

The *Music Box*

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



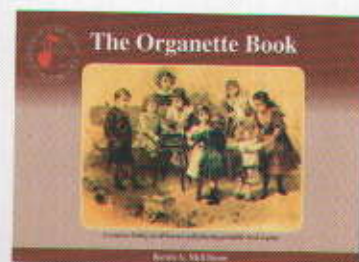
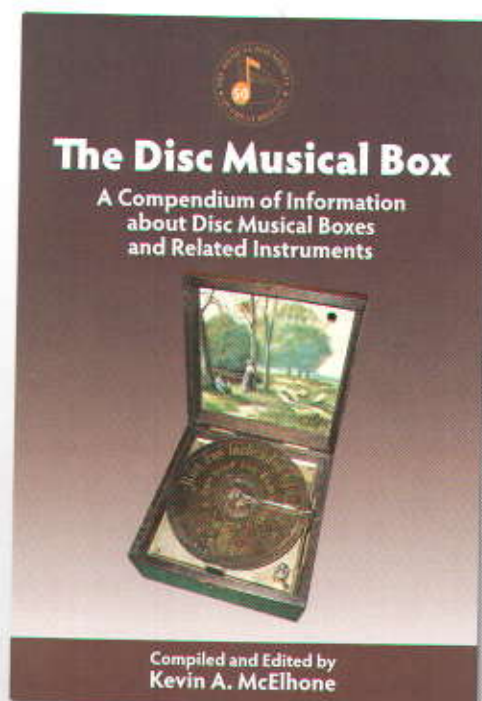
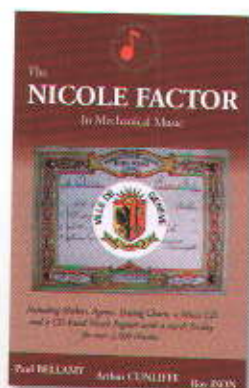
In this issue:

- The Ord-Hume Aeolian Orchestrelle
- Norfolk and Devon Meetings
- The Lecoulre Family
- Restoration Matters!



The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Editorial

It was in the Autumn number of 2004 that David and Lesley Evans introduced themselves as Editors of this Journal. It was particularly remarkable that they took on the task just as they were about to up-sticks and emigrate to Canada, where they intended to establish a museum. This they achieved, and managed to keep producing *The Music Box* through it all, for the best part of ten years.

Sadly, they resigned just as the Spring 2014 issue was going to press. There had been differences with the President and the Committee over editorial policy, in particular the inclusion of content that could be described as political in nature. So we have to say farewell to David and Lesley as Editors, but thank them heartily for the excellent work they have done over the last decade on our behalf.

A new Editor, or Editors, have yet to be appointed, and this issue has been achieved by 'borrowing' the Editor of *For the Record*, the magazine of the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society, which fortunately is also printed by Flo-Print.

We thank all our contributors, who have managed to confound initial fears as to how we would fill a whole bumper 44-page Journal in the time available (this issue has to go out in time for the AGM Notice to be dispatched with it). In the event, the problem was not How to Fill the Space, but How to Fit it All In!

Avid readers may notice the absence of any Letters to the Editors. The reason for this is very simple: we did not receive any. If any member has written in with a letter intended for publication in this issue, we can only apologise for its having disappeared somewhere in the changeover.

IMPORTANT NOTICE to all Members: there are **TWO GENERAL MEETINGS**

Attention is drawn to two General Meetings of the Members of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain which will take place at The Village Hall, Roade, on Saturday, 7th June, 2014.

There is to be an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) scheduled to commence at 10.30 a.m., immediately prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM), scheduled for 11.00 a.m. The Agenda for each meeting is enclosed with this edition of the journal, along with several other papers relating to the business of the AGM. Please check that you have received the following items, and inform a member of the Executive Committee in the event that any are missing:

- Notification of the EGM, containing the Resolution for consideration, with supplementary documentation on reverse
- Notification and Agenda for the AGM, with list of Nominations for Committee on reverse
- Statement of MBSGB Accounts for year end 2012 with Statement of MBSGB Accounts for year end 2013 on reverse
- List of Nominations for Committee posts
- Proposals for changes to the Constitution
- Copy of Code of Conduct for Members
- Notification of MBSGB Autumn Meeting (one double-sided sheet)
- Auction entry form with Terms and Conditions on reverse

CONTENTS

President's Message	211
Register News	212
Autumn 2013 Meeting	216
South Bank Centre Report	218
The Sisar Project	220
Building Gambrinus a Home	224
Early Lecoultré History	226
The Largest Singing Bird?	230
Dates for Your Diary	232
DMLE Orchestrelle	233
Spring Meeting 2014 report	242
News from other Societies	244
Restoration Matters!	247
Precis of 2013 AGM	249
Obituary – Joe Watts	250
Advertisements and notices	251

Front Cover illustration:
The Ord-Hume D.M.L.E.
Orchestrelle
(see page 223 et seq for the full account)

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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President's Message No. 4

Maybe it is a sign of getting old, but it is hard to believe that this is already my fourth 'President's Message.' The time since the last AGM has passed so quickly. In my first message I stated that one day I would be judged on my own performance. The opportunity for the Members to give their verdict is now fast approaching.

The MBSGB is a Society of and for its Members, and it is they who, through the AGM, are the ultimate authority. Once an AGM is opened, it is the Members who are 'in charge.' The Chair is there to moderate the discussion, not to impose his or her own will over those attending. It is for the Members to decide whom they wish to have running the Society on their behalf and for their benefit.

The past eleven months have been difficult for many Committee members, who have been under pressure from someone who was dissatisfied at the outcome of the last AGM. A reasonable person would have bided their time until the next AGM and then stood for election. (As I have already observed, the year has passed quickly.) Instead, there has been a campaign for him to take over running the Society, without recourse to elections or consultation of the membership at large. Recent actions have led the Executive Committee to call an EGM specifically to consider this matter. You will find more details on one of the papers enclosed with this journal. In consequence, progress in the past year has been limited. Many of the Committee feel frustrated by the amount of time lost and wasted by the attempted disruption to the management of the Society. I am deeply indebted to the support of my fellow Committee members, and their dedication to protecting the



Society's interests. They have sacrificed more time and effort than should be expected of your Officers, who are all volunteers. Credit is due to them for the recent very successful Devon meeting, the maintenance of membership numbers and the continued production of the journal. A special vote of thanks is due to Christopher Proudfoot, who, although not on Committee, has stepped in at short notice as Editor for this edition.

Nevertheless progress has been made. The events of the last eighteen months have revealed the inadequacy of the Constitution to deal with unusual situations, although it is impossible to prescribe for every eventuality. The Committee feels it may be helpful to have the Members' Code of Conduct it has devised, to which it can refer in future. A copy is enclosed. Although not intended to be incorporated into the Constitution, it offers guidelines for the standard of conduct Members should expect from each other.

A proposal to introduce proxy voting will be put to the AGM, arising from the review of the Constitution and the recent consultation of the Members. The

questionnaire prompted suggestions for further improving the structure of the Society, such as limiting the number of years an Officer can stand for re-election, or serving on the Committee. Hopefully next year will provide an opportunity to consider this and further measures reflecting the best modern practice for the governance for a small friendly Society such as ours.

Whatever your views, I would encourage you to come along to the AGM on 7th June. The Society exists for *you*, and it is up to *you* to determine how it shall be run and by whom.

The benefits of membership were summed up at the recent MBSGB meeting in Devon, by our local host, Robert Hough. His message was that however much you get along 'outside' the Society, whether through connecting with others and/or by using the internet, the experience and encouragement you receive through MBSGB cannot be matched. His collection testifies to the assistance and encouragement he has received over the years through his network of contacts and friends that he has made as a Member. For those with more modest collecting aspirations it offers unique opportunities to enjoy the collections of others, and for all of us to share our passion and interest with like-minded enthusiasts.

At no time before have I been more acutely aware of this last point than during the last eleven months. Maybe they have passed so quickly because I have been active in extending my own personal network of friends and contacts, many of them from overseas. I have benefited from their knowledge and enjoyed their company as much as their instruments. I look forward to many more friendly and hospitable encounters which lie in the future.

Register News No. 82

There are now over 10,000 boxes on the Register

During the first months of this year I have finally been able to register a number of boxes that enabled me to reach the 10,000 mark. It has been a task that has taken 40 years plus to reach this number, growing in scope and range during that time. For those members who may not be fully aware of the why and wherefores of the Register, I hope in this issue to use more space than usual to present a broader picture of the project.

The project started with my attempting to collect information on cylinder boxes in order to find out more about the makers and just how many boxes remained intact after such a long period. Later it became obvious, that if each and every box could be given a unique number, that this may help the police and recovery, should the box ever be stolen. From these small ideas, the project has grown to encompass more and more facts and figures. This in turn has resulted in the Register becoming a type of reference work that reaches out into almost every facet of collecting cylinder boxes.

Apart from being able to find a record for a specific box, the Register often holds details of time specific events in the life of that box. It may note that it was sold at a certain auction house in a specific year or

that it was part of well-known person's collection. For security reasons this is only noted after the death of that person and after their collection has been dispersed.

Lists of tunes and gamme numbers have been kept on the

Register and have proved to be valuable in identifying tunes on boxes that have lost their tune sheets long ago. As records continued to grow, the importance of writing down all these melodies became obvious as such information is useful



A Karrer Hoffmann musical box, serial number 6567 (R-7568.)

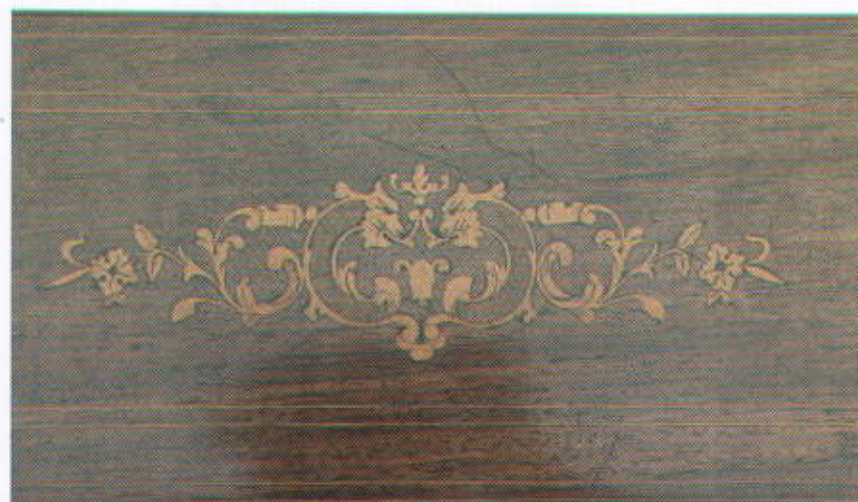
This is unusual in having the manufacturer's name on an additional brass plate below the tune sheet. Investigation leads to the suggestion that this actual box was shown by Karrer Hoffmann on their exhibition stand, hence the brass name plate to add further to the tune sheet.

The movement has their 'easy winding' system using a large diameter but narrow mainspring and associated gearing. The box has a grained case with an inlaid rosewood lid. The inlay of musical instruments with sheet music features on many musical boxes.



to help date a box accurately. Various sub-sets of the Register have since come about as more and more apparently trivial information has been noted. These sub-sets provide information on *gamme* numbers, names of composers, lists of tune and the dates when they were composed plus any interesting facts known about specific boxes.

A typical example combining such lists and information may result in a record of a box being produced that is similar to the one given below. In this case the box does not really exist although the individual facts are true and illustrate just what can turn up in the Register!



Left and below: a type of inlay described in the Register as 'Rosewood lid with large/small geometric inlay to lid.' Above is a standard Nicole key-wind box serial No 24436, with its tune-sheet, typical of its period (R-497)

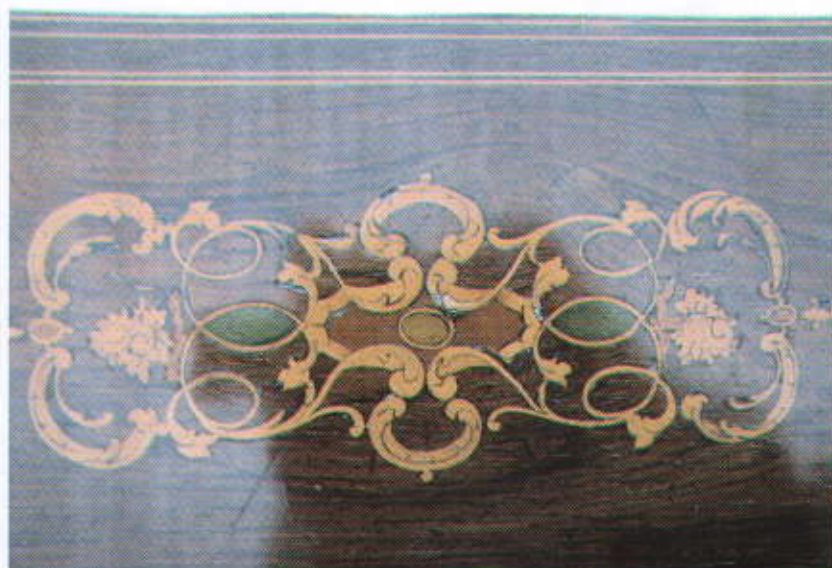
Below is an 8-air Langdorff forte-piano box serial number 10,051 (R-328.) Its card is shown overleaf.

An unknown maker producing a box with 8 airs and 3 bells with automata; nickel plated cylinder playing *The Master Miner Song* by Zeller on tune 2, with a tune sheet headed "Bells and Dancers". The Register also confirms that it was sold at auction in London in 1981 and again at auction in 1985. It may also record a fact like the name of a previous owner written in pencil under the case along with a date. Looking at the list of dates for tunes would also indicate that this box could not have been made before 1894 as that was the year Zeller wrote *The Master Miner*.

Of course the Register cannot be totally accurate. Auction catalogues

do have errors in them and people make mistakes quoting numbers. Add to this the fact we all make

typing errors from time to time then it is not surprising that the Register cannot ever be totally precise, but I





The tune-card of Langdorff 10,051 (R-328.). This has been repaired by joining in part of a reproduction card. There has been no attempt to colour in the replacement part and I believe that is an acceptable way to do the job. The repair becomes part of the history of that box.

believe the overall picture is largely correct.

The Register is still held primarily as a card based record index housed in a number of filing boxes. It is also held as a computer file together with many back up versions. Unfortunately, the original computer database is now old fashioned and, although still reliable and usable, it is no longer recognised by many computer systems. It cannot be put into a Word program and the only universal database program widely available nowadays is Microsoft Access. This program does not usually come within a computer package and is relatively expensive. However, there are plans to put the Register into Access in the future.

I will conclude this edition of *Register News* by illustrating what can be done by using the Register and why I believe it is so important to keep the project going. The very large collections held by enthusiastic collectors of sixty to eighty years ago have been scattered far and wide and it is impossible to locate the boxes again with ease. Probably the Register is the only remaining record

of a "window in time" which would be impossible to produce again.

Other extracts taken from the Register quite at random show just how much information has been gathered together over the past 40 plus years. I had no idea that all this data would turn out in the way that it has, or that the statistics would have so much potential use for research and information. Anthony Bulleid made regular use of Register data in his later research.

I hope you will find the following extracts interesting and informative:-

There are at least 132 makers and/or agents on the Register. As one would expect, the unknown boxes are the largest group with Nicole, Bremond, Lecoultre and Paillard being present in substantial numbers.

The musical boxes produced in the largest numbers are those playing 8 airs, followed by 6 airs and then 4 airs. In the later period 12-air boxes began to appear in ever increasing numbers as did the two-tunes-per-turn type of box.

Many musical boxes have passed through auction houses with Christie's, Sotheby's, Bonhams and

Phillips dealing with many of them in the earlier years. Recently there has been a great increase in the use of smaller auction houses and E-bay to sell musical boxes.

The Register notes the names of those who at one time had large and well known collections. These people are only mentioned when they have been long deceased and their collections dispersed.

The Register also records the past history of boxes where known along with any dates marked on them. The registering of *gamme* numbers has proved very useful especially when dealing with Nicole boxes; many boxes that had lost their tune sheets have had their musical programme found again, much to the delight of their owners.

Finally a sub-list in the Register mentions the music played on boxes. At the present time there are 1,303 tunes listed each of which has a date for its composition. Below is a sample taken from that file:-

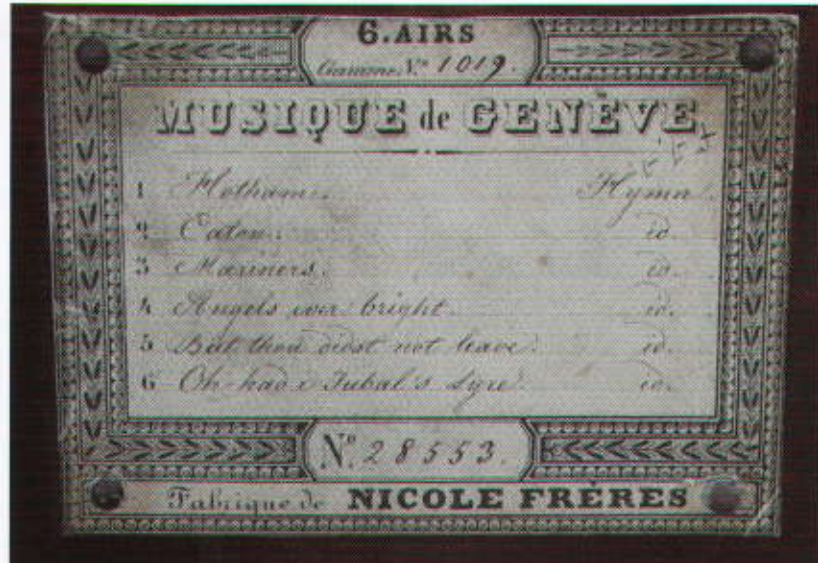
(All these tunes were composed in 1838)

A Life on the Ocean Wave	H. Russell.
Annie Laurie	Douglas Scott.
Das Schloss am Aetna	Marschner.
The Gipsy Wedding	Benedict.
Guids et Ginevra	Helevy.
Kathleen Mavourneen	W. N. Crouch.
La prigionie di Edinburgo	F. Ricci.
On dit au Village Margurite	Boieldieu.

Before going any further, I must mention that I have found reference works with differing dates for certain compositions. In particular, some use a date of the first performance and others seem to use a date when they became known worldwide. Another problem can be demonstrated when looking up a tune *The Death of Nelson*. I believe there must have been at least two pieces with that title but composed by different people. It is impossible to tell which tune is which without having the box to hand and a copy of the score!

A new departure for the Register has been to keep several large files on a computer with pictures of musical boxes that have been

registered. To date there are 875 photos stored in the main register, plus 435 for unknown boxes, 438 for Nicole boxes and 91 for Bremond. That is a grand total of 1,839 pictures kept on file. Often a single box may have more than one photo illustrating different aspects of that box. A second and recent addition is to start a music database which can be burnt to a DVD which eventually will feature a wide selection of musical boxes and not just "the top end" of the spectrum. To complete this Register News, I have made a



A later 6 air key-wind box by Nicole, serial No 28553 (R-551.)

The 'geometric' type of inlay was in common use especially in the mid period of 1840 to 1860 when I understand these inlaid lids were available at an increased cost. Standard boxes were often sent out with plain lids.

The tune-sheet is, again, typical of its period.



selection of pictures that I hope illustrate the scope of the Register better than any words.

