet unrecognised tune sheets.

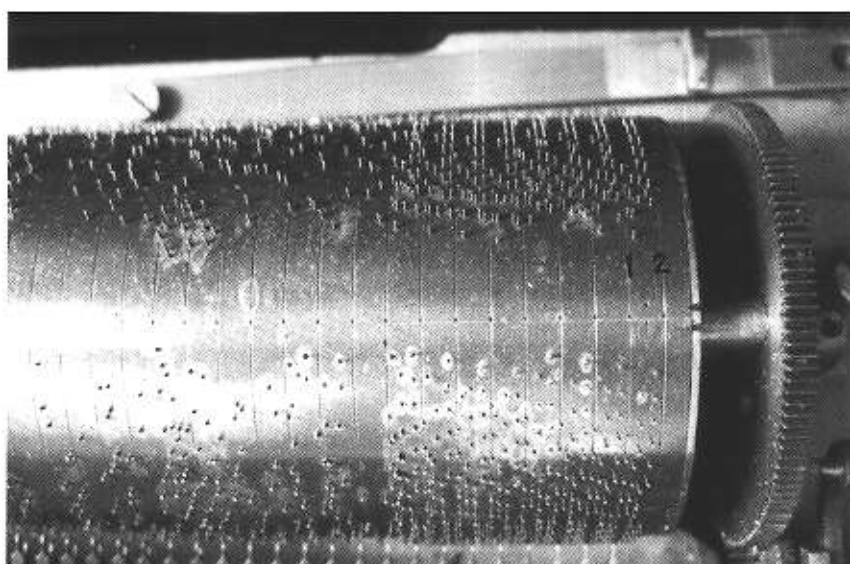


Fig 2. The treble end of the cylinder. The trill pinning is clearly seen. Tracks 1 and 2 numbered

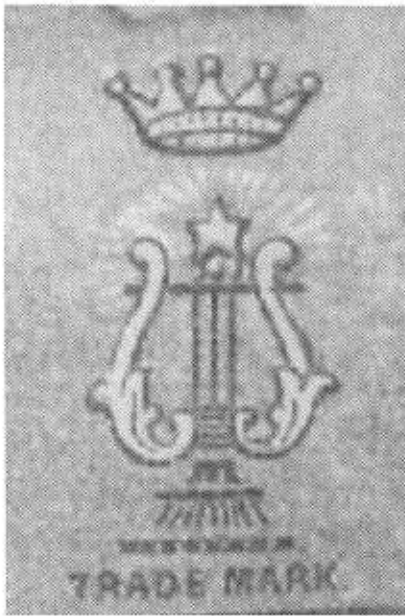


Fig 3. The trademark on the unidentified tune sheet

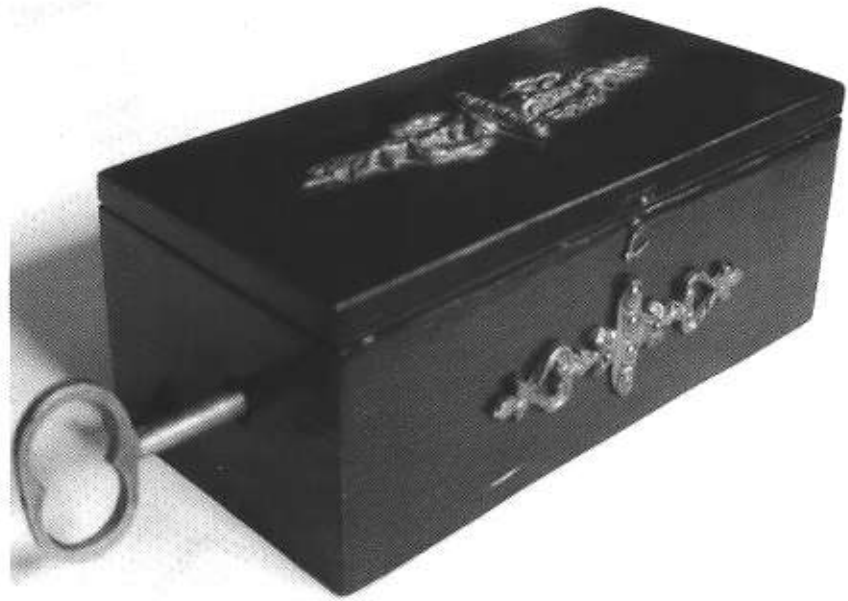


Fig 4. The 2-air Austrian musical box sold by Felsing of Berlin

Surely someone has spotted the item in a more revealing and data containing position?

(This is another example of a box that Anthony had spotted on the Register which had interested him very much. A.D.C.)