I will continue with this work in the future and hope that someone will carry on the work after my time. I do believe that the Register is a unique record of musical boxes compiled only just in time before a rapidly changing world makes it impossible to undertake a similar venture again.

Arthur Cunliffe
Registrar

Norfolk and the Waveney Valley

(see next page)

Members examine the items in the Organ Workshops of W&A Boggis.



Norwich and the Waveney Valley

27th-29th September 2013

For its 2013 Autumn Meeting, The Musical Box Society of Great Britain visited East Anglia; our base was The George Hotel, Norwich and our host Jonathon Ling; the meeting was held over 3 days during which time a total of up to 75 members were present. The meeting had promised to be an interesting weekend and so it proved; a programme of six visits, very different in character that catered for a wide variety of interests, although a distinct thread of the larger instruments could be detected running throughout.

The weekend began with a Friday afternoon visit to St Mary's Church, Diss. After a guided tour of the town and of the Church a few of the more adventurous among us climbed two ladders to the carillon chamber, directly below the bell chamber, containing eight bells, and above the ringing chamber.

The carillon was built by Smith and Sons, Midland Clockworks, of Derby, a firm still thriving today. It comprises a steel barrel and sixteen keys with pairs of keys operating hammers for each bell. For the carillon to play, the bells must be lowered to the hanging position and they are then hit from the side by these hammers. The carillon is played automatically every day at noon and 3 pm, and the seven tunes are sequenced on a daily basis. On Sunday it plays the Diss Hymn.

After Diss, we travelled on to The George Hotel in Norwich, where our opening dinner was held on the Friday evening; after dinner, members were free to relax, renew acquaintances and talk about their various interests. On Saturday morning, we left the hotel by coach

for the first of our visits, the firm of W & A Boggis, Church Organ Builders, whose workshops are situated in the Norfolk village of Roydon. We were given a brief introduction to the company after which members were allowed to look over the workshops to view the work in hand and, wherever possible, play the instruments that were nearing the point of return to their owners. Among those that attracted much attention was a small organ by Flight and Robson, in for complete restoration after being severely damaged by flood waters.

Our next venue was the home of Alan and Carol Smith, attractively located in the small village of Hoxne, where we were made most welcome by our host and hostess. We were shown around their interesting collections, of longcase clocks and mechanical organs. We were entertained with a superb lunch prepared by Carol, taken by many while relaxing in the gardens listening to a 65 Keyless traditional Dutch Street Organ; this is a composite instrument, built after the Second World War using parts from two abandoned organs, one by Limonaire and one by Gasparini, each built around the end of the 19th century. A second instrument played for us was a 48 keyless Chiappa fairground organ that had once played on a fairground cakewalk. After lunch, members were free to wander around the extensive two-acre gardens and enjoy the relaxing rural atmosphere, with the faint sounds of the two organs still to be heard in the background!

Next we visited a very different but also rural site, St Nicholas'

Church, in North Lopham. Here we were met by the Churchwarden and his wife; she it was who entertained us as she was the organist and it was one of the instruments with which she was familiar that we had come to hear and inspect, the JC Bishop Barrel Organ with keyboard. The history of the organ was explained as was its current role in accompanying church services, although with just a single barrel, and the notes to match, this did have its limitations. Members were able to play the instrument.



The Flight and Robson Barrel Organ

Our final venue for the day was the home of Grant and Rachel Pilcher where we saw and heard their collection of theatre organs; among these was the Compton from the EMI Studios and the Wurlitzer formerly in the Decca Recording Studios. After a brief overview of his collection and their historical background, Grant treated us to a concert on the Compton, followed by refreshments, before we returned to The George Hotel in Norwich; there, after the evening banquet,



Alan Smith's Chiappa Fairground Organ, named CEOL, the Gaelic for Music.

Our North Lopham hosts at keyboard of the 1864 Bishop Barrel Organ

Grant Pilcher recounting the history behind his theatre and cinema organ



members were free to relax and talk among themselves and Alan Godier provided added interest by showing and playing two cylinder musical boxes he had brought to the meeting.

On Sunday morning, a short journey from the hotel took us to The Museum of Mechanical Music and Bygones in Cotton, near Stowmarket in Suffolk. On display was an extensive collection of mechanical music instruments that stretched across our interest; cylinder and disc musical boxes, organettes, phonographs, gramophones, street and dance hall organs and a theatre organ. We were treated first to a film show, the Buster Keaton silent comedy, *The Blacksmith*, made in 1922; this was accompanied very adeptly by the organist, David Ivory, on the museum's Mighty Wurlitzer. Members were shown around each section of the museum and individual instruments were played to illustrate the different sounds, from the smallest cylinder musical

box and organette to the largest in the collection, the Mortier Dance Hall organ made in 1927.

The final visit of the weekend was to our host Jonathon Ling's farm in Palgrave, where lunch had been prepared for us; afterwards, we heard a selection of music from the instruments in our host's collection; musical boxes, orchestrions and large street and dance hall organs. The weekend over, most members then bade their 'farewells' and left for home, but a few lingered on to enjoy the Ling collection in the quiet

and more relaxed atmosphere created by having fewer people around.

This was yet another Society meeting with an interesting selection of venues for our visits, at all of which members were made most welcome;



together, they allowed us to see and hear a varied selection of instruments from across the wide spectrum of mechanical music that is our common interest and to-day forms the basis of the Society. Credits on this occasion go to our host for the week-end, Jonathon Ling, for arranging an excellent programme of visits, and to Daphne, our Meetings Secretary, for all the necessary background arrangements that made the week-end so successful.

David Worrall



Our host, Jonny Ling and his DECAP Theatre Organ



Roger Booty playing The Cotton Museum's Cabinetto Organette

MBSGB Members Pull Out All The Stops

By Alison Biden

As mentioned in the Spring edition of *The Music Box*, over the last weekend in March MBSGB member Jonny Ling took part in a two-day special event at London's South Bank Centre, Kirrage's 78 keyless '36b' Ruth, and a Belgian café organ, described as a Mortier 97 key but sporting a Bursens front, on loan from the St Albans museum, were all located outdoors between the Royal Festival

It's all about enjoying the music, and getting a different perspective on it. One of the perennial challenges for the South Bank is to get people – adults and children alike – to engage with classical music, for which there appears to be a dwindling audience. (Now, where have I heard this complaint before?)

Inside the Festival Hall, in the Clore Ballroom not far from Jonny's pitch, was an exhibition of specially created installations titled *Wondrous Machines*. These were all interactive, and, based on the principle of the organ, children and adults alike could produce notes (if not music) by pushing, pedalling and pulling various knobs, buttons and levers – some of which were made out of ordinary bathroom taps and plumbers' copper piping. Probably without realising it, youngsters were experiencing what it is to produce musical notes from an instrument, simply by having lots of fun. Music lessons were never before this entertaining! These organ-inspired instruments are the work of Jules Bushell, Dominic Allen, Lewis Jones, Harriet Lewars and Morton Underwood, created 'to challenge our preconceptions about this most complex and misunderstood instrument.'

To the side of this installation was a static display of ephemera and memorabilia associated with concert pipe organs, and in particular that of the Royal Festival Hall, and its history. The organ was designed by Ralph Downes, and was the largest ever built by Harrison and Harrison. According to the South Bank's Press Release, it was conceived 'in the spirit of radical thought at the heart of the 1951 Festival of Britain ... Its revolutionary open-plan design and eclectic tone had a massive impact



Detail from the front of the Ruth

displaying and demonstrating an array of organs and organettes. This was part of the series of special events – the *Pull Out All the Stops Festival* – arranged at the South Bank Centre to commemorate the re-commissioning of its concert organ after its restoration by the Durham organ builders Harrison and Harrison, who originally built it back in the early 1950s.

Capable chap that he is, Jonny could not do it all by himself, but was able to call upon several friends and colleagues to help, including Alan Smith with his Gasparini organ 'De Vondeling' which delighted the many MBSGB members who attended the Autumn 2013 meeting in Norwich. Alan's organ, plus Paul

Hall and the Hayward Building, whilst Jonny himself was inside with a collection of small hand-cranked organs, organettes, a chamber organ, a serinette and a 7-inch Symphonion. Fortunately for those outside, the weather was not merely benign but positively balmy, no doubt a factor in generating large crowds of passers-by who lingered, captivated by the toe-tapping music emanating from these wonderful machines, as they played in relays. Particularly popular was the Ruth's rendition of the theme music from *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the selection of Abba music on Alan's Gasparini. Not to be outdone, the Belgian café organ inspired one couple to perform an impromptu *paso doble* in the street.



One of the Wondrous Machines



Detail of the Wondrous Machine – note the bath taps, copper piping and Scrabble letters!

on English organ construction and its influence was felt around the world.'

By Royal Appointment?

Jonny reports that while business might have seemed brisk at times on Sunday, 30th March, it seemed a lot quieter than it had on Saturday 29th, a sentiment echoed by his colleagues outside. It did seem as though people came along in waves; at times there would be as many as maybe a dozen milling round the display, whereas

at other times there was the opportunity to put one's feet up. They ranged from fascinated children out with their families to curious singletons with a wealth of probing questions to have answered. A copy of Kevin McEllhone's book on organettes was at hand to assist on occasions.

Probably the most unexpected visitor was Prince William, who according to Jonny, very politely listened to a complete tune on a paper-roll organ Jonny was cranking, and at least looked as though he was interested. Unfortunately no one else was around at the time to record the moment for posterity, or sign him up for the Society!

After Jonny's indoor display had come to its conclusion there was a free public tea dance in the Central Bar, to the recorded music of the mighty Wurlitzer, featuring screened performances from celebrated organists. This too proved to be highly popular with many couples taking to the floor – an indication that organ music can still move audiences today in the 21st century.

Money towards the £2.3 million required to restore and reinstall the

final two-thirds of the Festival Hall's organ came partly from a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The South Bank Centre is going to great pains to justify the grant, by demonstrating how organs and their music still have relevance for the modern audience. Part of the on-going Festival is a project called 'Pipe Up', whereby members of the public are invited to share their personal and unique 'organ memory' with the South Bank Centre. If you have one, please do share it with the South Bank Centre. Email and postal address for sending such memories are given at the end of this article.

It is rumoured that the South Bank have been so pleased with the response to the weekend and the organ displays, that similar events may be planned for the future. Please give them further encouragement if you have an organ memory to share – it can be of the Festival Hall organ itself, a Wurlitzer, a theatre or cinema organ, a church organ, or one you have played or owned ... It is acknowledged that by doing so you agree to the South Bank using your contribution for exhibition, archive and publication.

The special weekend in which Jonny Ling participated was for the



French barrel organ with two bells, playing seven tunes, made by Gavioli

weekend of 29th and 30th March, until the end of June. Further information available from www.southbankcentre.co.uk. Video clips from the weekend have been posted on YouTube, as well as a number of

clips of the RFH concert organ, including a time-lapse one of its reinstallation.



Alan Smith 'behind the scenes' of his Gasparini



Another Wondrous Machine – with a different 'take' on the organ principle

Further information about the Wondrous Machines can be found on:
(<http://www.ifwet.org.uk/what/>) and <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/wondrous-machines-81014>

For sending 'organ memories', please email customerrelations@southbankcentre.co.uk or otherwise write to: South Bank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX.

Thanks to the South Bank Centre for additional information for this article.

A Letter to Members

Dear members

We were very disappointed that we were unable to attend the meeting in Newton Abbot in April, due to ill health.

Jean's entry into three different hospitals in Toulouse for various scans, investigations, and consultations, culminated in her having treatment to remove a tumour in the brain. The treatment appears to be successful, but we shall know more certain in three months. Such treatment is not only unpleasant and painful, but very draining, and she needs a period of rest and recuperation now.

So, upon returning home, we were delighted to receive a greeting card from those members who attended the meeting at Newton Abbot. It is so good to know that others are with you and behind you, and the card was quite moving. Very many thanks to you all, and we look forward to catching up very soon.

Best wishes, John and Jean Tibbles



One of the joys that John & Jean missed: Richard Hough's Welte Vorsetzer, newly restored and demonstrated for us at the Devon meeting by Thomas Jansen (see report on pages 242-3)

Our very best wishes to Jean for a smooth recovery

The Sisar Project

We are pleased to reprint here an article which first appeared in the original Italian in 'L'Antico Organetto', with the kind permission of AMMI (Associazione Music Meccanica Italiana.) The authors of the article are: Flavio Pedrazzini, Niccolò Perego and Matteo Malosio. Matteo Maolosio provided the translation.

As time goes by mechanical musical media deteriorate: pinned barrels are damaged by woodworm and moisture, and perforated paper rolls become more and more fragile, leading to a progressive loss of an important musical heritage.

In order to avoid this, the Italian Mechanical Music Association (AMMI) is carrying out the SISAR project, SISAR being the Italian acronym for the Scanning, Listening and Recording Integrated System, a long-term project devoted to the development of scanning and decoding technologies for antique musical pieces, recorded on old mechanical music storage media including pinned barrels, paper rolls, cardboard, paper boards and metal discs. Digitally decoding and preserving mechanical music media allows us to save both their physical appearance and their musical content. Some years ago a first device, for scanning pinned barrels (including helicoidal barrels) was designed and realized (Fig. 1). It is employed to

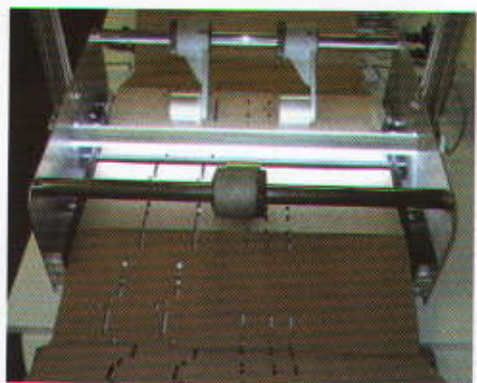
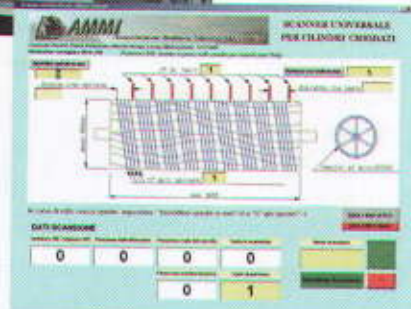


Fig 2: the PMS machine (above), scanning a paper roll (top right) and a card 'book' (lower right)

Fig.1 the pinned barrel scanner



scan different types of cylinders (e.g. for musical clocks, street pianos,...). This can help in identifying missing scales for cylinders no longer with the instruments for which they were made, digitizing, and instrument pre-repair evaluation. It is suitable for cylinders up to 500 mm diameter and 1500 mm length.

After this first project, the Perforated music storage Media Scanner (PMS) has recently been created, with the aim of acquiring the image of linear paper rolls and cardboard storage media, decoding and reproducing the recorded music (Fig. 2). The image retrieved can be easily archived, recovered and visually analysed by a standard PC for research and consultation purposes, without requiring the

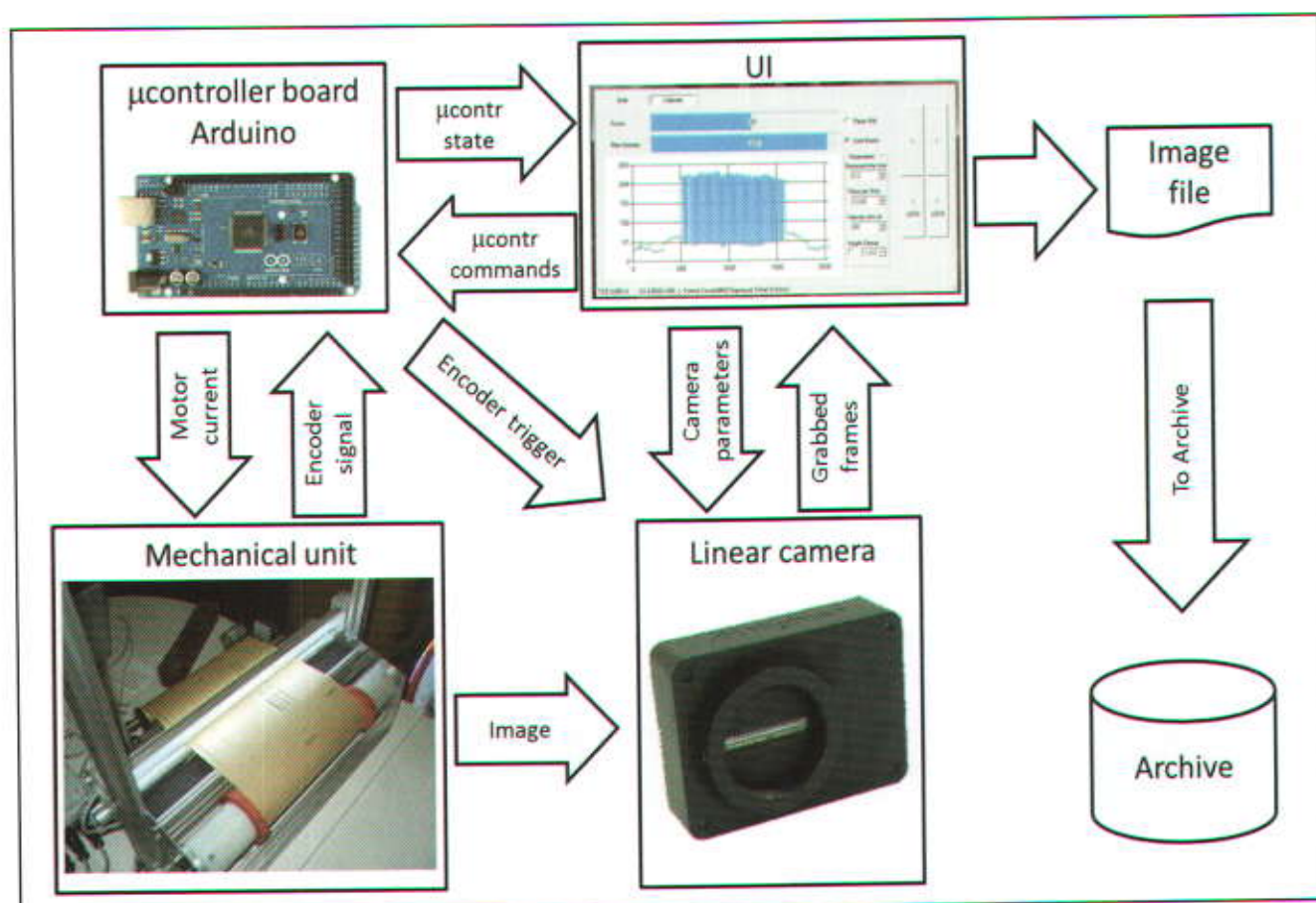


Fig 3 The linear scanner system

unrolling or unfolding of the original. The music is faithfully decoded, taking into account tempo changes, dynamics and other specifics of instruments as the Themodist.

PMS is a modular system adaptable to scan different music media. A linear scanner captures the complete image of linear music media such as music rolls and card. It is made up of four main components: a mechanical support equipped with DC motors, a microcontroller unit, a linear camera and a high-level graphic user interface. The four components are connected together, by hardware and software signals, as shown in Fig. 3.

The mechanical unit, properly a winder for music rolls and a group of pulling rolls for card, easily replaceable and connectable to the micro-controller unit, controls winding on the scanned medium. In detail, the music roll winder is equipped with two CC motors

exerting opposite torques, in order to maintain constant tension in the scanned rolls, avoiding paper curls and creases. An encoding signal controls the speed of the first motor, (the *feed motor*), guaranteeing constant speed of the roll. A second motor, the *tension motor*, is in charge of guaranteeing constant tension of the paper throughout the scanning. On the other hand, the card mechanical unit has a single *feeding motor*, providing support to the cardboard. This does not need to be kept under tension.

The low-level closed-loop motor controls are controlled by a microcontroller, namely the Arduino Mega unit, which can be programmed and connected and through a USB connection to a standard PC. The microcontroller triggers the linear camera frame acquisition synchronously with the feed rate. The linear camera, (compared to a standard matrix camera which grabs a whole 2D

image at once by a matrix of pixels), acquires single rows of pixels, delegating to a PC the task of stitching them together to compose the whole image of the scanned medium. The linear camera is equipped with a 2048 pixel 12-bit monochrome sensor, equivalent to a resolution of 104 px/in with a maximum width scan of 500 mm. The camera is equipped with a standard 50 mm lens.

The linear scanner is controlled by software running on a PC, which controls the setting of motor and camera parameters (e.g. motor speed and camera exposure time), monitors the state of the scanner and saves the complete image in a standard digital format. Utility functions to tune the camera focus and the diaphragm's aperture have also been implemented to support the user in the set-up phase.

In conclusion, the linear scanner allows the user to acquire the complete image of linear media which can be saved, properly

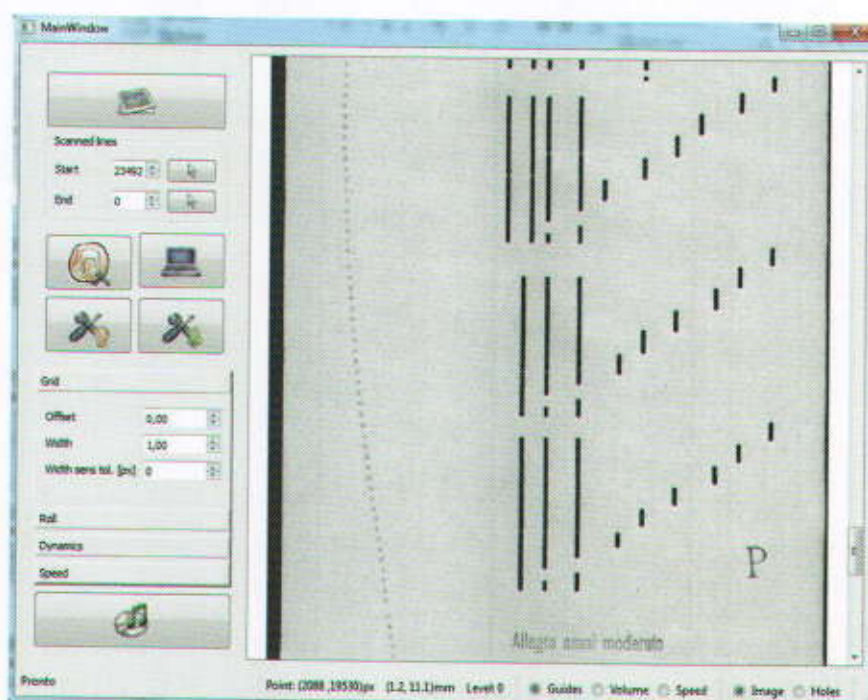


Fig. 4: Screenshot of the program implemented to decode images of musical media

archived, recovered and easily visually inspected by anyone using a standard personal computer.

As previously mentioned the PMS architecture foresees, besides the image acquisition, the decoding of the music "recorded" on the media, preserving not only notes, but also dynamics, tempo changes, Themodist effects and other sound effects as reproduced by old mechanical instruments. In these, the music, encoded as series of holes, was decoded by means of one or more tracker bars, over which the medium (paper roll or cardboard) ran. A computer program expressly developed (Fig. 4) allows the user to configure one or more "virtual" tracker bars which, by proper image processing techniques, decodes the scanned music and converts it into a Standard MIDI File. This file format provides a standardized way for musical sequences to be saved and easily transported. It encodes different types of musical events (e.g. notes, dynamics, speed of execution). MIDI files can provide a faithful music reproduction of old mechanical musical instruments by

a proper set of sound samples, increasingly available also on the Internet, or by exploiting MIDI expanders.

Besides decoding events encoded by holes, which were automatically reproduced by instruments, the developed software includes functions to manually modify dynamics and tempo reproduction all over the scanned piece of music, drawing polylines by the mouse over the image, simply

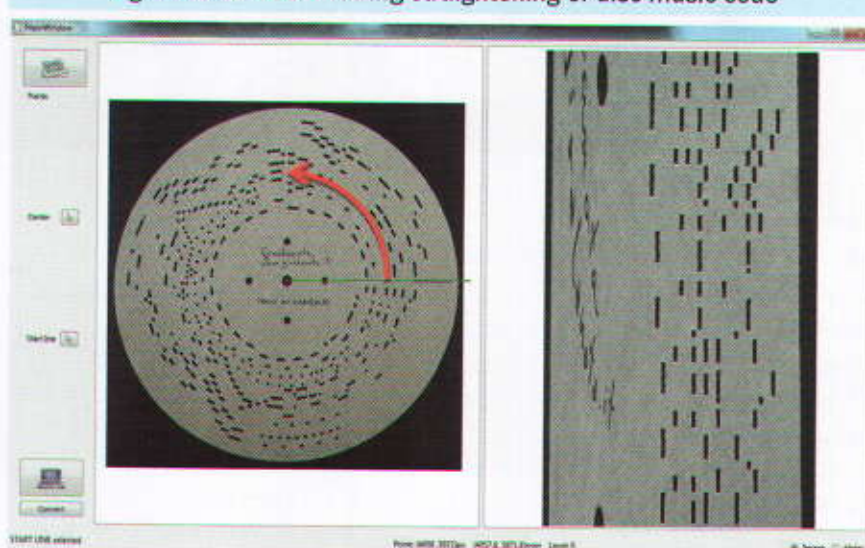
replicating the ones actually printed on certain types of music storage media. It is thus possible to encode, in the MIDI file, events that were not automatically reproduced by instruments, and which required player-pianists constantly and manually to adjust mechanical controls according to what was actually printed on paper rolls. A special functionality allows the user to generate midi files compatible with software specifically dedicated to the faithful replication of organ stops (e.g. *Grand Orgue*), overcoming the intrinsic limitation of native MIDI files, which are not suitable for reproducing the complexity of organ sounds.

Moreover a dedicated image morphing feature, currently being developed, will allow the user to adapt images of circular music media, such as Ariston discs, to be decoded easily, unwrapping their images and making them similar to standard linear media such as paper rolls (Fig. 5).

Recently AMMI presented the SISAR project at the Maker Faire Rome 2013 and two Maker of Merit awards were acknowledged by a panel of judges.

F. Pedrazzini - M. Malosio - N. Perego

Fig 5: screenshot showing straightening of disc music code



Building Gambrinus a Home

By Peter Trodd

As reported in the previous edition, Peter Trodd displayed two of his projects at the Wessex Group meeting last November. We are grateful to Peter for his latest contribution, detailing the construction of one of them



Having previously restored and replicated cabinets, disc bins and pediments for several orphan disc music boxes I wanted to make something a bit special and different, add to this that I cannot afford the really classy music boxes that I really desire, so often buy music boxes in sad and neglected condition and spend months or years trying to create that one-off princess for the collection.

I had toyed with the idea of copying the Gambrinus figure seated astride a 25G or 11¼" Symphonion movement housed in a barrel, for a while.

When Bonhams held one of their sales at Knowle they had an orphan 8" Symphonion which would have sat diagonally within its box had there been one, and this seemed an ideal opportunity to copy the idea - and what better shape to fit into an

elliptical barrel. Also by making this a different size from the original I would not have to follow the original design and could use some artistic licence.

Having bought the movement at a really good price, I initially tried to find a wine barrel or something similar of correct dimension by trolling the internet but without success, then tried to find a book on coopering (or making a wooden barrel.) Again I could find nothing. So here we go - let's make a barrel.

The original pictures of the Gambrinus /Symphonion show it as half a barrel, the back end cut off. I didn't want to do that, I wanted a full barrel shape, fatter in the middle and slimmer at the ends. I have used the full page picture in Dr Jan Jaap Haspels's book *Musical Automata* (p. 137) as my main source.

After drawing out plans, two oak ellipses were cut for each end. I then used thick sections of English oak about 35 mm deep to form the 'staves' of the barrel. Each segment was given bevelled edges to match the changing angles of the ellipse.

By using wide pieces of wood I could reduce the outside at the ends and expand the inside in the middle, producing a barrel shape. To gain access to the inside the barrel was made in two halves and finally glued together when shaping was more or less complete. On completion I found I did not like the end grain on the two ends of the barrel, so cut the sections back about 25mm and fitted two hollow ellipses at each end to house the front and back doors.

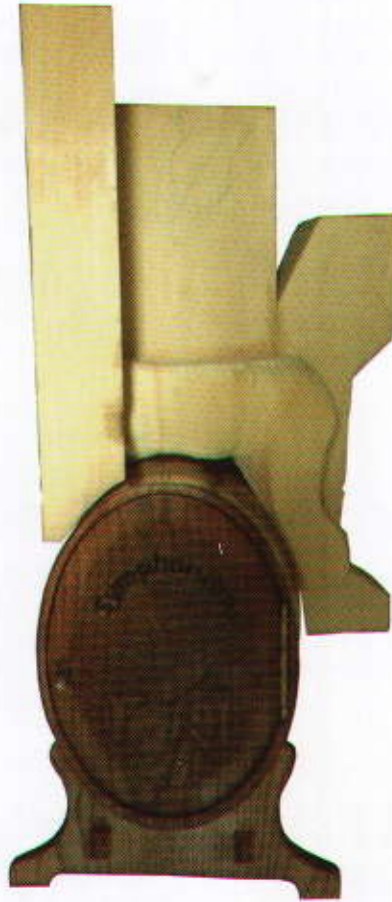
A spokeshave was used extensively to achieve the outside curve and carving gouges and a rotary tool fitted into a drill to shape

and smooth the inside to finish once the barrel was in one section.

With all the alterations the original ellipses were unsuitable as finish ends, so new sections were cut and carved for the doors.

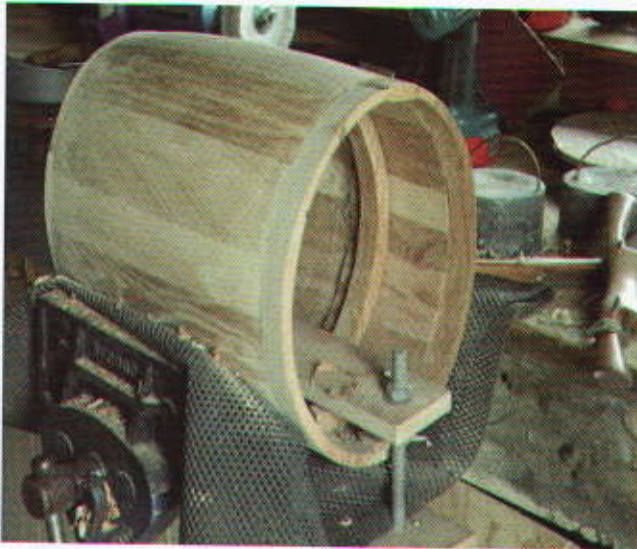
I did not want to copy the large steel hinges on the original boxes but wanted to add some relief carving to the front door, including the name and a musical theme and large black hinges would be in the way. However the door would be easily knocked off with a single hinge but because of the size not much room for two? A compromise then: a large brass hinge with finials and two brass barn gate arms shaped in what I hoped would give a Germanic look, soldered and set into the back of the door.

'Symphonion' was carved in relief on the doors and Microsoft Word used for what I thought was similar text to what might have been



so the movement could be fully restored while I concentrated on the figure. At this early stage the figure did not look very promising and Lester suggested that perhaps I might like to try a bear or antelope on the top. However having made some progress on the figure, I felt reluctant to throw this away and start again.

Having worked out the dimensions from scaling up the picture, several pieces of Jelutong timber were glued together and the figure roughed out. It was most important at this stage to match the base of the sitting figure to the shape of the barrel. The legs for example would have to be shaped from the top down to match the side in contact with the barrel. I was trying at this stage to complete the figure as one piece as shown in the pictures. As progress was made, however, I started to find this to be extremely



original. Carefully cutting the letters out and arranging them to the radius on the door I then stuck them in place with Copydex and carefully removed some of the wood from around the letters. To balance the front, a pair of musical instruments (simple ones – nothing too complicated) were carved below the name.

Two brass strips were used around either end of the barrel. Again I tried to heat and stretch these

to match the shape of the barrel but could not achieve this, so squared the ends of the barrel to match the brass straps.

The cradle was simply copied from the pictures and after sanding and sealing the case was wax polished and the door gloss varnished to emphasise the carving.

The completed barrel, with movement fitted, was then delivered to Lester Jones (Renaissance Discs)

difficult and first removed the drinking cup then the jug. I also found the position of the right arm to be wrong and had to remove this and reshape the angle of arm and hand together with the right foot. The great thing about a painted carving is, of course, that, provided the joints are good and tight, the alterations will not show.

The replacement jug was partially turned, the handle added

with a hops design, and the leaves decoration carved separately and added. The replacement drinking cup was completely carved.

I was advised to use gesso as a base coat prior to painting with acrylic paint and feel this was a

complete mistake as the gesso softened the detail I had worked hard to achieve in the carving.

Painting also proved difficult with all parts in place and so the jug and stein were again removed, painted separately and then refitted. I

deliberately gave Gambrinus a ruddy drinker's complexion.

I have since learnt that many wood carvers of large objects complete the work in sections. From start to finish the project took about nine months.

Finally some historical facts and stories:

There are several theories about the origins of the mythical character 'Gambrinus.' Here are three:

Some believe 'Gambrinus' is a corruption of the name Jan Primus, the first Duke of Brabant, (1251-1294), who ruled what is now mostly Belgium. Alternatively he may be based on John the Fearless (1371 - 1419) of Burgundy, who introduced hops in Flanders. Yet others think he may be based on a mythic German king, Gambrinius, who, according to legend, learned brewing from the gods.

Whatever the origins, which appear to lie in the Low Countries of the Middle Ages, this hero from European culture is associated with beer, brewing and joviality. A popular legend is that the town of Brussels was looking for a patron for its brewing industry and ran a contest for the honour, which would go to the man who could carry a barrel of beer the distance of two stones' throw. The wily winner did so by drinking the barrel dry first, then carrying it the required distance, apparently with no ill effect.

The name Gambrinus is used today as a brand name by a brewery in the Czech Republic.

The Early History of the LECOULTRE FAMILY

By John Harrold

Over the years, much has been written about the Lecoultré family. Articles by Olin Tillotson, David Tallis and Pierre Germain have appeared variously in editions of *The Music Box* and MBSI's *Mechanical Music*. The research and writing of these authors mostly cover the periods after 1800, and usually relate to musical box manufacture, giving a fairly comprehensive guide as to which members of the family were involved in the musical box industry.

However, my interest focuses on two different aspects. Firstly: how did the Lecoultré family leave its native France and travel to Switzerland, changing their profession from agricultural toolmakers, farmers, glassblowers, beekeepers etc., in the process and becoming the prime makers of musical boxes and their associated parts both for themselves and many

other makers. Secondly: how did they survive to the present day as Jaeger-Lecoultré, when all the other firms making musical boxes and parts fell by the wayside many years ago?

As previously known, the Lecoultré family came from the Diocese Meaulx en Brye, Lizy-sur-Ourcq, Seine-et Marne, Ile-de-France. The earliest member of the family that has been traced is Anthoine, who seems to have been born about 1500. The name of his spouse is unknown.

The Lecoultré family and many others in the town were Huguenots, that is, they were members of the Protestant Reformed Church of France. This put them in an invidious position, as a minority in a Catholic dominated country.

It appears that Anthoine's son, Pierre I Lecoultré, born in 1532, worked as a glassmaker, a traditional

Huguenot occupation, at Morges,

probably along with a Julian-David, Seigneur du Perron at St-Lo en Cotentin, and a Francois Prevost, Seigneur de Beaulieu en Pitou, both described as Master Glassmakers. These were people who owned land and of a rank who usually had people working it for them. On 10th May, 1557, Reims municipality sold the farmhouse, Praz Rodet, to Julian David and Francois Prevost. Pierre I Lecoultré worked with them until 1563, when the whole farmhouse property was sold to the city of Morges.

As a Huguenot, Anthoine could see trouble ahead, anticipating the French Wars of Religion, which started in earnest in 1562, between the House of Bourbon (Tolerance) and the House of Guise (Catholic.) Real persecution was perpetrated on

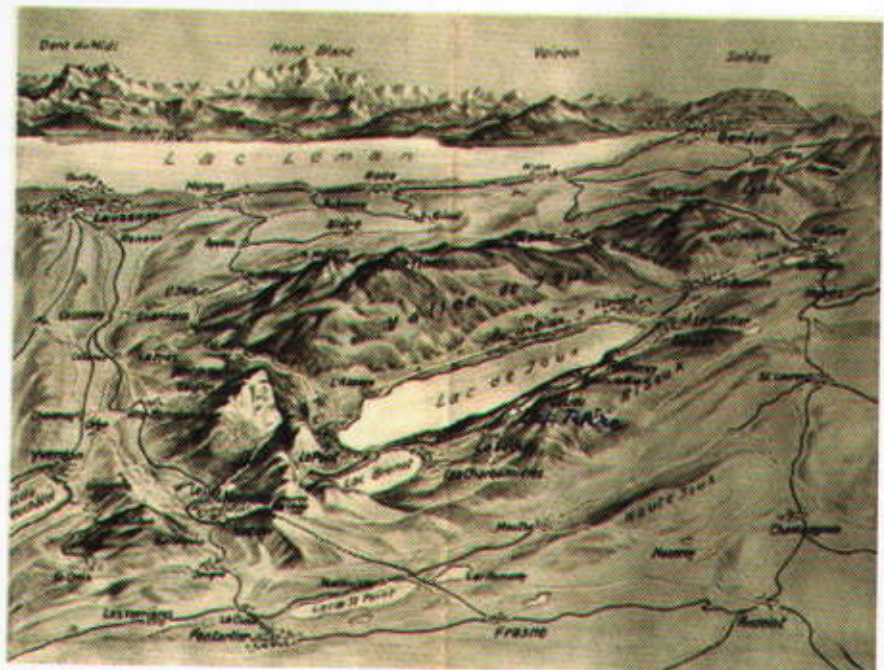




Le Bas du Chenit, le Cret le Coultre, 1828



Le Brassus today and (below) an earlier map (exact date not known)



the Huguenots, and many thousands were forced to leave France and settle either in neutral or Protestant countries.

Before he left France in 1558, there is a footnote in the family papers showing him to have visited two Master Glassmakers, Julian-David and Francois Prevost. Anthoine is then recorded as residing in Geneva on the 4th of April of that year, 1588. Anthoine's son, Pierre I was already married to a lady whose family name was Corcul.

Her father was Michel Corcul, who was born in Reims, Champagne-Ardenne, and was probably also a Master Glassmaker. It seems Michel may have bought a piece of land on the 6th of March 1559 at Le Lieu, La-Vallee, Vaud, Switzerland on behalf of Pierre I. The main reason for these Huguenot families' moving to the La Vallee was to use the sand, which was very good for glassmaking, plus the added bonus of water power. There is reference to another Master Glassmaker, also a traditional farmer, at La Fontaine du Plannoz at La Thomassette, which is an area around Le Brassus. He was party to this land purchase and may have been the actual owner of the land. He also arranged a further sale of a parcel of land on the 25th of March, 1568, near his own land in the Ortons area, behind La Combaz du Moucillon, not far from Le Lieu, Switzerland, which was owned by

the local Commune. This land was transferred to Michel Corcul and his son-in-law Pierre I Lecoultre.