The Vienna born Fahbach family

Phillip Fahbach was born in 1815 in Vienna. He grew up to become a bandmaster and composer. For a time he worked closely with Johann Strauss the elder at one time being a member of the Strauss orchestra, but by 1835 he had set up his own orchestra in competition with both Strauss and Lanner. He composed

around 400 songs and dances including the well known Julia Polka in 1844. In his day he was a popular composer and musician. He died in 1885.

The younger Fahbach was also christened Phillip. He was born in Vienna in 1843. When his father retired, Phillip took over the orchestra playing his own compositions and those of his father. Fahbach undertook tours around Europe including Paris and visits to Britain. He became quite popular in this country. He remained admired right up to his death in 1884. He composed around 350 songs, dances and marches many of which

can found on musical boxes. They include:-

Cavaliei Polka. 1884
Fleurs d'Oranges. 1878
Goldene Myrthen 1879
Preioga Mazurka 1883
The Stork Galop 1880
Les Sybartes 1882.
Tout a la joce 1880

(On the deaths of Strauss the elder and also of Lanner, Fahbach came into his own only to recede into the background again on the emergence of Strauss the younger. Fahbach's works found on the Register to date appear to have been favoured by Ducommun Girod and Langdorff. No doubt his compositions were used by other makers but Fahbach's name has been omitted from their tune sheets. A.D.C.)

A 2-air Austrian box

The 2-air Austrian box illustrated here is very like fig 3 in Oddments 81 but with another as yet unidentified tune sheet. Having the serial number 3075 and with an agents label stuck underneath the case, it has similarities to some Rzebitschek movements with 83 tooth combs and pull string start. The case is typical of the Austrian style with picture frame corner

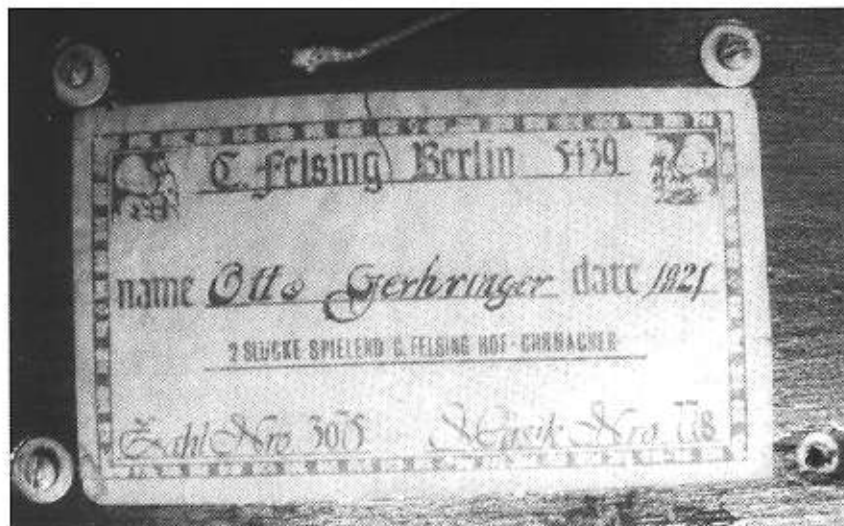


Fig 5. Felsing's trade label



Fig 6. Two-air tune sheet on the Austrian box lid

joints, single screw hinges and a single hook and eye catch to the lid. (See fig 4)

The Berlin agent C. Felsing placed his trade label under the case (fig 5) and the as yet unidentified Prague tune sheet covers most of the inside lid. (fig 6) The serial number has not been recorded before on the Register and neither has the gamme number 778. More work yet to be done!

(Anthony describes this item in his notes as having a baffling tune sheet. The Register has other examples of these Austrian boxes having a trade label being stuck under the case sometimes alongside the tune sheet. A.D.C.)

From the Register

Figures 7 and 8 show an example of a small 4-air box that were made in their thousands at the end of the 19th Century and early 20th Century. They had cylinders around 9cm with 52 tooth combs. The cases came in many styles having a recessed lid which closed over a glass lid that slid out from one side. Cases were around 15cm wide with often a shield decoration to the centre of the lid left for the subsequent engraving of initials. This particular does have a plain

shield inlay to the centre of the lid and is without any decoration.

In this instance the tune sheet covers nearly all of the inside lid and is of an unusual design. The brightly coloured birds and the surrounding scroll work have not been seen before and strongly suggest a later period of manufacture. Unfortunately there is no indication as to who made the box nor is there any sign of a serial number. The choice of tunes suggests

that it was made for the American market. I have not been able to date any of the tunes up to now. Any help would be appreciated.

(This box originally came to light via Ebay and the vendor was contacted by the Registrar. Although he was not a member of our Society he was a helpful person who took a lot of trouble to supply as much information as he was able. A.D.C.)