These land purchases are somewhat convoluted, the position of some of them being unclear. There are references to other people and parcels of land. What is clear is that several families of glassmakers were leaving France and moving to land around this area. A member of one of the LeCoultre families built the main house *Le Cret* [The Crest] at Lower Chenit, just off the 'Route du Plannoz' in 1599.

Pierre I was listed as a citizen of Geneva on 4th April 1558. His title

was given as 'The Honourable' but the reason for this is unknown.

Although Pierre I purchased La-Place En-Vallee on the 25th March, 1568, the deed memo was not dated until 2nd June, 1580, and he was living at Meaulx en Brie at the time. He purchased a further piece of land on 25th May 1593 at Le-Lieu, Vaud. He died in 1602 at La Place, his occupation was stated as schoolmaster (ca 1562-ca1572) and church singer.

His youngest brother could not stand the climate and went to Holland, and was likely to be the founder of that family branch. There



(Vaud) N1 Transcript: "I, Pierre Le Coultre established judge of the Consistory of the Communauté Location in the year 1619, I have compiled this book and so I signed up to be true this 5th day of October in 1628." Signed Pierre Le Coultre

Although Pierre I had four children the line was only carried on by the Honourable David Lecoultre. His occupation is unknown, but as he was known as 'Honourable,' he was probably a Judge like his father.

families. Their second son, Abraham Joseph II, was born in October 1746 at Le Sentier, La Vallée. His occupations were listed as a Consistory Adviser and Assessor, watchmaker and cutler (for which he obtained a patent on 18th June, 1801.) According to local records he took over his father's forge, probably on the latter's death.

Other members of his family are

were branches of the Lecoultre family in many countries, including England.

Pierre I's first child and eldest daughter, born in 1552, married Antoine Favre on 28th January, 1582, in Geneva. He came from Saint-Forgeux, Rhone, and was listed as a goldsmith. He was one of 13 children, his mother being N Corcul. One of his descendants is credited with inventing the tuned steel comb.

Pierre's second child is listed as Honourable Pierre II Lecoultre. He was one of three brothers. In the local census of 1619, he was listed as proud father and head of the family of 22 persons. His occupation was Consistory Judge of the *Lieu commune*. In 1613 he was the instigator of the construction of a church in Sentier, and was summoned along with one Isaac Piguet to appear before the authorities in Bern to gain permission. While there he bought a bell from a foundry for 30 Florins. The only son of his to carry on the line was Abraham, born ca 1615, and married to Magdeleine Reymond. Abraham died in 1687; the record was signed by David Meylan, Registrar from 1681-1729.

This document (illustrated above) appertains to a book, the following gives the details:

Certification autograph Pierre LE COULTRE, October 5, 1628, a copy of the Journal (1614-1628), made ('engrossed') April 5, 1628 by Jaques MARESCHAL of Chenit. Communal Archives of Chenit Sentier



A razor, with its paddle-shaped strop, by Jaques Lecoultre

David married a Suzanne Piguet and they had 11 children. Now the line gets very complicated!

We have to go back to Pierre I's other son, Simon, who died in 1676. His fifth son Jacques, (b 1630 and d 1694) married Judith Meylan, who died young. He then married Jeanne Capt in 1695.

Jacques's first son, David, was born in 1660 at Le-Chenit. He was listed as Lieutenant and Governor of Le Chenit on 25th June 1694, and then on 2nd December, 1701, as Captain of the Consistory Judges. He had seven children, variously married into the Meylan, Golay, Reymond, Nicole and Aubert families. From our point of view David's second son Jacques David I (ca 1684-1766) is of interest. He married Elisabeth Golay, daughter of Rosine Reymond. They had five children, the second being Abraham I, born in February, 1711.

Abraham I married Susanne Reymond. They had six children, several of whom married into the Meylan, Golay and Reymond

listed as: Abraham-Isaac Regent, another Abraham as a lapidary (probably providing jewel stones for watches) and dozens of others with no trades noted.

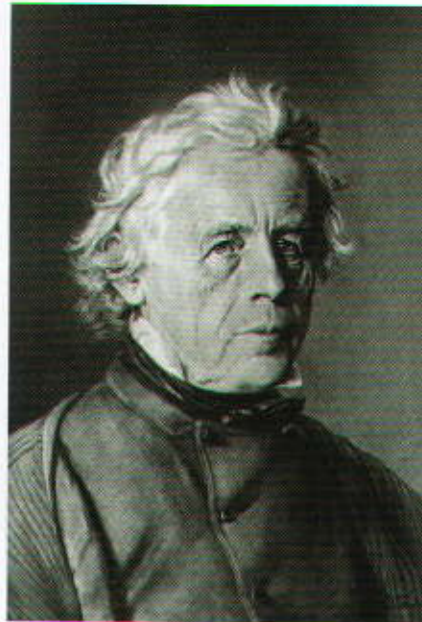
Abraham Joseph II and Jean Marie Julie Golay's eldest son and first child of 10 was Jacques David II born in January, 1781 at Le Sentier. His occupations were listed as blacksmith, mechanic, maker of musical box combs and razors.

This is the first recorded note of comb making. The steel used for razors and combs is quite similar, both being very high quality and pure. Earlier researches of mine discover that he was using English steel, very similar to modern gauge plate. It was thought to come from Sheffield, but

the prime maker and seller was Peter Stubs of Warrington, whose high quality steel and files were world famous. They had two travelling salesmen who travelled the world getting orders and whose trials and tribulations travelling in those far off days would fill a book.

Jacques David II married Louise Catherine Lecoultre (b.1779) on the 20th August, 1802. His eldest son, Charles Antoine, was born on the 16th April, 1803. He married Julie Zélie Golay.

The following is a resumé of Charles Antoine's fascinating career and life's work:



Charles Antoine Lecoultre

1819-1825: Antoine worked alongside his father on combs for musical boxes for his uncles in Geneva, and also for his own account.

August, 1828: Antoine left La Vallée for Geneva, with the intention of learning the trade of watchmaker. He is registered as a foreigner in Geneva, 7th August, 1828.)

He joined his uncle François LECOULTRE, working with his cousin Adolphe NICOLE in London.

Antoine renewed five times his residence permit in Geneva, dated 28th October, 1828, but we do not know, it seems, the exact date of return in the Joux Valley.

1829 Antoine embarked on a watchmaking career.

1st November, 1830: Company Agreement between father, David Jacques, and his son, Antoine, under the name 'David Jacques LECOULTRE and Son'.

During 1833, a rift grew between father and son over profound differences regarding in particular the manufacture of gears:

Antoine then left his father's forge, his father making the company 'David Jacques LECOULTRE and Son'.

The father, David Jacques, then formed a partnership with his second son, François-Auguste.

For his part, Antoine then established his small gears factory in his apartment on the first floor of the old house.

3rd January, 1837 - Antoine and his brother, Ulysse, bought all the land and grazing. Their uncle, Henri-Joseph Lecoultre was shown as domiciled in Geneva at this time.

ca 1839 - due to a cramped workshop in the old family home, they decided to build a new two-storey house, flanked by a rural area to the north.

At Le Sentier, 6th August, 1842 - there was a Company Agreement between the two brothers Charles-Antoine and François-Ulysse Lecoultre under the name 'Antoine Le Coultre and Brother'.

1844 - Antoine built with his own hands a *millionometer* (apparatus for measuring a thousandth of a millimetre).

1846/1847 - Antoine created and commercialised the first crown winding system which replaces the old system requiring a winding key.

1st November, 1847 - During the political crisis of the Sonderbund War (Swiss civil war), Antoine was appointed by the Council of State of Vaud, Under Lieutenant of the District Valley Voluntary Company.

25th January, 1850 - Act of sharing out between the two brothers, as a result of family discord, especially between sisters; both brothers decide to separate.

23rd June, 1851 - Antoine went to the World Fair in London, where he received a gold medal for his exhibition of products.

19th April, 1852 - Taken from the proceedings of the Swiss Federal Council "The Federal Council has received a new shipment ... 25 medals in London for Swiss industry and were sent ... to the respective cantonal governments to send to address, namely ... in the Canton of Vaud ..

Louis Audemars, Brassus (watchmaker)

Antoine LeCoultre, Le Sentier (watchmaker) ..."

Geneva, 3rd December, 1853 - Contract of General partnership between Antoine LeCoultre and his son Jean Gallay, under the name "Antoine Le Coultre & Son."

In 1860, Antoine LeCoultre almost ruined this unfortunate association with Jean Gallay.

1st August, 1860 - Contract of Company limited by shares, between Antoine Le Coultre and BORGEAUD Auguste (1831-1878), Pully, under the name 'LE COULTRE, BORGEAUD et Cie.'

1867 - At the *Exposition Universelle*, the company LE COULTRE, BORGEAUD & Co. was awarded a Silver Medal.

14th March, 1869 - New contract of General Partnership between Antoine Le Coultre, his three sons, Elijah, Paul, Benjamin, and Charles Louis Auguste Marc BORGEAUD (son of Jean-François Louis, 1800-1880), Pully and Lausanne, and Marguerite VALLOTTON (1805-1877), under the same name 'Le COULTRE, BORGEAUD et Cie'.

In 1877, Auguste BORGEAUD decided to leave his associates for health reasons.

Le Sentier, 13th October, 1877 - Dissolution of the Company 'Le COULTRE, BORGEAUD & Cie'. and dividing up of the property between Antoine Le Coultre and his three sons Elijah, Paul and Benjamin.

(To be continued)

I am seriously indebted to Pierre Casalonga, who has allowed me to use his researches. He can directly trace his LeCoultre family ties back to the first known member. This article is copyright and it is expressly forbidden to use any part of it, without the permission of Monsieur Casalonga (via me), and must not be used for any other purpose, especially commercial.

The World's Largest Singing Bird?

A Garden Folly in Herefordshire

On a previous page, we reported the Society's visit to the organ workshop of W & A Boggis in Roydon, just up the road from Diss in Norfolk. But it isn't just church organs they build and restore; some years ago, Rodney Briscoe, the owner of the business, was called in to restore the water organ in the fountains at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, near Rome. He also created another, which plays birdsong, installed nearby in the gardens. And as a result of this, he was called upon by Richard Pim, owner of the Westonbury Mill water gardens in Herefordshire, to create a similar birdsong barrel organ which



Pim has incorporated into an enormous water-powered cuckoo clock. I don't know how the birdsong device in Italy compares in size with the one in Herefordshire, but I suspect that one of them must be the world's largest serinette!

(Pim himself claims only that his clock is probably the world's largest water-powered cuckoo clock).

Richard Pim constructed the clock and its half-timbered tower himself (he was, until retirement, a hydrogeologist, so he knew what he was about), and built the device with everything showing. Thus it is possible to study it in action and work out exactly what everything does. There are humorous touches, too, in the way that everyday objects have been utilised with no attempt at concealment. The valve for opening and closing the water supply to the driving wheel, for



The water-wheel which powers the organ, its supply valve controlled by two Guinness cans



The clock as first seen (We'd just missed the 2-o'clock performance!)

example, is controlled by alternately emptying and filling two Guinness cans. As Pim explains, they are the right shape, light in weight and rustproof.

A few minutes before the hour, the doors at the top, below the clock dial, open and the cuckoo emerges. Eventually, he cuckoos, and there then follow two minutes of bird song from the barrel organ. I saw this happening last summer, and was entranced by the whole thing. My wife had her camera with her, but I had no notebook to hand, and failed to write anything down, so I cannot give a detailed description of the mechanism. But who wants a description, anyway? Go and see it for yourself when in Herefordshire (the gardens are open to the public in the summer, and there is an excellent café there, as well as

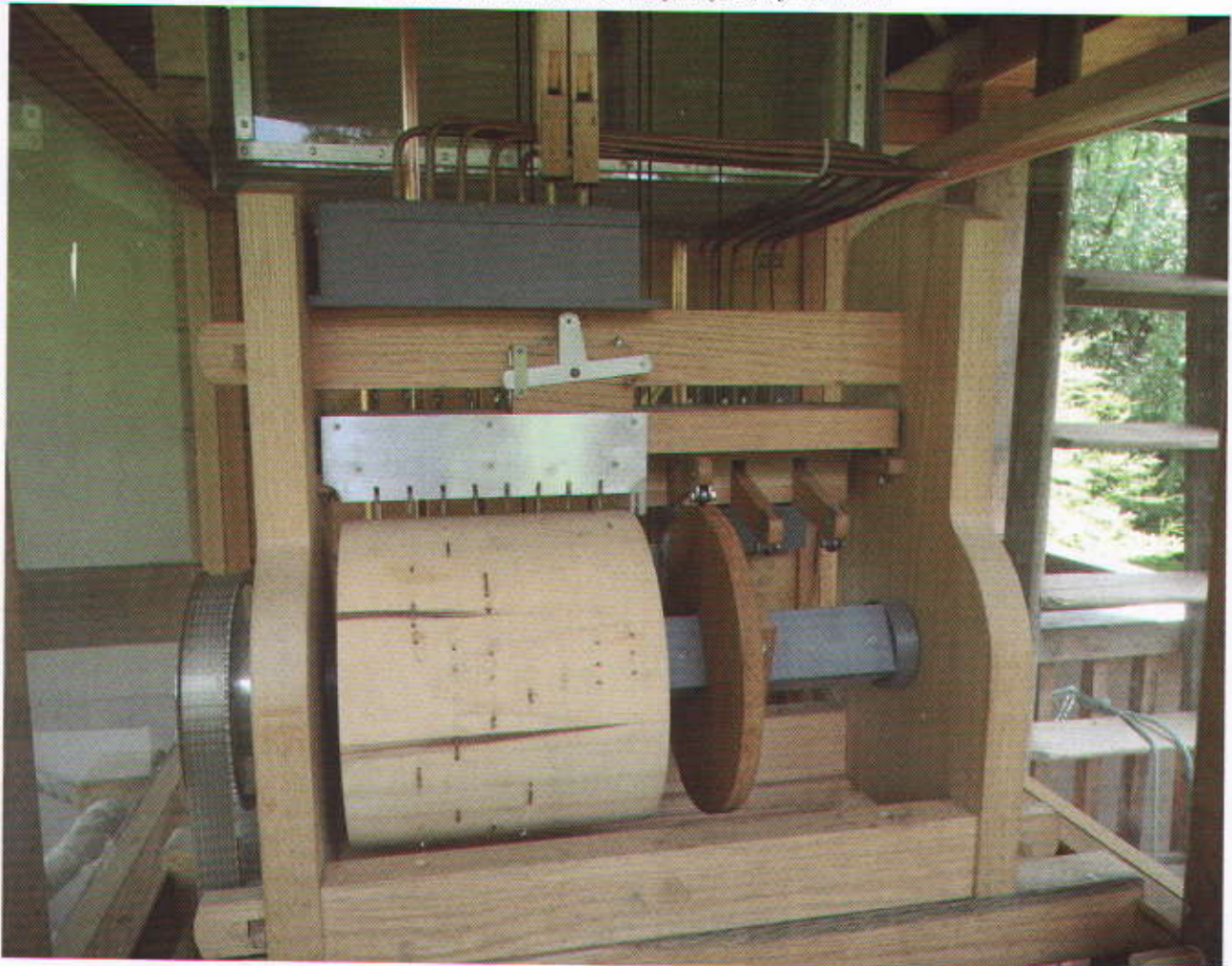


another water-operated 'folly' and a marvellous dome built of wine-bottles).

A view of the header tank, the coils of pipe that control the clock and some more home-made weights!

Christopher Proudfoot

The barrel mechanism, on the first floor of the tower



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2014

11th May	National Vintage Communication Fair , Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, The Fosse, Fosse Way, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1XN
17th May	Midlands Group meeting, Lincoln: Roy Ison 01522 540406
31st May	Essex Group Meeting St Mary's Church Hall Doddinghurst Road Doddinghurst Essex CM 15 0QJ Robert Ducat-Brown 01438 712585
7th June	MBSGB Annual General Meeting , Roade Village Hall Roade, Northamptonshire
21st June	Teme Valley Winders , Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire: John Phillips 01584 781118
28th - 31st August	Great Dorset Steam Fair , Tarrant Hinton, Near Blamford Forum, Dorset DT11 8HX
5th October	Cotton Museum Organ enthusiasts day , Cotton Mechanical Music Museum, Blacksmiths Road, Cotton, Stowmarket, Suffolk. IP14 4QN
7th - 12th October	Musical Box Society International Meeting , Weston, near Fort Lauderdale Florida USA
11th - 12th October	Milton Keynes Organ Festival Milton Keynes Museum, McConnell Drive, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5EL
18th October	Midlands Group meeting, Derby: Nicholas Simmons 01332 760576
6th December	Teme Valley Winders , Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire: John Phillips 01584 781118

Responses to the 'Voting in Absentia' questionnaire

Sixty-one responses were received to the questionnaire on 'Voting in Absentia' sent out in the previous edition of *The Music Box*. While in some respects this number is disappointing, it is not insignificant, and similar to the number typically attending an AGM. Given that people tend to be more active if they support changes to the status quo, the eight members who wrote that they had no strong views either way should be congratulated for taking the trouble to do so!

Of the sixty-one, 49 thought that members who cannot attend an AGM should be offered some means of casting a vote. However, almost half (29) of respondents stated that they normally attend the AGMs. This is a matter of concern as it means 'Voting in Absentia' might impact on the attendance at AGMs.

Members' additional comments were enlightening and wide-ranging.

Ironically one respondent stated only members *resident in the UK* should be allowed to vote in absentia, while another said it should be limited to those *resident overseas*! Some members suggested other changes to the running of the Society: more than one advocated the introduction of fixed terms for serving on the Committee. Another suggested blanket elections to Committee, with the elected Committee members then allocating the Officers' roles between them.

A couple of respondents expressed fears of potential fraud if 'Voting in Absentia' were introduced, while another rightly observed that the ultimate authority lies with the members. There were a couple of negative comments about last year's AGM, and a respondent whose only comment was 'Keep up the good work.'

Are those responding who want 'Voting in Absentia' a discrete minority,

or should they be considered a representative sample, and their responses extrapolated over the membership as a whole? The answer lies probably somewhere in between.

Having given consideration to all views expressed over several months, the EC is putting forward an amendment to the Constitution to introduce proxy voting. This measure, seen as a compromise by some, has the potential to receive the most support. For further information, please consult the insert dealing with proposals to Amend the Constitution.

This was written before the deadline for submission of amendments to the Constitution, so it should be noted that there may be other proposals by the time you read this.

Dynamic Melody-Line Emphasis on the 58-note Orchestrelle

Improving the interpretative qualities of the Aeolian player organ

By Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume

The majority of those who own 58-note Aeolian Orchestrelle player organs start their roll-playing lives with a diet of popular songs, marches and, perhaps, the more flamboyant orchestral overtures. As their interest in music quickly matures this rather bland amateur repertoire is gradually replaced by more interpretive and imaginative music. They are then well on the way towards becoming members of that still-restricted number of Orchestrelle-owners who are both musically aware and have a sensitivity towards performance. They may even, perhaps, punch their own music-rolls.

It is around this time that the first of the Orchestrelle's many deficiencies begins to show up, namely that melody emphasis and chordal expression is quite impossible to achieve. This limitation created the impetus that pushed Aeolian to invent the 116-note or two-manual organ with its special music rolls. It is also worth pointing out that although the firm made a number of two-manual roll-playing organs, they made very few instruments that actually *had* two manuals. I know of only three 116-note instruments having more than one keyboard.

Of course the more one looks into any instrument the easier it becomes to pick faults, either in the manner in which it was built in the first place or in its musical arrangements. The Orchestrelle suffered greatly from being built as



The finished form of the Ord-Hume-designed Aeolian Orchestrelle case which was first erected in 1992 and has recently been fitted with the Dynamic Melody-Line Emphasis system. The two flanking 'tower' flats are hinged to give access to the organ and all panels are readily removable for servicing.

a mass-production instrument (which, actually, it never was although its processes followed that direction) but fundamentally from the truly awful quality of the greater majority of its music-rolls. Cut 'metrically' and with a metrical precision that turns the music-lover's scalp purple, these are to a hand-played organ roll as a spam sandwich is to a dinner at the Ritz. That tempo and expression markings were frequently printed 'out of register' and were consequently less than helpful only adds to the overall dissatisfaction.

Perhaps the most basic fault is that the individual tone-ranks, all basically conforming to the same or similar dimensions but with tone-development chambers of widely-varying sizes, are placed behind a lot of woodwork of which the case is only part. But it is axiomatic that all reed organs that possess a swell mechanism must muffle the sound when the swell is shut which is why a good harmonium with its unhindered passages often sounds better.

Those who rebuild and restore Orchestrelles will have discovered

how fine they sound 'in the raw' meaning unenclosed without case or swell mechanisms. Once the instrument is complete, however, tonal imbalance is immediately noticeable. This cannot have altered over the years so it remains a key question how Aeolian's engineers allowed this to happen for they must have discovered this inherent weakness.

Of all the manufacturers or player organs in the world at the time, the principle ones can be grouped into two families – American and European. Aeolian and Estey, Wilcox & White and a few others made up the US contribution. The Europeans were led by Mustel in Paris and from them came Schiedmeyer in Germany (virtually the same organ mechanism, different case). Despite there being several British makers, these I exclude simply because they were poorly executed and not particularly *musical* instruments.

The real difference between these families comes in the interpretive quality of the musical performance. The European organs

have rolls which, I have reason to believe, were derived from hand-played masters. The American rolls were never cut from a live performance. From this one can safely say that the majority of Aeolian 58-note music-rolls provide inferior performances. There are, however, a small number of exceptions in the shape of very fine rolls indeed.

One other difference is that the French and German makers used Estey organ reeds while all production organs in America used reeds made by or for the Munro Organ Reed Company. To this one fact can be attributed the noticeably different sounds produced by the best American-made reed organ (the Estey) and the best European (the Mustel).

None of this, however, tolerates in any form *melodic emphasis*. The late Sidney Belfrage (1872-1951) was experimenting in Wembley, North London, with valve-driven amplifiers and miniature microphone arrays to tackle this problem as early as 1948 and his greatly-modified 58-note Orchestrelle had a prominent

gallery like a balcony built around the treble side which was fronted with individually wired and controlled active-cone loudspeakers. Its tonal success was a moot point and the quality of the sound suffered because it was hard to balance and appeared to require disturbingly regular adjustment. This instrument, which I had the mixed pleasure of hearing before his death, unfortunately no longer survives.

Disciplines of conservation and preservation have prevented my attempting modifications along any lines, similar or contrarily, to otherwise-original instruments but recently I have been able to undertake experiments which have produced such an agreeable improvement that I believe they warrant some consideration by those who, like myself, have a shed full of incomplete instruments of many types, none of which can reliably be restored to 'original'.

To start with, then, let's make a quick tonal analysis of the 'regular' sound produced by these instruments. From this yardstick, we ought to be able to calibrate and quantify any attainable improvement. The sound-measuring equipment used comprised a pair of AKG studio microphones positioned ten feet in front of the instrument being calibrated and at a height of six feet from the floor. Calibration was by wave-form generator driven from a Korg-type frequency recorder and output first by observed Marantz Vu-meters and second by studio frequency analyser.

In all tests, two 8ft registers were drawn in both divisions of the keyboard, one 4ft in each and the bass/sub-bass actuated. Differences in naming the registers were met by selecting audibly acceptable matches. And, of course, the sub-bass in all instruments is external to the swell chamber.

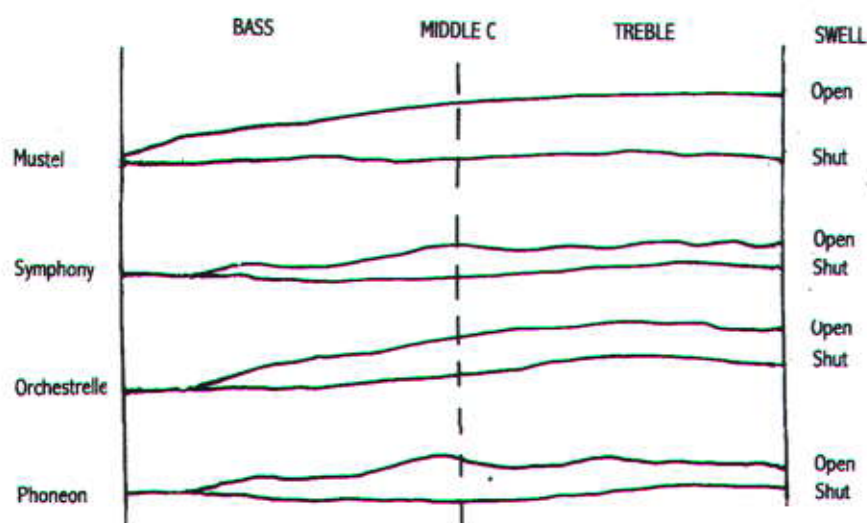


Fig. 1.

Tonal output of (1) Phoneon, (2) Orchestrelle, (3) Symphony and (4) Mustel player reed organs calibrated in terms of relative volume. In each case, the lower line is with the swell closed and the upper with it open. Note that the Phoneon has a C-f compass and that of the Symphony is F-f. For the purposes of this representative multiple-results chart, the tonal range has been ignored. All these calibrations have been made with the following stop registration selected: *bass half* = Bass 16ft; 2 x 8ft + 1 x 4ft + Bass; *treble half* = 2 x 8ft + 1 x 4ft. This highlights the tonal smoothness of the Mustel.

It will be seen that in using such simple apparatus, while there is room for error, the margin will remain constant *so long as the observations are consistent*.

Four instruments were tested using this equipment comprising a Model V Aeolian Orchestrelle, a Wilcox & White Symphony, a Mustel and a Phoneon. While it was impossible to replicate the exact trials with each instrument due in part to their disparate specifications, the results were sufficiently distinctive to suggest a line of further study.

Fig.1 illustrates a composite chart of the findings. Whereas the original was in the form of a wave-chart, this has been converted into a less-confusing and smoother chart by halving the amplitude of each excursion and then 'rounding-off' the points created. Each instrument is recorded first with swell closed and second (the upper line) with

German Schiedmeyer to produce similar results.

What the method of presenting these data does not clearly indicate is that there are several unexpected spikes and troughs in the gamut for which I cannot immediately account. Whether it is due to the mechanism of the individual note in each organ or induced resonance I remain unsure. In the conclusion, though, these are a mere irrelevance to the overall findings. That which is blindingly obvious is how impossible it is to 'bring out' any part of a melody, in particular when that melody is fighting against perhaps both a counter-melody and a strong bass line. Pianola-players have the *Themodist*; Orchestrellists have nothing!

Let's take a practical example. One of the better-quality Aeolian 58-note music-rolls is that for Cherubini's *Anacreon* (roll number 30187). This is a real *tour de force*

composition filled with mystery and musical intrigue. Small wonder, then, that John Flight of Flight & Robson set this as a showpiece on the barrels of the great *Apollonicon* organ in London's St Martin's Lane in 1818 – and no surprise that some of the audience were reported to be 'frighted by the curious melody'. However, *Anacreon* is thought-provoking and Aeolian did well to produce a roll of it, only how on earth is one to bring out the emphasis on the strings after the first *tutti*? Expert Orchestrellists will already have substituted Cherubini's original orchestration for Aeolian's 'muted strings' and 'flute', so putting a bold 4ft against a quieter 8ft register.

The trouble is that the swell on these instruments acts over the whole tonal spectrum. However, as we have seen (Fig. 1), the effect is not consistent! Even that 4ft + 8ft combination is going to struggle to be heard above the immense activity taking place in the region below Middle C! This is why it is almost always a mistake to select more than two of the Orchestrelle's split ranks in the lower register and why using the swell, while supposedly making the whole gamut louder, skews the reinforcement towards the stronger lower registers.

One can think of countless other examples not just from the classical repertoire but from hymn tunes and even popular songs by Strauss and

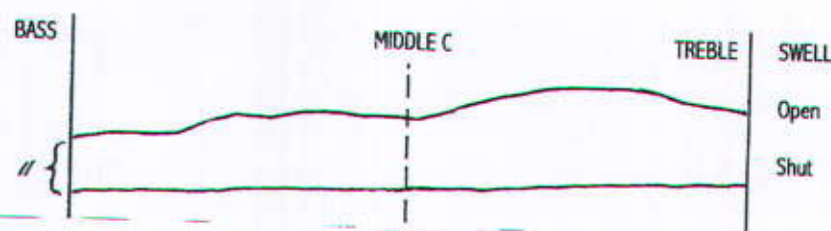


Fig. 2.

The overall effect of operating the Swell in the average roll-playing reed organ. Aeolian's individualistic name for the swell shutters in all models of the Orchestrelle is 'shades', a term usually applied to the flat metal tuning shades fitted to the tops of certain ranks of wooden pipes in a pipe organ. The dip in the middle is probably due to the presence of the spool box assembly. Note how the effect is more or less constant from the lowest notes to the middle treble where the increase in effect diminishes to the high notes. Because the Orchestrelle's lower-to-mid-range registers are usually too loud, the effect of this is to drown out a solo melody in the acoustically-weaker treble and diminish its ability to shine through.

swell open. The vertical separation of the graphs produced is an artificial aid to improving clarity on a 'single-colour' composite. Perhaps the greatest surprise is how poor Aeolian's 'flagship' Orchestrelle emerges, only marginally improving on the Symphony as regards balanced output. There is no question that the French Mustel is the most perfect and from this we can extrapolate that one would expect the

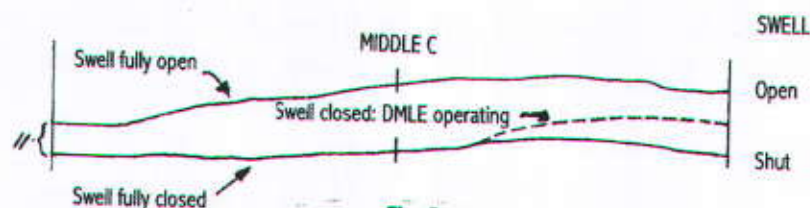


Fig. 3

The effect of Dynamic Melody Line Emphasis (DMLE). Since the Bass and Sub-Bass registers are external to the swell shutters, they remain unchanged in sound volume output throughout the whole range of the swell operation. As before, the acoustic peaks and troughs have been averaged out for clarity. To emphasise the effect of DMLE, this particular graphic is divided bass to treble by a constant separation. DMLE is shown by a broken line. For comparative purposes, all calibrations have been made using the following stops: *bass half* = Bass 16ft; 2 x 8ft + 1 x 4ft + Bass; *treble half* = 2 x 8ft + 1 x 4ft.

Meyerbeer where melodic emphasis is called for yet cannot be achieved.

There is a perfectly good reason for this – the mechanics of the actual reeds themselves. Lower notes have larger reeds that impart more energy to the air while the higher reeds are much smaller and make less impact on the air. This is shown graphically in Fig. 2. If ever there was a good case for comparing a 58-note arrangement to the 116-note one, then this is it!

I came upon Marcel Dupré's organ version of the ancient seasonal Marian antiphon *Alma Redemptoris Mater* some years ago in a second-hand shop and quickly realised that this was ideally expressive music for the Orchestrelle. Orlando di Lasso's original 12th century chant, forever associated with Palestrina and his music for double choir, appears in numerous forms, the vast majority of which are choral and/or instrumental. For solo organ, however, it offers fine opportunities for the use of solo registers. The beginning, for example, states the theme on a single register in spaced crotchets to which the full organ, quite enclosed, follows.

Using the score and a live performance I tape-recorded in Vienna some years ago, I hand-cut a 58-note transcription for Orchestrelle. The result, while musically adequate, was tonally poor since it was impossible to let a simple and thin melody transcend the full counter-melody. No reed organ, of course, may ever equal the purity of the pipe organ but it would be nice if it got just a bit nearer!

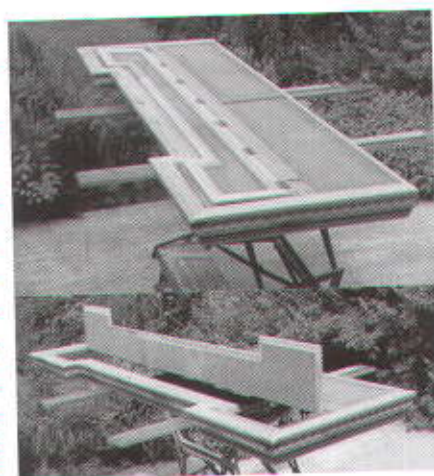
Perhaps better known to most than this admittedly obscure antiphon is Baldassare Galuppi's *Largo*. I first heard this music on a church organ near my home in 1944 and the organist was, remarkably, a gifted Italian prisoner-of-war billeted locally! In the mid-1950s I visited

Venice and although at that time all the church organs were in lamentable disrepair, I played several fine instruments including one by Gaetano Callido (1727-1813) which possessed an astonishing flute stop that shone like a ray of sunshine through whatever other registration was selected. After my own sub-standard performance on this rare instrument, the resident organist then took control of the keys and the first piece he played was that Galuppi piece played to me in Pinner during the war! But what a difference that crystal-clear flute made!

All this made me ever more anxious to have an instrument which would sound at least similar to that Italian renaissance masterpiece. Begging the score from an Italian colleague (it was not available outside Italy at that time), I laboriously punched a 58-note roll. Again, all the notes were there but what came out was hardly satisfying.

Disappointment (calibrated in time wasted) set me thinking afresh about the problem, although not about Belfrage-type amplification so much as mechanical emphasis, and to my surprise a simple solution was staring me in the face.

My interest in Orchestrelle improvement remained bridled for the reasons already given regarding original authenticity until two significant events interposed. First was the opportunity to acquire some years back a derelict and incomplete Model V Orchestrelle from the celebrated and sadly missed Mr Smith of Takeley in Essex, a tiny village some 4½ miles east of Bishops Stortford and today hounded by the swelling of Stansted Airport. Second was the offer in 1989 of a very non-original and much-modified Orchestrelle that had lost its case and been re-housed in an art deco-style rounded-edged plywood



Pictures taken during the construction of the Orchestrelle case showing the shape of the case-top swell-shutter during construction. At this stage the wooden ramp cams which 'accelerate' the rise of the shutter, have not been fitted nor has the external transverse web-brace.

and brass radiator-fret case. It resembled a Model V but there were some significant differences which led me to the conclusion that this was more than just a re-cased movement and that it was a 'bitzer' (for the uninitiated, a 'bitzer' is anything that's made of 'bits of this and bits of that'). Here, then, was a very good basis upon which to create an Orchestrelle with a difference using parts that I could modify as and if required.

A brief description of the instrument that I ended up putting together is needed here. First was the pre-requisite that the casework must be removable easily and rendered into a 'flat-pack' for storage. Remember that the Aeolian design was for heavy and enormous corniced box-assemblies that took up as much space as the organ itself. An extensive exercise with levels, plumb-bobs and tape-measure produced the smallest ground plan for the instrument that I put together from the pieces – essentially similar to a Model V but with some tonal repositionings. The case was given two slender dummy-pipe-front

towers at each side and a three-panel dummy-pipe-front central panel.

Aware that repairing a broken bellows strap is only facilitated by the dismantling of Aeolian's case, I arranged the pedals and their supports as an independent stand-alone structure attached to the organ base, not the case. Removal of the lower front panel thus gives immediate access to the pedal webbing straps. To this bottom panel I applied fresh thinking to the knee swell and knee *grand-jeu* levers. At the expense of a small amount of leverage I mounted them on stand-offs so that when not in use (such as when the lower panel is removed) they fold flat into the space between them – something quite impossible with the original.

Next to the top of the Orchestrelle case. In Aeolian's original, this is a one-piece assembly with a wire-gauze-covered central panel through which sound can fight its way to freedom. In my version, the one-piece construction is preserved but the majority of the forward portion is represented by a hinged solid-wood swell shutter and sound deflector. Connected to the mechanism for operating the main swell, this shutter can be opened and closed while playing, the fact that its opening creates a reflective surface out towards the player and his audience has proved more effective than an uncontrolled exit for the sound in a direct upwards direction.

This top swell is operated by a pivoted cross-shaft that extends the full width of the organ case inside the upperwork. This shaft carries weight-balanced cam-like arms

terminating in turned wheels of nylon rod, one at each end, which in turn engage with a rising cam fixed to the underside of the swell shutter. This allows maximum rise for the smallest possible incremental angle.

An interesting observation on Aeolian swell shutters is that the original wooden push-rod is a frequent cause of problems through wear and tear. It can also be noisy as it wears. I tried a number of alternatives, substituting chain, rigid wire and rigid rods of hardwood. Because of the geometry of the mechanism none of these was entirely satisfactory until I hit on using the simplest material – string! In the end, sealed braided Terylene cord was used of the type used to move the carriage in some photocopiers. This does not stretch, fray or break easily, is cheap and can be tied with a knot that is afterwards heat-sealed. The size chosen was 2 mm x 5 core and, being fully flexible, it is not 'geometry-sensitive' and is quite silent in operation.

I had observed that the lower three swell shutters each side of the spool-box were divided and while

mechanically interlocked with the rest of the shutters, formed an independent entity. The first thing I did was to remove the bottom treble shutter completely. The difference this made was astonishing since, with the rest of the swell closed, it was now possible to hear a melody on a quiet solo stop such as 'muted strings' when matched against horns and flute in the bass.

The solution to my problem then seemed best served by replacing this shutter but engineering it in such a manner that while it operated normally as one of the complement of swell shutters when worked using the right knee swell, it could also be operated independently and through an infinite range by a separate control.

This was achieved using a standard player-piano tempo lever fitted upside down to the top of the stop rail. Placed in this position it did not interfere with the curved keyboard fall when the fall was closed, yet protruded enough to be found without looking during performance. The degree to which the lever is moved to the right regulates the amount by which the



The DMLE operating lever protrudes inconspicuously beneath the key-fall between an 8ft and 4ft drawstop. It is easy to operate with the knuckles while operating the stops.

short lowest swell shutter is opened or closed. And when the knee swell is used, the system is overruled and the shutter works in harmony with the others.

The need for extreme sensitivity quickly established two things, first that the radial movement of the control lever must be restricted to no more than a lateral distance of just over an inch and second that to achieve this, the actual operating

quadrant (known in organ-building terms as a 'square') needed to be both rigid and to have 'negative balance' meaning that its mass would remain constant or neutral with the centroid regardless of position. As it was, this lever took the most time to design and make, representing the culmination of many experiments. Since rigidity was imperative to avoid any backlash, it was made of tapered channel-section 20 s.w.g. mild steel formed in two separate

parts and brazed about a central pivot tube. To balance what was thus essentially an inverted 'L'-shaped crank, a brass rod was brazed to the centre and this mounted a counterweight of lead. Freely pivoted, the lever would now rest in any radial position in which it was placed.