Fig 8. Small unidentified 4-air box

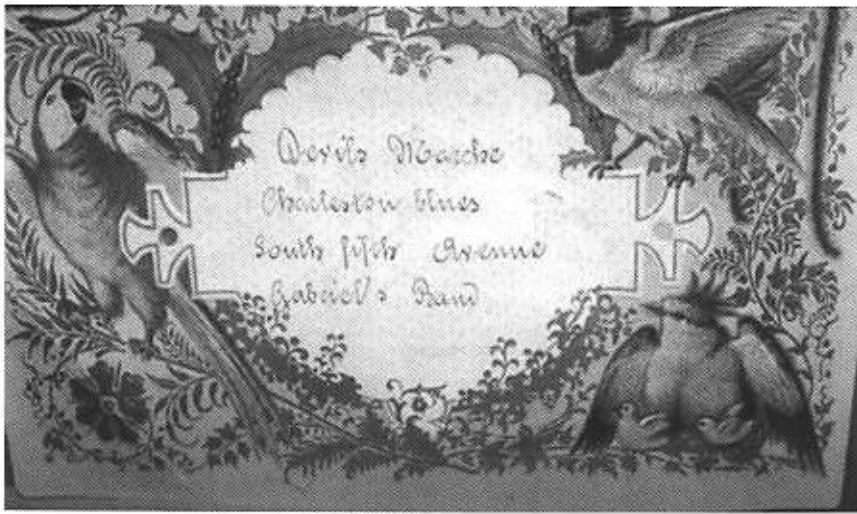


Fig 7. Colourful tune sheet of the 4-air box.

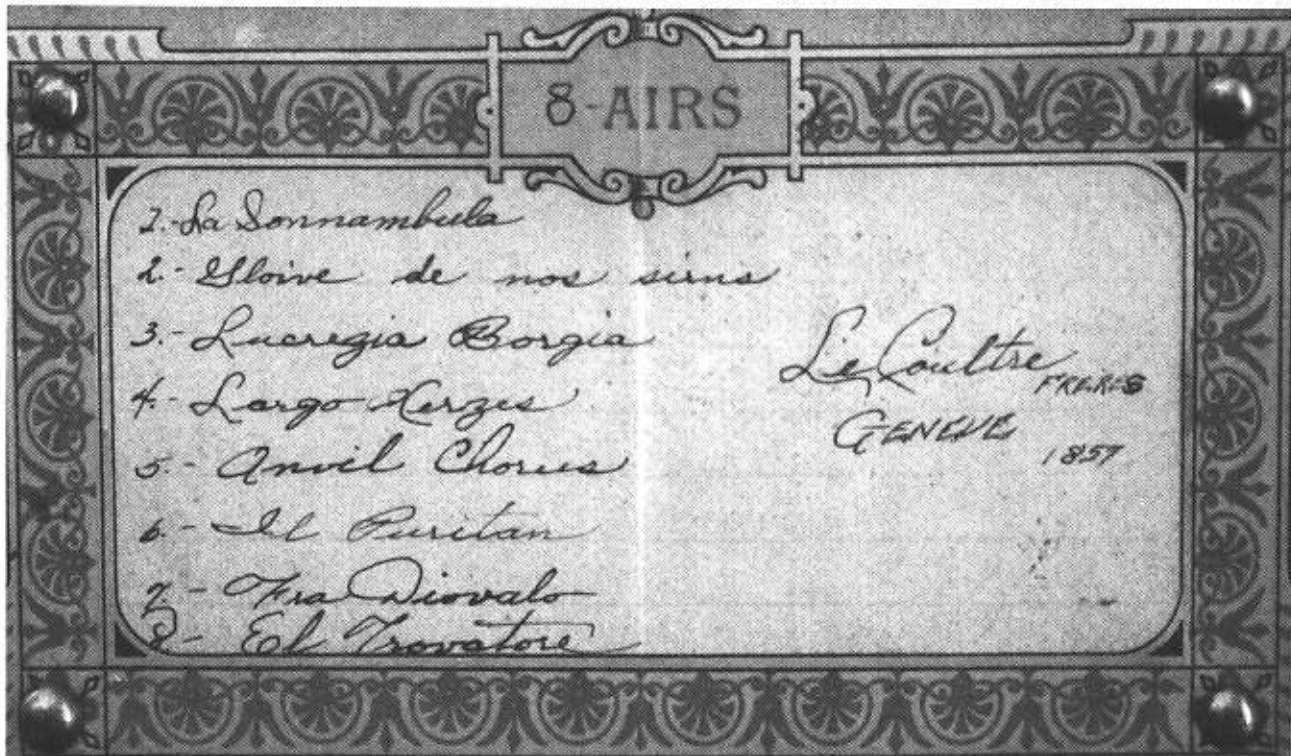


Fig 9. A 'fake' LeCoultre tune sheet on their Serial 29620.

Finally

The tune sheet in fig 9 might be taken as an unusual Lecoultrre type. It is on their serial number 29620, a keywind box with a 33cm cylinder. It plays a good selection of 1833 to 1855 operatic tunes and the box would have been made in 1857.