Next the lowest swell-shutter was disconnected and, having provided the three-strong set with a lever having $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch greater offset, a separate operating crank was formed in brass and fitted to the shutter. Tension coil springs were introduced where necessary not to assist movement but to eliminate the inevitable small amount of slack that builds into a non-precision system.

This shows the extended main swell lever with its counterweight, the DMLE operating crank and its pivot mechanism, the DMLE shutter and its principle of operation. Frictionless linkages of woven Terylene cord ensure silent operation. The main swell lever has been extended (upper centre) while the shutter link only embraces the upper and central of the Aeolian swell, the lower one comprising the DMLE shutter.



In use, the operator has the normal full-front Aeolian swell-shutters controllable from the knee swell. This mechanism is in tandem with the case-top baffle which deflects sound forwards when it is opened and accordingly acts as an additional swell shutter. This compares with the normal instrument where this top void is effectively always open. By closing it off, the 'shut-swell' condition is quieter than normal while the 'open-swell' is both louder and more focussed. When the swell is shut and a treble melody, chord or even a solitary note needs emphasis, operating the individually-operated lower swell produces a clear and enhanced sound. Fig. 3 shows the measured results. I call this *Dynamic Melody-Line Emphasis*.

On a 'solo' theme, DMLE appears to offer only a small measurable improvement – rather less than 6dB – but the difference is very apparent to the listener and this may be due to the fact that the unshaded sound is purer than that that escapes from behind swell shutters.

Obviously this additional control cannot easily be used when manually



Close-up of the shutter link showing the light-coloured wooden override that operates when the normal knee swell is moved. The coil-spring comprises 40 coils of 26 s.w.g. wire providing a rate of 1.75 ounces/inch closing force on the DMLE shutter.

playing the Orchestrelle. For those who might seek such a system for non-roll-playing, it should be possible to operate DMLE using an extra or divided knee-swell (perhaps part of the left knee board) or create a heel-operated lever similar to those used in the Mustel/Schiedmeyer instruments.

The overall sound of my Orchestrelle is no different from that of any other example. Where the improvement lies is in solo melody-line emphasis through a widely-variable spectrum. Instead of being a mundane roll-player, this is now a *musician's* instrument. It is an inspiration to create more hand-cut rolls and I am currently at work on some Orlando Gibbons, more Galuppi, the delightful little *Rondo* from Ignazio Spergher (1734-1808) and the little organ pieces by Alessandro and Benedetto Marcello.

An observation here is why so much early music, especially Italian,

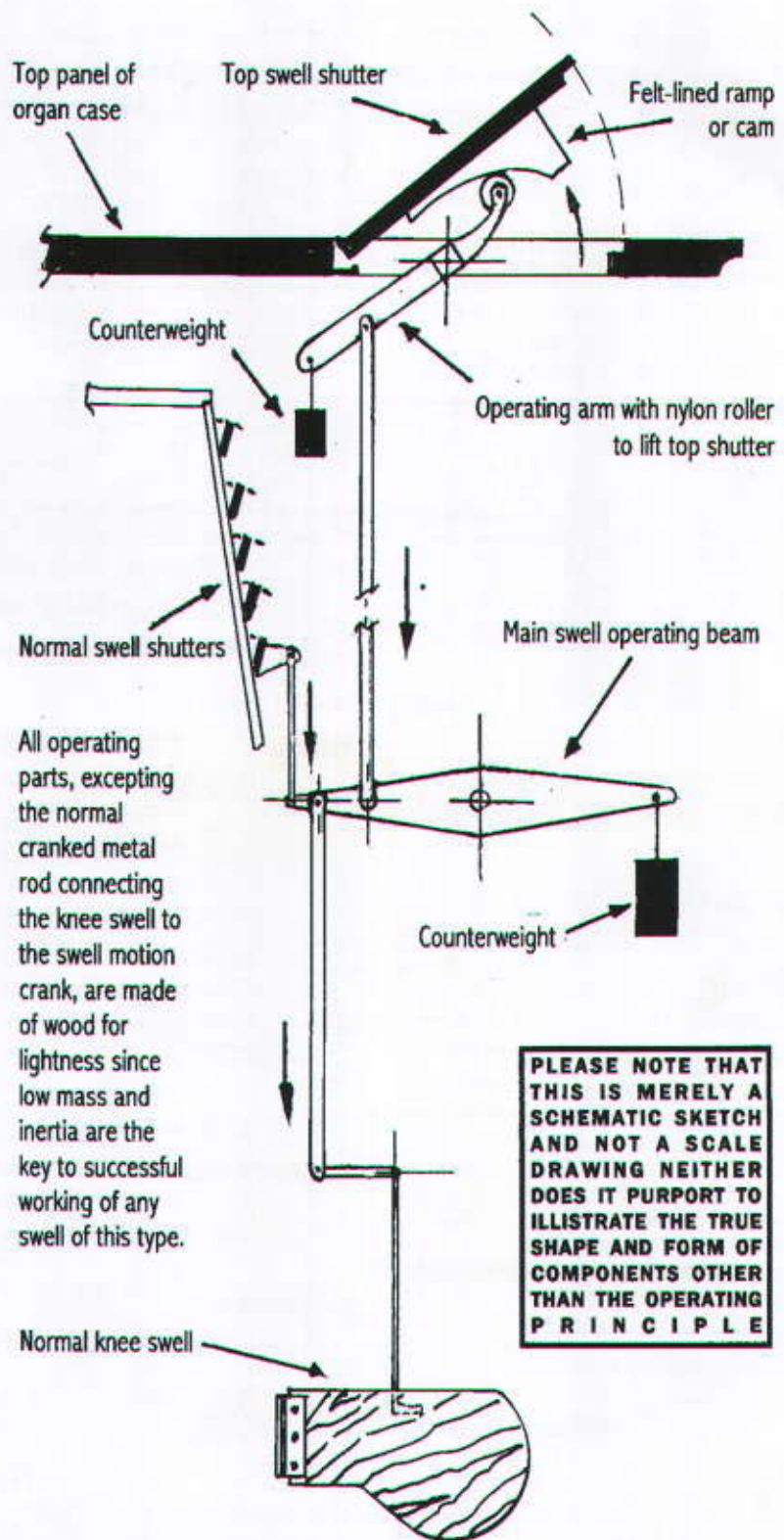


Fig. 4.

Sketch illustrating the method by which the Orchestrelle swell mechanism has been modified to incorporate an upper case or top swell shutter which is operated by a transverse shaft extending the full width of the case top. This raises the hinged and felted shutter from each side using cam levers fitted with nylon rollers that ride up a felt faced wooden ramp or cam affixed to the underside of the shutter. This top swell has to be of fairly substantial construction, hence the two operating cams that move it from each end. The mass is counterbalanced by a weight on each arm as shown. The main motion beam, centre, is also balanced so as to move easily.

Normal operation of swell shutters is achieved by knee-operated lever which effectively pushes this connecting rod down. The DMLE shutter is disconnected from this connecting rod but can still be moved by it

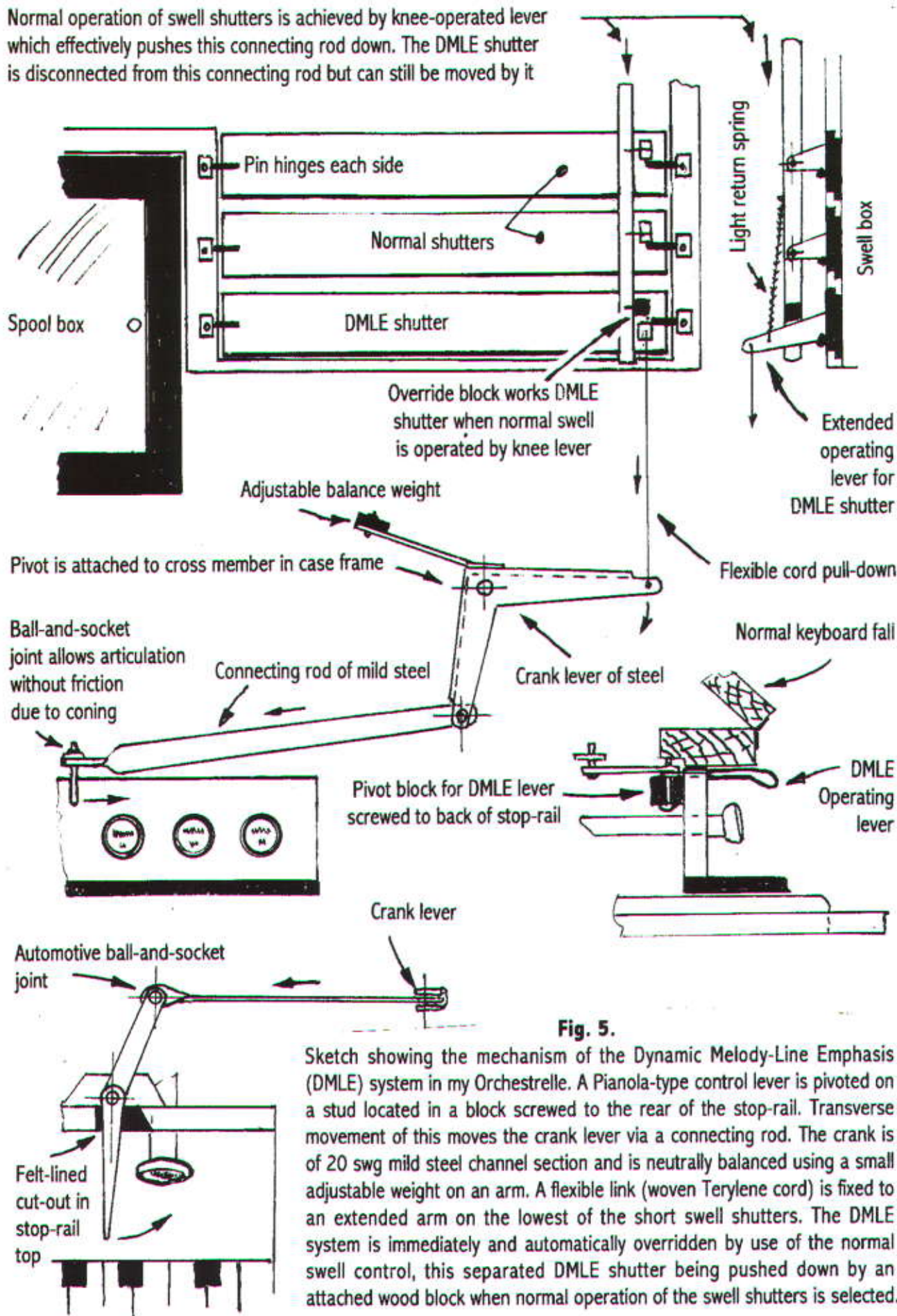


Fig. 5.

Sketch showing the mechanism of the Dynamic Melody-Line Emphasis (DMLE) system in my Orchestrelle. A Pianola-type control lever is pivoted on a stud located in a block screwed to the rear of the stop-rail. Transverse movement of this moves the crank lever via a connecting rod. The crank is of 20 swg mild steel channel section and is neutrally balanced using a small adjustable weight on an arm. A flexible link (woven Terylene cord) is fixed to an extended arm on the lowest of the short swell shutters. The DMLE system is immediately and automatically overridden by use of the normal swell control, this separated DMLE shutter being pushed down by an attached wood block when normal operation of the swell shutters is selected.

is so suited to the revised Orchestrelle. While some early Italian organs were not fully enclosed – the very effect I have tried to emulate in my instrument – it is also apparent that much could be done to influence thematic balance by voicing, hence the South German tendency towards registers comprising two ranks, one voiced normally, the other softly.

My 'home-made' Orchestrelle has been modest in cost. It was built using old, 'pre-used' and well-seasoned timber which I had had in store in the workshop for many years. The pedal cheeks and keyboard cheeks were cut from top-quality 2½-inch thick Honduras mahogany sourced from a friend's vast and heavy monoligneous sitting room mantelpiece and the deeply-

corniced top was formed in old pine using a hand-router and five different cutters. Other power tools comprised a hand jig-saw, a small bandsaw, an electric drill and a hand-sanding machine. Rubber pedal mats, webbing straps, leather and rubber cloth came from stock.

The expense of hardware – the best-quality solid brass locks, catches and hinges, brass roundhead and countersunk woodscrews and sundry hardware – came to a fraction under £50. Total expenditure on timber extra to that in stock (in the main quarter-inch resin-bonded plywood for panelling) amounted to £20.

By far the most expensive items were the brass woven decorative panels in the side doors which had to

be manufactured to special order by a specialist art-brass company: these two panels cost £120 the pair. Since they form an acoustic path they could not be dispensed with. Sundries such as red silk and the special matt white finishing paint, added a further £50 to the price bringing the total cost of making and finishing the case around the £240 mark. It also took two years of spare time.

Please do not think I am encouraging you to cut about and alter your original instruments: that is the sign of the vandal and, I hope, there are none in our midst! But if you are moved to acquire a derelict instrument at any time, then rather than slavishly attempt to 'copy' an original that isn't there, experiment. I have found it very rewarding!

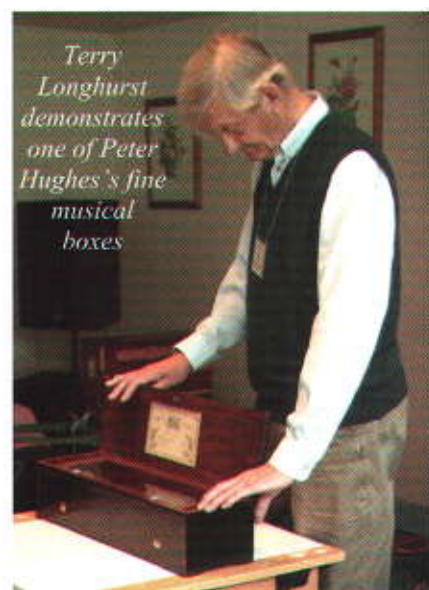


How the DMLE operating lever is installed in the top of the stop rail. It is located in a pivot block, seen as the light-coloured piece, screwed to the back of the stop-rail and slides from side to side in a felt-lined cut-out.

The Society's Spring Meeting 2014 **'Twas Devon, Glorious Devon**

Sixty-one members and guests attended the Society's Spring Meeting held in Devon, where the emphasis of the programme was very much on the enjoyment of music. The value of the Society as a milieu for people to share their interest in mechanical music was evident by the attendance of members from Switzerland, Sweden and Scotland, visitors from Japan and Germany, and members closer to home. The international flavour was further enhanced by the inclusion in the programme of an Indian tenor!

For his first meeting, new organiser Bernard Weekes, with the local assistance of Robert Hough and several willing volunteers, had arranged an entertainment-packed weekend. This ranged from the fun presentation delivered on Friday afternoon by Nicholas Simons, of some of the more ridiculous mechanical music items on the internet, to Saturday's sublime recital of excerpts from opera and nineteenth-century popular music.



Terry Longhurst demonstrates one of Peter Hughes's fine musical boxes



Suzanne Manuell and Anando Mukerjee conclude a love duet at Aeolian Court

Photo: Peter Ruf

on the progress of John Moorhouse's Fabergé-style automaton egg (Friday afternoon), and Thomas Jansen's restoration of Robert Hough's Welte Vorsetzer (Saturday morning.)

It was also a first for member Peter Hughes, attending his first national meeting having been a member for over 40 years. Those not attending missed a treat when, on Saturday morning, Terry Longhurst demonstrated four of Peter's cylinder musical boxes, illustrating the piano-forte effect. These were: a Lecoultré Frères two-comb box playing four airs; a rare chevron-shaped comb Lecoultré box; a long and short pin two-per-turn Lecoultré-Grainger box, and a mandolin box by an unknown maker. This latter had an unusual winding lever (it was noted that many years ago the late Robert

Burnett had a similar box, attributed on the tune-sheet to Golay-Leresche, and signed on the bedplate *L Kimmering*). The 15" cylinder had 145 forte and 76 piano teeth! Terry observed that the arranger had lots of scope and noted that the mandolin effect was achieved by up to eight teeth tuned to the same note. The quality of the boxes and the exquisite music they produced evoked in some of us the meetings of over thirty years ago, and inspired the admiration (not to mention envy) of the present audience.

This was followed by Thomas Jansen's presentation on his restoration of the *Vorsetzer*, evidence of his passion for all things Welte. He tantalisingly hinted in his accomplished delivery that he had a lot more to offer on the subject!



Some of Robert Hough's smaller instruments

In complete contrast Gordon Bartlet followed with a light-hearted look at what he describes as 'the fourth stage of mechanical music: people making their own machines.' (See article by Arthur Ord-Hume in the Spring edition of *The Music Box* for the other three.) Interested in the challenge posed (to offer an entry level to new collectors of mechanical instruments), Gordon has the answer: do it yourself. His nonchalance belied his ingenuity as he described vandalising the reeds of a piano accordion, coupled with Amorette discs and 1/12 scale dolls-house figures to produce his version of a Station Box, which he calls *Le Palais de Danse*. Another, titled *The Dancing Class*, is programmed by a paper roll. 'Forty Second Street' had the toes tapping, while 'If you knew Susie' led to the MBSGB equivalent of karaoke. More singalong accompanied his final contribution: a new barrel he had pinned for his Faventia barrel piano, which he described as a tribute to Marie Lloyd.

Delicious though Jackie Hough's home-made scones and cream tea were, the highlight of Saturday afternoon was another first for the Society: a programme of entertainment delivered by

two regular, world class performers from The Devon Opera, in Robert's Music Room at 'Aeolian Court.' The chemistry between the singers resulted in a lively yet moving rendition of music chosen from the repertoire of mechanical instruments in Robert's collection. This totally captivated the audience, including sceptics who beforehand had thought that opera was not their scene!

Back at the hotel there was more activity in the form of a 'bring and show', where a surprising number of members had brought something along, albeit much of a relatively frivolous nature. Among the more serious contributors were Peter Howard with his own creation of a musical automaton, Elisabeth Hoodless with a small disc musical box, and John Farmer with his

delightful Stuber 26-note hand-cranked organ.

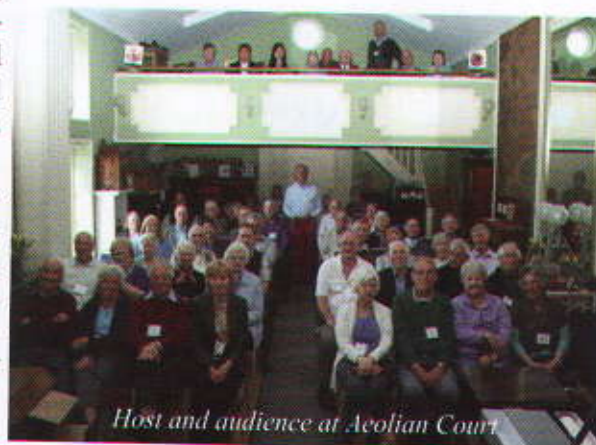
On Saturday evening the entertainment consisted of more light-hearted music, as eight members each with a Thuringer Konzertina were mustered to give a jovial, if brief, musical interlude. This was in contrast to Friday evening's short presentation by Saki Nakazato and Deiki Arai, about a project they are involved in to set up a museum of mechanical music in Singapore, about which we hope to hear more in due course.

Sunday morning was the occasion of yet another first, the first time the Houghs have entertained the same group back-to-back on consecutive days, as we enjoyed a tour of Robert's fine collection before Jackie's home-produced two-course sit-down lunch.

Not a fan of either instrument, I felt I could be converted after hearing 'The Skaters' Waltz' on Robert's barrel piano, and 'Bring on the Motley' from *Il Pagliaccio* on the Racca Piano Melodico, whereas the Overture from *Zampa* on the Aeolian Pipe Organ was alone worth the visit! We also got to hear the impressive results of Thomas Jansen's labours, executed by the Welte Vorsetzer on a Bechstein piano.

In summing up his collecting history at the conclusion of the tour, Robert expressed the sentiments of most members. As he observed, his collection demonstrates the value of membership of our Society. Over the years he has received willing help and friendly advice from collectors he has met and networked with through MBSGB. I would add a further benefit of membership this weekend has demonstrated: the opportunities it affords to enjoy other members' instruments coupled with the experience of congenial company of fellow enthusiasts.

Alison Biden



Host and audience at Aeolian Court

News from Other Societies

Compiled by Alison Biden & Nicholas Simons

**Mechanical Music, Vol 60, No.1,
January/February, 2014**

(See also www.mbsi.org)

This issue was put together by a 'transition team', following the change in Editor. There is a short article about a musical picture clock, referred to in Arthur W J G Ord-Hume's book, *The Musical Clock*, and now in the collection of an MBSI member. Bob Caletti gives some useful advice in 'Restoration Basics,' referring to a 15½" Regina which he 'brings back to life.' Eleven pages are dedicated to the Equitable Manufacturing Company and its Criterion trade stimulator, submitted by Steve Boehck. Lavishly illustrated, it contains material about the company and its rare and fascinating product. The enterprising Gustav Brachhausen, founder of Regina, features in the next article, 'A Shocking Experience?' Reminding the reader of Brachhausen's patent for a self-changing machine and the march this allowed Regina to steal on the market, Steve Boehck then directs the spotlight on a more dubious device patented by Brachhausen: one to apply a faradic current to the listener's hands when he grasped two electrodes connected to the box. Apparently Brachhausen believed this would intensify the pleasurable experience of the music! Steve then speculates as to how Brachhausen came up with the idea. Still on the subject of 15½" Regina changers, Bob Caletti takes us through how to make a replacement crest for the cabinet. Thirteen pages of various chapter reports bring us to the regular feature, 'The Hunt,' this time with a contribution from Dave Corkrum. He describes how he was first smitten by an unaffordable 20¾" Regina in a small jewellery shop (not too dissimilar from my own initiation into the world of musical boxes.) His desire to own such an instrument was finally realised when he obtained a 20¾" Reginaphone thirty years later.

**Mechanical Music, Vol 60, No.2,
March/April, 2014**

(See also www.mbsi.org)

Various officers' messages allude to the recent change in Editor, and the

success in producing a magazine from scratch at short notice. Membership 'Chair' Ardis Prescott has been off on her travels again – this time visiting members in New Zealand. Charles Wilson's nine-page article describes how he made a new comb for a 15" Polyphon/Regina. Another ten tune sheets are examined by Tim Reed, bringing the total since Anthony Bulleid began this project up to 510. Another technical article by Mike Lund, describes the 'resurrection' (now, is that restoration or repair?) of an original Wurlitzer Style B Automatic Harp. The reader can scan a couple of QR codes with a Smart phone, to be directed to web pages containing videos of Michael's harp in action. The article is supplemented by reprinted original Wurlitzer publicity material. We then have an account of MBSI South East Chapter's public exhibition of mechanical music instruments last December in a community known as The Villages (Florida). This is followed by several Chapter reports. Mary Grace contributes to the occasional series 'The Hunt', with an account of her acquisition of a Karl Griesbaum singing bird box. Sadly, another occasional series, In Memoriam, carries tributes to no fewer than five late MBSI members.

**AMICA Bulletin, Vol 51, No 1
Jan/Feb 2014**

(see also www.amica.org)

This edition is the first to have been produced by AMICA's new Editor, Glenn Thomas, and the first few pages of Officers' messages welcome him to the position. After a preview of the AMICA convention to be held in Fresno, the magazine gets down to serious business with a profile by Matthew Jaro of retiring Editor, Terry Smythe. Terry became instantly interested in mechanical music in the 1960s when he heard a friend's player piano, and rapidly started a collection. He now has a piano roll scanning project on the go, and scans original literature to go on the AMICA online research library. This is followed by an intriguing item about an award-winning piece of art by Cuban-American artist Maria Elena Gonzalez. Noticing that

some birch bark resembled a piano roll, Maria Elena took a rubbing of it, had it copied and cut, then played on a piano ... 'The phrasing, polyphony, and rhythms seem deliberately composed and modern ... [it] reminds us of the inherent logic that exists in all of nature's patterns.' Julian Dyer writes a lengthy item about the standard 88 note roll scale, adopted at a convention in Buffalo in 1908. James Wesley Gearhart and J Wesley Tilton, Fresno's first Ragtime publishers, are the subject of the next article by Stephen Kent Goodman. There then follow four pages on the Italian SISAR project, first featured in *L'Antico Organetto*, magazine of the Italian Society (AAMMI), in December 2009. It is good to see at last an article in English about this award-winning project. A tribute to the late Blaine N Thomas and five Chapter reports complete this issue.

The Key Frame (Issue KF1-14)

(See also www.fops.org)

This issue starts with an important announcement that a rare Gavioli Concert Symphonique 90 key organ has been imported by the Gavioli Organ Trust. We look forward to this, and other organs owned by the Trust, being restored and made available to enthusiasts.

The late Herbert Slack's 87 key Gavioli, for many years stored at the Crich Tramway museum, is now on the road again under the stewardship, but not ownership, of the Howard brothers of Cromford. A detailed article shows recent restoration and 'lorrying' followed by reports of the various trips made during 2013.

Many colour pictures adorn a report of the MBSI convention focussing on larger machines in the Krughoff, Sanfillipo and Gilson collections. Orchestrion lovers can do no better than visit these collections.

There are obituaries for two major names in mechanical music. Firstly Marcel van Boxtel, a professional photographer who had a keen musical ear and a skill in arranging music for organs. He trained under Carl Frei and throughout his life supplied music to many French and German organs.

Franz Oeherlein was well known to British organ grinders some years ago due to his regular visits with his unique automaton organs. He would make small batches of automata and organs, always demonstrating his abilities as a musician and engineer.

Organ Grinders News, No 87, Winter 2013

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

There is a comprehensive obituary for Boz Oram, well known among the organ loving fraternity, who died at the unfairly early age of 56. Also remembered is Yvonne Gosling, the BOGA Members' Representative for some time.

The Enthusiasts Day at Cotton and the Milton Keynes organ festival are both reported, complete with a multitude of colour photos.

Organ Grinders News, No 88, Spring 2014

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

This issue includes a major report of the recent 'self build' organ day at Milton Keynes Museum. John Smith has pioneered the small self-build organ market, producing plans and guidance for newcomers, and here he provided a workshop to assist those using MIDI for music origination.

Elsewhere are reports on the renovation of two small organs and also the export of an organ built by MBSGB member Ian Alderman over 20 years ago.

Non-English journals

Het Pierement – January 2014

(See also www.draaiorgel.org)

A lengthy article features De Efteling, an amusement park in the Netherlands. Open all year round, it attracts millions of visitors, and introduces the public to several organs (or vice versa), generating a lot of interest. The article focuses on the well-known illustrator of fairy tales, Anton Pieck, who was involved in the design of the park, and then some of the park's attractions. This is followed by the second part of '50 years ago in Amsterdam' featuring many street organs which were well-known then. A touch of glamour in the next article: the stunningly attractive Lesley

Kraaijeveld shares the secrets of how she brings smiles to the grumpiest faces, and shares her enthusiasm for organs with the public. Eschewing traditional Dutch costume, she dresses like a poster (though judging from the photos, more like a 'Strictly' contestant!) The article goes on to describe how she developed her love for organ music. The regular series 'From the rediscovered archive' contains a number of nostalgic photos. There is another article about the firm 'Symphonia' which made music rolls, and Eugène de Roy. Several pages of KDV business are followed by the winter schedule for the Haarlem Organ museum. More an announcement than an account, we are informed of the restoration of a 67-note Joseph Bursens orchestrion – and very splendid it looks too! There's news from the Speelklok museum, announcing a new space for the double Ruth and Decap organs. Composer Ary Barroso is the subject of a biography by Alois Broeke. 'Brief news' includes an obituary to Boz Oram, and a report of the rededication of the grave of Theophile Mortier and Joanna Vermeulen. This ceremony was attended by members of the Mechanical Organ Owners Society, and marked the start of the last trip to be arranged by Boz Oram before his death. There is also a report on an organ festival in Amsterdam.

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 1st Quarter, 2014

(See also www.aaimm.org)

Many pages of this edition are devoted to the Society's activities since the 2013 AGM in anticipation of the 2014 meeting, its projects being testimony to this Society's energy. The venue for the 2014 AGM is Mirecourt, which ties in neatly with the first article by Jean Nimal, on the discovery of a German serinette, recalling those from Mirecourt as it does. The German serinette may well have been a simplified copy of the Mirecourt serinette, the latter not changing in 200 years. This is attributed to the the Mirecourt serinette's attaining such perfection within a short time that it could not be improved upon. However, copies evolved elsewhere. Further

research leads the author to believe that this German serinette was made in the Bruder workshops in Waldkirch. This article can be followed on the internet, where it is supplemented by video recordings of the instrument. There follow reports of six festivals, four in Central Europe. Jerome Thibouville-Lamy is the subject of an item by Jean-Luc Alexandre, reprising the Mirecourt theme, as this is where Thibouville-Lamy's business enterprises began. In a four page article, "Un Bruno" chez Mino, Marcel Mino, *roi du piano*, Philippe Beau writes about the business affairs of Jean-Marie Brun – a taster for a more comprehensive account in a book on the subject published by the author. The enterprising Brun would buy barrel pianos from other manufacturers – Amelotti in Nice was a favourite supplier – customise and then resell them under his own label. This article was prompted by the acquisition by his friend Marcel Mino, of just such an instrument, which he then goes on to describe. In an attractive 'belle époque' case, it used to reside in a restaurant in Saone-et-Loire, which it no doubt served well with its ten dance tunes. Identifying it as a true 'Brunophone' required some skill on the part of M Mino, as well as restoring it to good playing order.

After further reports of two more festivals, there is an account of AAIMM's Autumn trip to Anvers, a significant element of which comprised the Decap family and their instruments. Another article with video illustration on the internet describes the collecting habits of the late Philippe Rouillé, whose interest in musical boxes was first piqued by finding one in an English junk shop. Unlike those collectors whose primary interest is in the mechanical nature of the instrument, Philippe was attracted by the musical possibilities of those he collected.

Das Mechanische Musik-instrument (Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musik-instrumente), December, 2013

www.musica-mechanica.de
In the first article, which is an elaboration of a lecture given by the author, Johann Gebert writes about the

restoration of a Limoniere organ – which turned out not to be a Limonaire, but a Mortier dance organ. Dr Cornelia Oelwein contributes an article about court mechanic Joseph Gallmayr (117-1790) and his automat, which is followed by one about the Vienna branch of Ludwig Hupfeld's company. Adolf Buff-Hedinger is the subject of the next item, described as being 'in the shadow of Hupfeld, Popper and Losche'. His works occupied for just under ten years, the former premises of Paul Erlich's organette factory in Leipzig. We are then treated to a three pages biography of Paul de Wit, 1852 – 1925, who was a publisher and collector of historical musical instruments, which he ensured were kept in good playing order. More biographical material follows in the next article, where the spotlight is on Richard and Alfred Bruder, of the renowned Bruder organ building family from Waldkirch. Under the title New Technology there is an article from the Italian Society AMMI describing a scanner for pinned barrels. This has been published in English in *The Music Box*, Vol 24, No 5, Spring 2010, and complements the item in this current issue about the SISAR project. The Shanghai Gallery of Antique Music [sic] Box and Mechanical Works is the subject of 'Museums and Collections.' A number of notices, reports of events and short 'news' type items follow, with Waldkirch featuring prominently for one reason or another, before the contents finish with the usual reviews and advertisements.

L'antico Organetto (Associazione Musica Meccanica Italiana), December, 2013

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

The first item in this issue is about a 25-key barrel organ with wooden pipes, made by Manfrone, and another Manfrone instrument belonging to some Swiss friends. In 'Cavezzo and the Edo Theatre' Chiara Fattori writes about a puppet theatre created in 2008, which has as a musical accompaniment a 29 note, card programmed Mascagni organ. Original music has been

composed for this instrument, and appropriately, one of the plays in the theatre's repertoire is called 'Ludovico's Journey', the Ludovico in question being Ludovico Gavioli, native of Cavezzo. There is a lengthy report of a concert held on 28th September 2013 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Verdi, which included music produced on automatic instruments. Next is a brief item about Edison Long-Playing Records. The following feature is about the Rome Maker Faire, at which the SISAR project won a couple of awards. Finally, Manuela Cesana writes about the European trip of a group of Italian enthusiasts, which included a visit to England.

Newsletter from Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde, December 2013 (See also www.sfmm.ch)

President of the Swiss Society, Andre Ginesta, writes about the automaton which inspired the Brian Selznick book, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, which itself inspired the Martin Scorsese film, *Hugo*. Mr Ginesta took advantage of his trip to the MBSI convention in Chicago last year to make a detour to see this automaton. 25-year anniversaries seem to be the order of the day: first the 25th birthday of a rally in Laufenburg, followed by the 25th anniversary of one in Zurzach. Still on the theme of rallies, or festivals, there is an report on the 18th International Festival in Thun which took place last Summer. Something a little different: four pages from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* nr 247 of 25th October, 2012, about street organ players in Mexico. The instruments were imported from Germany in the twentieth century, and are now at home in Mexico. Amongst the makers represented are Wagner Lieven, Bacigalupo and Frati. Another item previously published elsewhere, is the article from the *New York Times* of 2nd July, 2012 speculating on whether Puccini was inspired by a musical box when writing his opera *Turandot*. A report on an organ gathering in Keszthely in 2013 covers five pages, followed by a brief item about a Station box in Le Noirmont. An article by

Raphael Lüthi a year ago about Christmas tree stands prompted another contributed by members of the Society. The remainder of the contents is devoted to a report on the Swiss Society's trip to the Black Forest in 2013.

Nieuwsbrief from MechaMusica (Belgian Society) January, 2014 (See also www.mechamusica.be)

For once the reviewing of this magazine was rendered easier than usual because I had actually been present at some of the events described! This did not apply to the report on the Belgian Society's trip to Northern France in October 2013, although I recognised one of its destinations in Lille. There is also a reference to Herzele where 200-300 people regularly turn up to dance to Mortier organs. This is followed by an account of the rededication of the Théophile Mortier grave, mentioned elsewhere. The Mortier organ De Klok was on site at the cemetery, which links nicely with the new article about the composition of a piece for this organ called *Highland Cathedral*, written by two German composers for the occasion of some Highland Games organised in Germany in 1982. Another sortie into France, this time by Gilbert Duerinck, leads to the author offering some tips for travelling in Burgundy. Specifically he writes about the Musée de l'Aventure de Son in St Frageau, which has about 20 small automatic instruments as well as phonographs, early televisions and radios, a pianola, Limonaire organ and Graphophone, and the Paul Bocuse collection, housed in the Abbaye de Collonges near Villefranche sur Soane, comprising some impressive organs. Next we have a report on the Voer Family's open day – an annual tradition where they display their collection of German fair organs at Ulvenhout, near Breda. This family has been building this collection since 1910, and it is unique for a Dutch collection to have so many German-built organs. The reader is then advised of an event to take place in the Speelklok Museum in March, where the Roaring Twenties will be the theme.

Restoration Matters!

15 – Making Small Pressure Bellows

By Nicholas Simons

This article describes how to make small pressure bellows of the type used in small organs where the air is at pressure rather than vacuum. The parts shown are from a J. Thibouville-Lamy 24 key Organina which is a book playing reed organ. This was bought some years ago from a MBSGB auction but needed a complete rebuild including the replacement of many parts. There are four pumping bellows and a

make a small bellows about 6 inches long.

Fig 1 shows the bellows boards already hinged. It is important to sit the hinge on a thin packer to ensure that when the two boards are closed there is sufficient gap between them to accommodate the folded stiffeners and leather. The bellows span should now be ascertained. It should be such that the bellows doesn't approach too closely its fully

pressure once glued to the leather. Try to use a good quality manila card rather than the widely available white card which is prone to delaminate.

Figs 3 and 4 show the six stiffeners laid out on the leather and also as they would nest when the bellows is closed. Suitable gaps must be left between the edges to allow the leather to fold and also the



Fig. 1

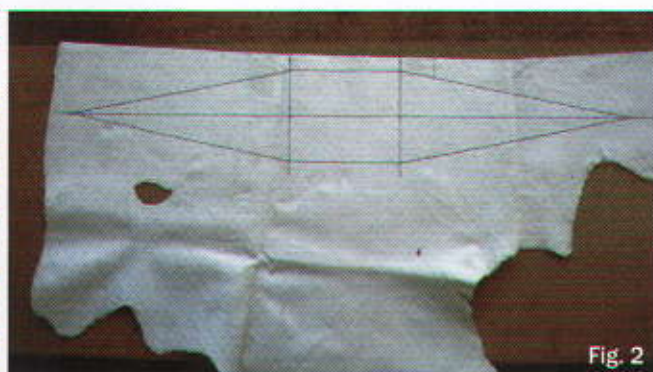


Fig. 2

single reservoir on the underside, all of which are made in the same way. Simple suction bellows can comprise just the two hinged boards covered with thin rubber cloth. With a pressure bellows, however, the rubber cloth or leather covering would blow out when the bellows closes. For this reason, pressure bellows must be made with a set of card stiffeners carefully designed to allow the bellows to operate easily through its full range of movement whilst preventing any 'panting' of unsupported areas of leather. The techniques vary depending on the size of the bellows to be made, with large supply bellows used in orchestrions and pipe organs often using very thin plywood as stiffeners. The exact sizes of the stiffener elements will also vary according to the thickness of covering used. Here, I show how to

open and fully closed positions when going through its travel.

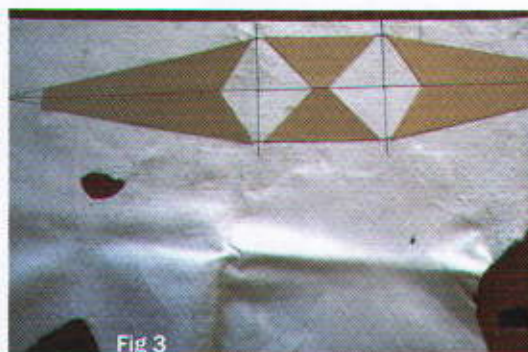


Fig. 3

Fig 2 shows the leather laid out with the full span across the centre and the right-angle triangles having a hypotenuse equal to the bellows board length. One can imagine this shape wrapped around the fully open bellows. The most important job is to design and accurately cut the stiffeners. Extreme accuracy is required here otherwise the bellows will not operate freely. The card used does not need to be too thick, just enough to withstand the internal

stiffeners must not overlap. The exact shape of stiffeners for different size bellows and thickness of leather or rubbercloth is something one learns from experience. Try to imagine how the various

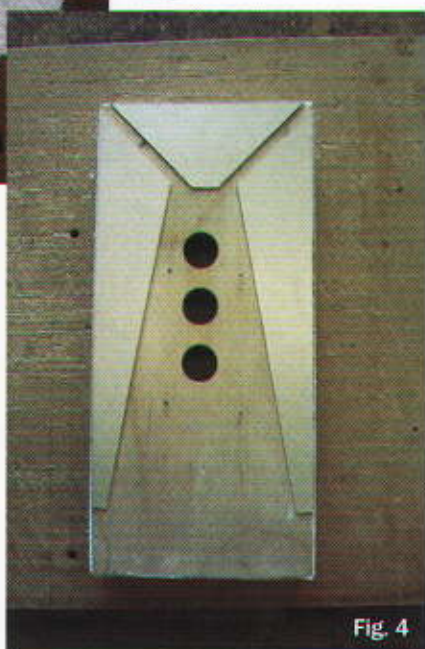


Fig. 4

parts move relative to each other as the bellows closes.