A second look at the tune sheet shows that it is merely a bad

copy of their tune list with six of the titles spelt incorrectly and with the name Lecoultrre divided in two with a flowered capital "C" in the middle. I believe that in the past, the original tune sheet must have been replaced by someone not well versed in classical music.

Tune 1 composed in 1831
Tune 3 composed in 1833

Tune 6 composed in 1855
Tune 7 composed in 1830
Tune 8 composed in 1853

(We trust you have enjoyed reading Anthony's last comments on boxes and both of us hope we have interpreted Anthony's views and opinions correctly and presented them in an acceptable manner. T.B. & A.D.C.)

(Ted Brown writes:- Speaking to Anthony in the last week of his life, I realised that he was acutely aware that his memory was starting to let him down. He knew that the time when others would have to take over his work was rapidly approaching. Anthony was keen that research into the musical box makers and their products should continue and expressed the view that the only way to do this would be through the Register. I think that the majority of us would agree with Anthony so can we make every effort to keep the Register going.)

News from Other Societies

from John Farmer

Mechanical Music, Vol 55, No.6, November/December 2009

(See also www.mbsi.org)

Larry Karp writes about Forte-Piano cylinder boxes which have "Chevron" style combs where the bass teeth of the two combs are at the far left and right. These are usually attributed to Nicole Frères, but in the example discussed by Larry, there are a number of non-Nicole features. After some investigation, and discussion with Luuk Goldhoorn, Larry concludes that it may be, or may not be, by L'Epée.

Seeburg coin-operated Pianos and Orchestrions is the subject of an article by Q. David Bowers and Arthur A. Reblitz, with focus on the style H Solo Orchestrion. These instruments were manufactured by Justus Percival Sjöberg, born in Sweden on 20th April 1871. He changed his name to Seeburg after emigrating to the USA where, after several positions in the piano trade, he started his own company in 1907. Seeburg's instruments became extremely popular, running second only to Wurlitzer. This is an interesting and very comprehensive article.

Bob Yates and Roger Puls explore two rare Organettes, the Pipetta 536 and 567. These are floor standing, pedal operated organettes, operating from paper rolls, blowing pipes rather than reeds. Carel Huydecoper and Martin Paris describe an unusual treasure in the Speelklok tot Pierement museum in Utrecht. It is an electronic circuit board (marked MOH-J), with a small mechanical cylinder box movement attached. It is believed to be from an NEC telephone switchboard, and provided "Music on Hold" (MOH).

The Key Frame (Issue KF4/09)

(See also www.fops.org)

In this issue Fred Dahlinger, Jr. continues with part 3 of his series

"Big Wheels and Band Organs", covering the Rubin & Cherry Exposition Gavioli/Wurlitzer, Dodson's World Fair Shows Wurlitzer 153, World of Mirth Shows Model 33 Ruth, and the Harry A. Illions World's Fair Giant Wheels. David Leach gives a detailed explanation of "Pipe Making in Pictures", suitably illustrated, and David S. Smith writes about Tipoo's Tiger. A Musical Roots by Andy Hinds covers Lionel Monckton (1861 – 1924), and Jaromir Vejvoda (1902 – 1988).

Events reported are Torbay Steam Rally, Great Dorset Steam Fair 2009, and West of England (St. Agnes) Steam Rally, and advanced notice of the 2010 FOPS AGM to be held at Salomons House, home of the Welte style 6 roll playing Philharmonic organ.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXVIII, No.3, 2009

(See also www.reedsoc.org)

Coleman Kimbrell reports on poorly repaired organs he has had to fix, and lists the top ten mistakes (most of which apply to other types of mechanical music:-

- 1 – Screws mixed up – not back in their original locations.
- 2 – Plunger mixed up.
- 3 – Holes for screws not punched in gaskets.
- 4 – White glue used, often with staples.
- 5 – Rubber-cloth of the wrong weight used.
- 6 – Coupler and seal caps re-hinged with duct-tape or other adhesive tape.
- 7 – Neoprene or other foam materials replacing felt.
- 8 – Rubber cement used where hot glue should have been used.
- 9 – Plastic webbing on treadles.
- 10 – Ordinary carpet used on treadles.

The centre spread of the journal is the sheet music for Gloria from

Mozart's Twelfth Mass from Landon's Organ Method. Milton Wainwright, owner of Woodville Reed Organ Museum in New Zealand tells how he acquired two Aeolian Player Organs (and bought his favourite roll, the Hallelujah Chorus, from Kevin McElhone), and Hakon Sodal writes about the history of reed organs in Norway.

Organ Grinders News, No. 70, Autumn 2009

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

Meetings reported on include the BOGA Gathering at the Forest of Dean Heritage Centre on May 11th, the Victorian Extravaganza at Llandudno, 2nd to 4th May, 2009, and the Organ Grinders informal get together at Milestones Museum, Basingstoke on 8th July. An addition is Gordon Bartlett's report on building his 31 note street organ, reprinted with permission from MBSGB, and a report on the wedding of BOGA members Jo Williams and Chris Doe.

Organ Grinders News, No. 71, Winter 2009

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

This issue opens with several tributes to Ian "Taffy" James who passed away on 26th October 2009. Peter Jones described him as Clown, magician, organ grinder, friend, mentor, confidant and big brother. There follows reports of the committee meeting in October, the Milton Keynes organ weekend, 10th-11th October, the Steam Trains and Fair Organ Octoberfest at the Woking Miniature Railway on 18th October, and the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition attended by a few BOGA members. Derek Dean from Bombala, Australia, writes of his re-building of a badly worm-eaten Ariston Organette (a common fate for many German organettes, I think).

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 192, September 2009

(See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk)

Joyce Brite attended the auction of the Player Piano Company in Wichita Kansas held in June 2009, following the death of the proprietor, Durrell Armstrong in December 2008. Many players, some quite rare, together with many lots of rolls for all types of pianos, were sold, but the main business failed to meet its reserve. However, it continues to trade as Player Piano Parts, but without the heart and soul of the Durrell original.

Adam Ramet finds an unusual piano roll with just 14 holes – a Metrostyle tempo checking roll, whilst John Phillips discovers a Wurlitzer Rolla Artis roll (Rolla Artis were usually European), of music composed by C. V. Alkan, a rarity on any piano roll. Julian Dyer follows up with a brief discourse on the two “Rolla Artis” makes.

Yamaha is a well known name in modern pianos, and for their Disklavier solenoid-operated players, but Julian has discovered that they also produced pneumatic players, and rolls, in the 1920's.

North West Player Piano Association Journal – Christmas 2009

(See also www.nwppa.freemove.co.uk)

The first Duo-Art rolls were issued in January 1914, and the first on the list was 5501 “Love's Last Word” by Cremieux, played by Felix Arndt. The Floral Dance is No. 6 in the Song Roll Collection. It was written, words and music, by Katie (Kate Emily Barkley) Moss in 1911. Katie (1881–1947) was an accomplished all-round musician, being a singer, composer, violinist and pianist.

No. 62 in the Famous Musicians series is Brazilian Guiomar Novaes (1895–1979). She was the 17th of 19 children and began to play the piano instinctively from the age of 4. She started having lessons at the age of 6 and went on to win first prize among applicants to the Paris Conservatory, judged by Debussy, Fauré and Moszkowski. She toured Europe between 1911 and 1914 visiting Welt in 1913 where she recorded 4 piano rolls. She also recorded for Duo-Art, Artecho and Artrio rolls.

Less-well-known reproducing systems No. 6 is Empecó, the rolls probably being produced by Concordia Notenrollen Fabrik of Leipzig. Whether it was a true reproducing system or a sophisticated expression system is uncertain since no technical details have been found, but the rolls are believed to have up to 3 rows of expression holes on each side of the roll.

This is just a brief list of the plethora of interesting articles therein.

Non-English journals

Het Pierement – October 2009

(See also www.draaiorgel.org)

- England's Pride – 121 key Decap
- Glorious organs – 21
- Childhood Memories, Rotterdam South
- Henri Christiné (1867–1941)
- Gebrüder Wellerhaus – 3
- 40 Years of the Haarlem Street organ Museum

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes – 4th Quarter, 2009

(See also www.aaimm.org)

- A history of street singers and musicians in France
- A family portrait of various sounds Part 5
- Mechanical Organs
- Birth of the Phonograph Part 2
- Mechanical Music in Portugal
- Mechanical Music and Horology
- Favre and the Musical Box

L'antico Organetto

(Associazione Musica Meccanica Italiana), September 2009

(See also www.ammi-italia.com, or www.ammi-mm.it)

- Return of the Barrel Piano (Construction of new pianos using traditional techniques).
- The gramophone – a black market in imitations.
- Edith Piaf – the solitary sparrow.
- Little Italy in London

L'antico Organetto

(Associazione Musica Meccanica Italiana), December 2009

(See also www.ammi-italia.com, or www.ammi-mm.it)

- SISAR – Sistema Integrato Scannerizzazione Ascolto Registrazione
- (An AMMI project to create a computerised system for scanning all types of mechanical musical media for preservation, reproduction and research purposes.
- Project Europe – the future of mechanical music in Europe.
- Charlie Chaplin in “Limelight”.

Nieuwsbrief from MechaMusica (Belgian Society), October 2009

(See also www.mechamusica.be)

- 92 key Decap “Retro”
- An interchangeable cylinder musical box
- Albert Decap (1931 – 2009)
- MIDI in organs

Other Journals Received:-

Newsletter from Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde, October 2009

(See also www.sfmm.ch)

Letters to the Editor

**From Edward Murray-Harvey,
Norwich**

Dear Editor

An Unknown Barrel Organ Maker

The Winter 2009 issue of your splendid magazine has just been delivered. It was just as excellent as usual, and Maggie and I devoured it immediately -- not exactly fighting over it, but taking it in turns. I myself was particularly interested in Mr Ord Hume's article about the barrel-organ by Payne and Hopkins.

The reason that I was so interested in that article, is that I myself have a chamber barrel-organ which has on the front a painted cartouche showing that it was built by "Astor & Compy" 79 Cornhill, London.

It is a strange coincidence, but I acquired my organ as a result of giving a talk at a Women's Institute meeting in 1979. I was put in touch with the then owner by a lady who attended that meeting. It was in near-ruinous condition, but I bought it, and it was beautifully restored by the late Freddy Hill.

Far be it for a mere associate-member of the Musical Box Society of GB to gainsay such a great authority as Mr Ord Hume, but I would like to tell you what

I have found out about the date when the firm of George Astor became Astor and Horwood. You will remember that in his article Mr Ord Hume tells us that the change took place in the year 1811. I do hope that Mr Ord Hume will not mind my suggesting that there are grounds for putting that date not as 1811, but as 1815?

I base my suggestion on two pieces of evidence.

Firstly, in Langwill and Boston's book "Church and Chamber Barrel-Organs", second edition, Edinburgh 1970, we are told on page 43 that George Astor was in business from 1798 to 1815. And on the same page it says that the dates of the firm Astor and Horwood were 1815 to 1831. Thus, Langwill and Boston go for the date 1815.

(It is well-known that George Astor was a close relative of the American John Jacob Astor who founded that family's fortune in the fur-trade. But I seem to remember having read somewhere that Mr Horwood was George Astor's cousin. Does any member of the Society know anything about that?)

Anyway, my second piece of evidence is more personal. I have told you that the name "Astor &

Compy" is painted on the front of my organ. However, pasted on the inside of the lid is a paper giving instructions for using the organ, and that paper is headed not "Astor & Compy" but "Astor & Horwood".

I think you will agree that this suggests that my organ must have been built -- or sold -- at a time very close to the date when the firm's name was changed? The organ having been built under the former regime, and the paper perhaps having been printed as part of a fresh batch under the new. If that is so, what can the date have been? Luckily, it is fairly easy to answer that question, because one of the tunes that my organ plays is called "The Waterloo Dance", a tune which must have been composed at the time of the famous battle. And, as every schoolboy knows, the Battle of Waterloo was fought in the year 1815.

Those are my two pieces of evidence. I am not saying that I am right and Mr Ord Hume is wrong, but I would not be human if I did not prefer my date of 1815 to his date of 1811.

From Tony Waddell (3052)

Dear Sir,

I would like to reiterate what others have said about the advantages of

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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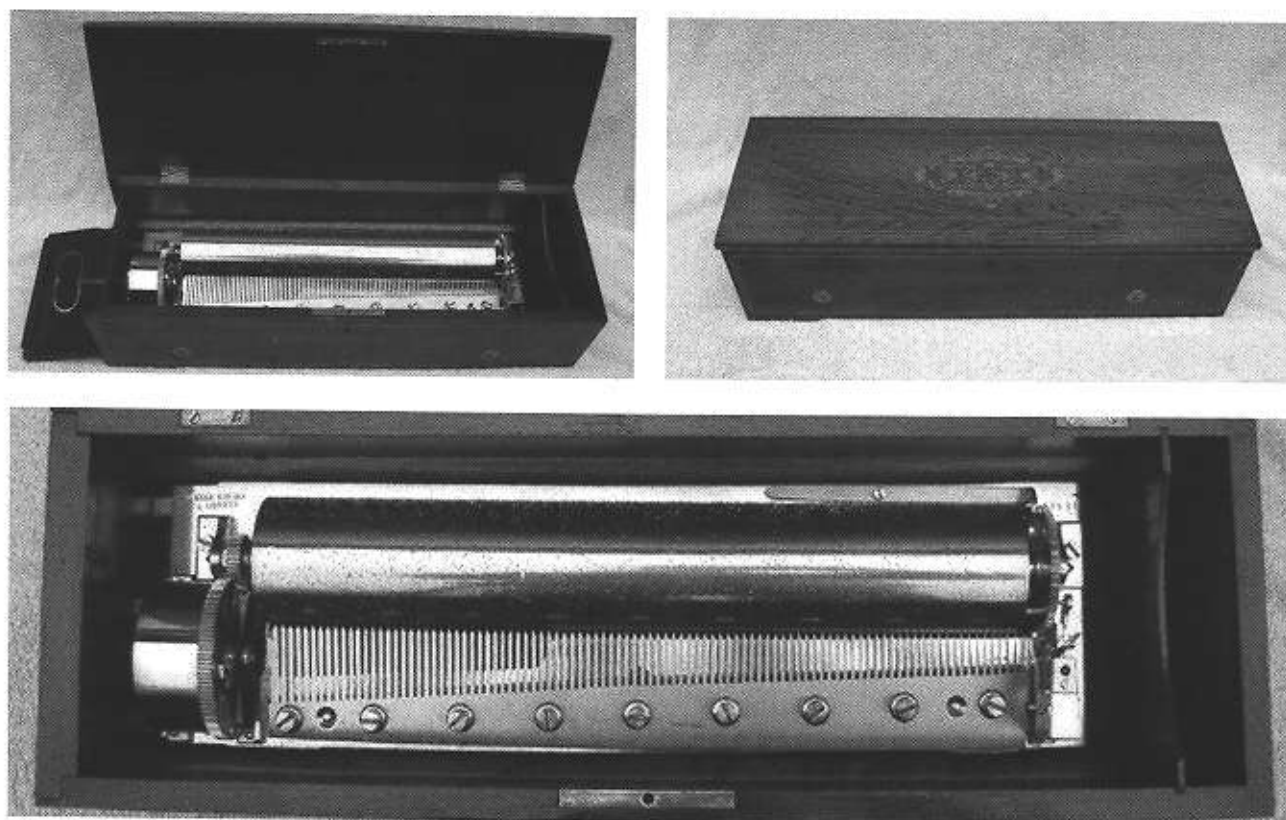
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E mail: info@deangroup.co.uk

Tel: 01275 834474 & 01275 832840



Views of Tony Waddell's fine Nicole Frères box

registering one's boxes with the Registrar. I have a Nicole Frères 'Sacred' 8-air box, SN. 39131, G 1477 with no tune sheet. By chance, in the new 'Nicole Factor' book on page 238, there is a similar box with the very next SN. 39132 and the same Gamme Number. 1477! Thus Arthur was able to send me a list of the tunes on my box!

It is so easy nowadays to photograph one's boxes with a digital camera and send a photo, together with a description of the boxes, to Arthur. This helps us all in the research of boxes, tune sheets, maker, etc and with the unique Register No. which Arthur will provide, would surely help in the recovery of a stolen box.

Thanks for the 'plug' for the Register, Tony! - Ed

Name and address supplied

To the editors,

I read with interest the Ord-Hume article about the 'newly discovered' chamber organ maker. The evidence is largely based on the fact that the label with its "maker's name" was

printed on the barrel before the barrel was pinned. I would be a little wary of making an assumption based on this fact. For example, I have seen a Hicks-type piano with exactly the same evidence, this time an Imhoff & Muckle label but I recognised the casework as identical in every detail with a Hicks piano bearing the Hicks label and number. Thus my thoughts were that the Hicks firm was not only a direct maker and supplier in their own right but were prepared to trade with other outlets, such as Imhoff & Muckle who then used their 'own brand' label.

Canon Wintle was renowned for buying barrel pianos, removing the maker's labels and replacing them with his own, again with Wintle arrangements pinned over his label on the barrel.

This practice was common not only in the barrel organ and piano world but also in the musical box era. Many so-called makers, actually agents, traded another supplier's movements, even to the extent of the comb being stamped with the agent's name before the comb was hardened and tempered.

Of course there were also makers that also bought in and relabelled another's product as their own, thus making it hard to determine the actual maker. Nicole was known to do this before the 1880 buy-out by Charles Brun. Recent evidence shows a movement with PVF tune sheet and serial number but still with its Cuendet names and serial number hidden away inside the works. Of course, PVF London were known to be agents for makers other than Paillard but actual hard evidence of the other makers is rare.

However, whatever the evidence, it is good to know that these newly discovered items get published and aired for posterity's consideration. Whether or not the thoughts are proved or disproved, it all adds to the pool of knowledge and acts as a 'stepping-stone' to further research.

From: Bill Cooper, West Sussex

Dear Sir,

On a recent 11" Polyphon musical box that I purchased, the comb was covered in mould or bloom. Now and then one comes across this, I usually paint it over

with thin oil, as yet I have not known it to appear again.

Now I know this subject has been sorted over before, were the Swiss and Germans short of lead at that time? Did they eke out with carbon or graphite, thus occasionally was there a chemical reaction? Years ago someone said that sea air might be the cause, I have lived on the South Coast all my life and only about five combs have been affected out of fifty.

The old man himself

Bill Cooper

NEW MEMBERS

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

If you would like to get in touch with members near to you please 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.

- 3057 Alexander G. Small, Fife, Scotland
- 3058 Chris R. Nunn, Norfolk
- 3059 Michael P. Seybold, USA
- 3060 Reg Smith, USA
- 3061 David T. Marks, England
- 3062 David L. Beck, USA
- 3063 Ural Press, Russia
- 3064 Thomas Macey, Berkshire
- 3065 Johan Goyvaerts, Belgium
- 3066 Jean-Pol Poupe, Belgium
- 3067 Alan W. Berrisford, Worcs

Footnote

There is an article about corrosion of lead weights by the late John Powell, which can be found on our DVD Volume 21, number 6, page 172

R Ducat-Brown

From Don Busby

Dear Editors

Whilst describing my attempts to make a musical box to fellow members of the Society at Essex Group meetings, two of them brought to my attention that someone had built a cylinder movement from scratch, but had not pinned any music before he died.

The engineer was G.T. Mayson whose project was described in an article in "The Music Box" sometime in 1975 or 1976, his work having started in 1972.

Does anyone know what became of Mr. Mayson's very fine looking movement and, did he in fact pin any music, contrary to the above observation?

From Alan K Clark

Dear Editors,

The Bretby firm of potters mentioned in the last edition, (re the musical teapot), was correctly called Bretby Art Pottery, it was founded in 1883 by Henry Tooth and William Ault and based in Derbyshire. They closed down in 1996. They produced a wide range of art pottery, including animal and human figures, vases, plaques, jardinières etc. These were decorated with a wide range of different glazes. They also made a small range of musical items. The larger items were impressed with the firm's trademark which comprised a sun rising above the single word BRETBY, and this is sometimes stamped in ink on the wooden bases of the musical items. We cannot find any listed references to these musical items, so I have attempted to give the items my own descriptions. The following musical items have so far been seen, but I expect you society members to tell the Editors of those that we have missed.

1. Coronation Heads. These 8 inch high jugs are modelled as quite accurate versions of the heads of King Edward VIII and George VI. They are glazed in all over single colour glazes with colours ranging from off-white to green to black. These items are stamped with the firm's trademark.

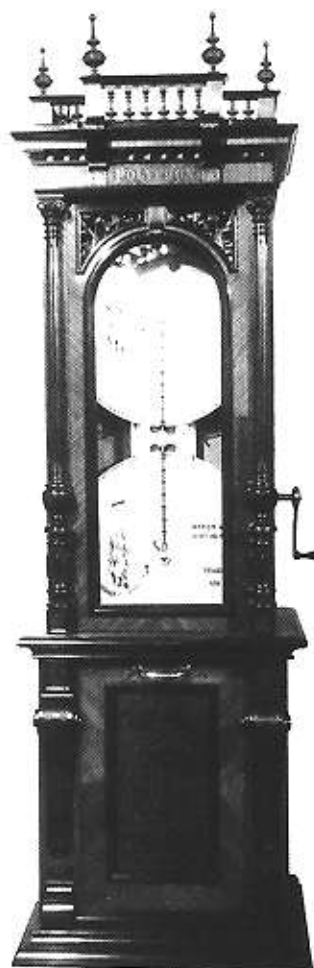
2. Small Mugs. These are 4 inches tall and appear to have been made in perhaps two series. The first may have been a souvenir gift series, and so far; Shakespeare's Birthplace; Anne Hathaway's Cottage; Galleon and Palm Tree; and Widdecombe Fair are known. The relief moulded picture on the Shakespeare mug matches that on the teapot, and is the same as on one of Bretby's wall plaques. These mugs are not marked with the makers name or trademark and are only identifiable by their handles which look as if they were formed from a strip of clay joined to the top of the side and connected again near to the base by a short vertical strip of clay. The second series shows Dickens characters, (Bretby also made Dickens model figurines), so far we have seen Sam Weller and Peggotty & Little Dorrit. The mouldings for these characters do have the character name impressed along their bases, (like the Shakespeare ones), but they are very easily overlooked, and difficult to read.

3. Character Head and Shoulder figure of an old man. These would appear to be of a much more modern manufacture and may date from the 1960's.

I hope this adds a little to our collective knowledge of our absorbing hobby.

See also the article on Page 430 of this issue.

Thank you to all our contributors for sharing your knowledge and expertise. It makes our job so worthwhile! - Ed



Renaissance Discs

New Discs for all Musical Boxes

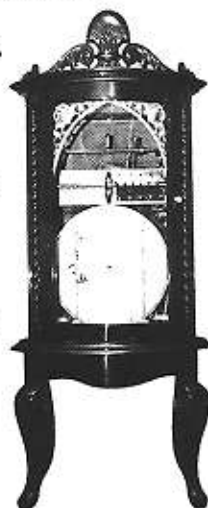
- correct quality steel & original style artwork
- 127 different types available
- efficient worldwide delivery service
- send for the tune lists for your instruments
- treat yourself to perfect copies of you favourite discs
- great value – eg. new 15 1/2" discs only £28 + VAT each

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