It is important that the edges of the stiffeners are prevented from tearing away from the leather. This is an area often forgotten by beginners, the result being loose and bent stiffeners inside the bellows. The stiffeners are first glued down onto the leather with hot glue and

shows the first job of gluing along the open end. This is standard practice for all types of bellows. Again, only use hot glue. Once set to the gel state, which will only take a few minutes, turn on to its side and cover one side at a time, as shown in Fig 8. Make sure you do not get any glue on the folding edge between the stiffener and the bellows board, but

the complete bellows is glued to the base board, but in other bellows you may need to fit this valve first.

Fig 9 shows the completed bellows. There is something satisfying about making a set of leather bellows and exercising them whilst watching the stiffeners move smoothly in and out. Ah well, it keeps me out of the pub!

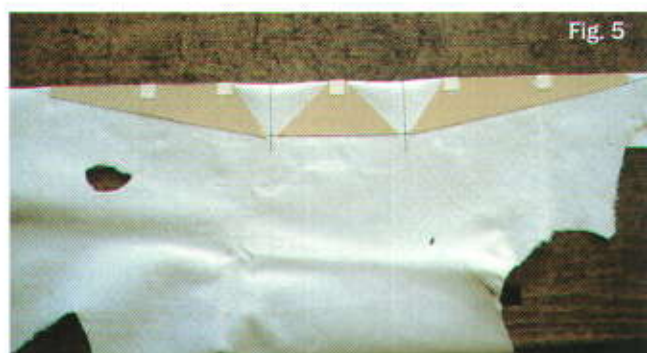


Fig. 5

weighted until set. The stiffeners are then folded back on themselves, as if the bellows was closed, and small lengths of thin leather are glued as shown in Figs 5 and 6, ensuring that this piece is pushed between the stiffeners so it adheres to the back face of the main leather. In larger bellows, cross-over tapes are used but the method shown here is acceptable for small bellows.

Once you are happy that the leather and stiffeners are glued and free to move at all joints it is time to cover the bellows boards. Fig 7

do make sure the entire width of the board edge is glued. Remember that care and accuracy are required. Finally, glue the leather tails to the back of the hinge and trim all the way round. On this bellows the internal flap valve can be fitted after covering, before



Fig. 6



Fig. 8



Fig. 7



Fig. 9

THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN

Précis Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 1st June 2013 at Roade, Northamptonshire.

Chair of the Meeting: The President/Chairman, Arthur Cunliffe, having resigned, former President Christopher Proudfoot was eventually elected to take the Chair of the Meeting. A total of 70 Officers and Members were present.

Apologies for Absence. 4 Officers & 16 members sent their apologies.

Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting. The 2012 AGM Minutes, with one minor correction, were approved; there were no Matters Arising.

President's Report: In view of the President/Chairman's earlier resignation, a report was not taken.

Secretarial & Officer Reports. Reports were received and accepted from the following:

Subscriptions Secretary, Membership Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Meetings Secretary;

Treasurer: although the Treasurer had resigned immediately prior to the AGM, a report was presented; however, the 2012 Accounts were referred back to the incoming Executive Committee for further examination and clarification before acceptance on behalf of the AGM.

Reports were then received and accepted from other Officers: Editors, Archivist, Auction Organiser, Advertising Secretary, Web Master, Registrar and Authorised Sub-Committees and Working Parties.

Propositions under Bye Laws Article 1 Section 4: One Proposition had been received but not in accordance with Article 1 Section 4 and so was not considered. Its sponsor will re-submit next year.

Election of Society Officers for the Forthcoming Year.

Election of Hon. President/Chairman: Notwithstanding the circumstances leading to this Election, the Meeting regrettably but unanimously agreed that Postal and E-mail votes sent in by members prior to the meeting should not be counted.

Paul Bellamy having withdrawn, three rounds of voting by members present in the room for the two remaining candidates produced an inconclusive result: 25 votes each for Alison Biden and John Phillips with 13 Abstentions; the Chairman declined to exercise a casting vote. The result was decided when John Phillips offered the Office to, and it was accepted by, Alison Biden.

Election of Hon. Joint Vice-president: As Ted Brown had withdrawn as a candidate for this Office, John Phillips was elected to the Office of Vice-president unopposed.

Election of Committee Members: The following were appointed to serve as Officers of the Society for the year 2013-2014 in the Appointments shown below:

Appointments Filled:

Joint Vice-President [US]	Robert Yates	Archivist	Alison Biden
Membership Secretary	Kevin McElhone	Advertising secretary	Ted Brown
Meetings Secretary	Daphne Ladell	Registrar	Arthur Cunliffe
Correspondence Secretary	John Ward	Joint Editors	David & Lesley Evans
	Member without Portfolio	Bernard Weekes	

Appointments Unfilled: Treasurer; Subscriptions Secretary; Webmaster; Auction Organiser.

The Meeting indicated that these Appointments should be made by the incoming Executive Committee as soon as it was able to do so.

After Meeting Note: The Executive subsequently co-opted the following to fill some of the vacant appointments:

John Farmer as Treasurer and Subscriptions Secretary; John Ward as Auction Organiser.

Set Level of Subscriptions/Fees for 2014: Membership Fees for 2014 were agreed as follows:

Single Member - £24.00; Joint Membership - £30.00; Life Member - £Nil.

Arthur Cunliffe: The meeting voted unanimously and with acclaim a sincere vote of thanks to Arthur Cunliffe for his years of service to the Society as President/Chairman.

Banking Mandates: All necessary changes to the banking Mandates were approved; all accounts to remain with the National Westminster Bank.

Date and Venue for 2014 AGM - Saturday 7th June 2014 at 11 a.m. in The Village Hall, Roade, Northamptonshire.

Any Other Business:

- The Executive Committee was requested: to consider ways and means of attracting younger age groups into the Society; to be good guardians of the Society's finances; consider allowing ordinary members to sit in on Committee Meetings; and consider ways of disposing surplus RACCA Piano souvenirs.
- Alan Wyatt expressed a vote of thanks and appreciation to the Officers of the Society: in particular, he singled out Arthur Cunliffe for his many years of service, Daphne Ladell for the marvellous meetings she arranged and to Christopher Proudfoot for the manner in which he had conducted a difficult meeting; the meeting acknowledged and supported his vote of thanks with acclaim.
- The late Mr Ken Stroud Bequest** - MBSGB now had legal entitlement to the items bequeathed to the Society; they were in the safe storage and the Committee will consider ways and means of dealing with them;
- Temporary arrangements were approved to manage AGM Auction Finances;
- Paul Bellamy.** A vote of appreciation together with the award of Life Membership in recognition of his huge contribution to the Society and to the Mechanical Music interest generally, was approved with acclaim.
- Members were asked when renewing their membership for 2014 to indicate their willingness to have their contact details used for legitimate Society business other than Subscription renewal and Journal posting; and the new President thanked all who helped in the organizing of the day, particularly Clive Houghton for all the unseen work that he did behind the scenes.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.08 p.m.

Hubert William Watts ("Joe") 1929 – 2013

Well-known and well-loved member, Joe Watts, passed away at the end of last year. We are indebted to Ian Alderman for this intimate 'In Memoriam.' Ian's reflections on his many years of friendship with Joe portray a lifestyle from another age – somewhat in keeping with Joe's collected items! Their unlikely friendship is but a single example of the many that have been forged over the years by a shared interest in mechanical music.

Joe, the farmer from Somerset, died on December 27th, 2013. His friends in the musical box world will remember a gruff, outspoken old man, who spoke with speech laced with dialect, the only proper words to describe his way of life. [Some of us remember him as a lovely 'old boy', with a twinkle in his eye!]

Joe was a farmer first and last, and I remember him as much in the open fields as when he was sharing his treasures in the Parlour. He had always collected: the odd and the curious. He had an eye for the ingenious and the beautiful. And like many of us, he collected to preserve, without necessarily having the means to restore. He showed me once a venerable Seraphine that could well have dated from the reign of William IV. Its broad treads invited music, but its damp keyboard resisted all touch. Who knows, its reeds may well have been intact. And there was the large barrel organ. "It's all there!" Joe maintained. And indeed it was. Flight and Robson, rescued from a barn. Each of its hundreds of pipes dismantled by the damp. And the carillon clock, 23 bells, marquetry case, just needed fixing.

We first met Joe when we were on some trip in Holland. We were in Dutch Dance Hall, and a great organ was playing, and Joe and his wife Beryl were waltzing round like youngsters. The next time we saw each other we were competing for a barrel organ in a country house sale. Neither of us successful there. And then at Lawrence's [an auction house in SW England] we met over a



Joe (and Judy) on his tractor

strange little barrel piano. We left it. Too far gone. Joe bought it. And the next thing it was delivered to our workshop, where Roy (Davis) restored it. A strange little upside-down Hicks piano. So then we were invited to Sunday lunches at the farm. Beryl roasted beef – only their own would do. Apple pie – again, their own fruit. And cream, thick from their dairy herd.

And Joe would harness the pony, and we would ride out in the trap to the outlying fields, using the old drove roads. "Not for they townies; these are work-roads!" Disgorged into the fields, (which we discovered quaked as you trod, since they floated on the peat bogs, and we knew that the Somerset Levels were truly the Isle of Avalon), we were set to counting sheep. Counting sheep

is very difficult if you're not a farmer. One missing meant an inspection of the dykes, and a possible hauling-out. Better count again.

And then there was the adventure of milking time. The herd was pastured a mile or so from the dairy. From medieval times the cows had trod this route. "We always have. We were here first!" I would take my stick, as instructed, and clump along behind the cows. Only now the route was the main Glastonbury to Wells road. The cows were good; they walked on the left. Thus holiday makers from industrial parts got snap-shots of scenes from country life.

But after the day's work was done, Joe would share his real treasures. He liked to sit in the front parlour to listen to his musical boxes. A Barcarolle from a forgotten Auber opera, the ballet music from *Robert le Diable*. And we would examine the silk pictures, and so many other treasures.

Joe continued to farm after Beryl died, and his daughter Kathleen took over the main work, with dictatorial suggestions from her father. To the end he maintained his routine at bed time of at first playing his favourite tune on the organette, *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*, and then quietly drifting off to sleep to the strains of the Polyphon performing the Overture to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Joe was a staunch friend and an amusing companion. He was buried, with his wife, in the churchyard of St. Lawrence, Weston-sub-Mendip, on 10th January, 2014.

WEB SITE NEWS

We now have a Members Only section of our web site; this is to convey important and urgent information to you. It also contains information, which may be of interest to members about the society. We hope that it will soon contain a message board on which all members can contribute with information, or maybe offer an item for sale, or one that is wanted.

Please check this page regularly for notices, particularly close to a meeting or the Annual General Meeting.

Click the third button down on the home page, the user name is **disbox** and the password is **lecoultré** all in lower case letters.

This may change from time to time and will be notified regularly in the journal.

To make this part of our web site a success, it requires input from our members, please contact any committee member if you have anything to report or have an idea.

FOR SALE

88-note scale O rolls, suitable for modern 'Build-Up' orchestrions: new, choice of 6.

Wurlitzer 125 rolls: new, choice of 5.

Complete **box pump** from Hupfeld Clavist, including large pulley, for restoration.

FREE; Two upright **player piano** stacks, complete for repair/spares (one from a Steinway, the other from a Wurlitzer)

FREE; **American organ** in playing order.

FREE; Large selection of **88-note piano rolls**.

FREE; Empty case for **Ariel organette**.

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NEW MEMBERS

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

3175 Kurt & Ursula Matter,

Switzerland

3176 Stephen Miles, Wiltshire

3177 J. Herz, U.S.A.

3178 Andrew Watkins, Derbyshire

3179 Paul Tucker, Wiltshire

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@btinternet.com who 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.

Now that there are four Local Area groups I hope that even more members will come along and join in.

NVCF

Sunday 11th May 2014

Venue

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre
The Fosse, Fosse Way,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire,
CV31 1XN

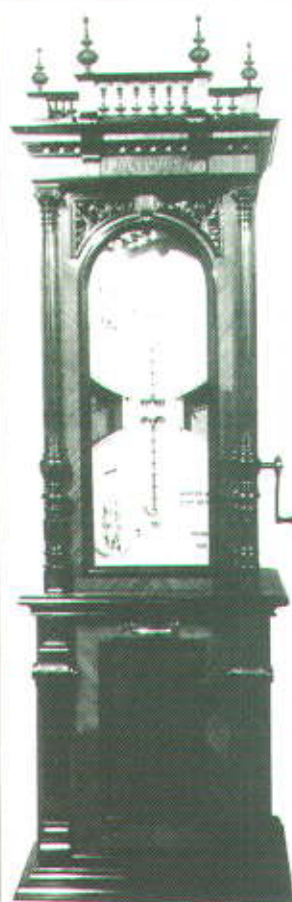
Visitor admission fees

Normal Entry -
10.30am to 4pm -
£8 (under-14s FREE)

Early Entry - from
approx. 9.00am - £25

No advance ticketing, all
tickets on the door.

FREE CAR PARKING



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New Discs for all Musical Boxes

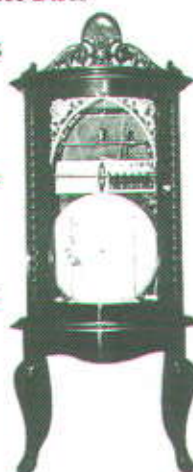
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WANTED

Instruments Coelophone, Chorophon, Double-Reed Ariel Organette, Polyphon 19 5/8 inch [50cm] coin-op; Thüringer Konzertina. Discs for Polyphon 17 inch or 45cm with Bells; Gloria 8 inch with bells; Fortuna 26 inch. for myself and other members. Kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com 01536 726759.

(there is an underscore " _ " between my 2 names).

FOR SALE

Kalliope 13 inch; table-top Polyphon 11 inch; Coin-Slot 1d Polyphon 15 1/2" and 24 1/2"; Symphonion 6 inch centre drive; Orphenion 10 inch.

Huge selection of LPs and cassette tapes; Triola roll-playing Zither; Victorian photograph album; Musical Jack-in-the-Box; Singing Bird; Organettes – Large Cabinetto / Tournaphone, Clariona, Gem Roller, Celestina, Ariston; Orchestrone. Empty cylinder box case; Spirally pinned barrel for 36-note Faventia; Musical Toby Jugs x 2. Many instruments on behalf of members such as Aeolian Orchestrelles x 5;

Aeolian 46-note; Player Piano Grand and Upright; Barrel Piano Orchestrion; Church Barrel Organ 9ft tall, Whitehead 31-note Fair-organ, Clockwork Barrel Piano. Over 2,000 Musical Box Discs, Pianola Duo-Art, Ampico, 88 and 65 note, Organette and Organ rolls, discs, rolls, Cobs, Recordings on CD, Books etc. All items listed and available by e-mail with photos on request. Can play by Skype or Telephone. Personal visits welcome by prior appointment. kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com

01536 726759 (there is an underscore " _ " between my 2 names).

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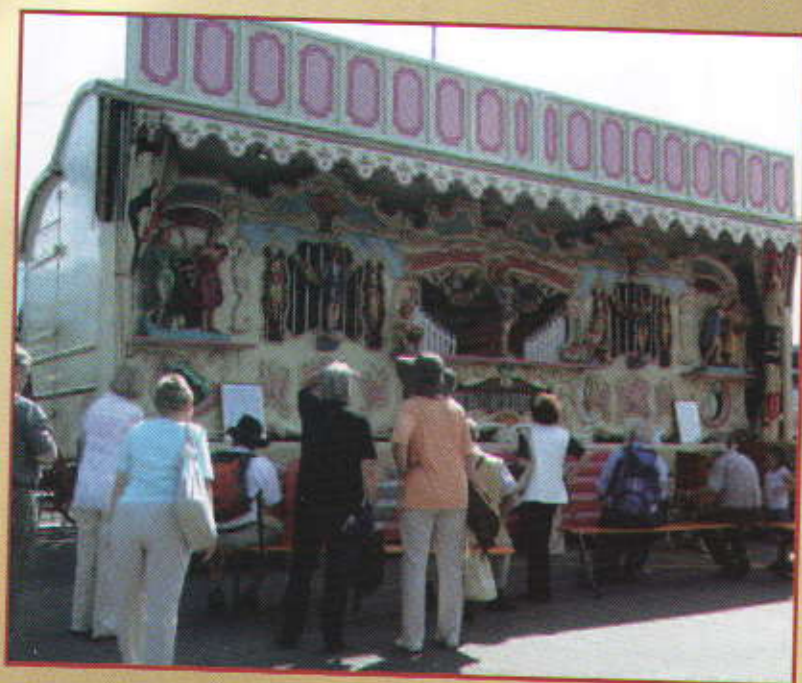
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Swiss Station Musical Box, c. 1890

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Viennese Musical Picture Clock, c. 1850s
With grand sonnerie movement.
Impressive exhibition piece.
(€ 3,000 – 5,000 / US\$ 4,000 – 7,000)



Folding-Top 'Emerald' Polyphon Nr. 49c with Bells, c. 1890
In just perfect condition.
(€ 20,000 – 30,000 / US\$ 27,000 – 40,000)



Espagnole Automaton by Lambert, c. 1885
With Jumeau head, in original costume.
(€ 3,800 – 4,500 / US\$ 5,000 – 6,000)



Early Parisian Silver-Gilt Musical Box with Neoclassical Micro-Mosaic Lid, c. 1840s
With rare Parisian guarantee stamp.
(€ 18,000 – 22,000 / US\$ 24,000 – 30,000)

»Mechanical Music & Automata«

24 May 2014



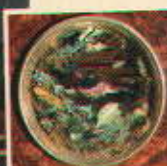
Contemporary Enamelled Bronze Singing Bird Box, stamped 'EB'
(€ 2,000 – 3,500 / US\$ 2,700 – 4,500)



Musical Box with Dancing Dolls by Langdorf, 1890
Audio-visual late 19th Century parlour entertainment.
(€ 2,000 – 3,000 / US\$ 2,700 – 4,000)



Rare 'Pièce à Oiseaux' Musical Box by Ami Rivenc, c. 1870
With 16-note organ for birdsong, automaton bird in glazed "bower". Wonderful operatic repertoire!
(€ 18,000 – 25,000 / US\$ 24,000 – 33,000)



Early Cylinder Musical Box, c. 1820(?)
Four airs on chevron-shaped comb. Later case.
(€ 2,000 – 3,000 / US\$ 2,700 – 4,000)



Magicienne Musical Automaton by Roulet et Decamps, c. 1885
With stamped Jumeau bisque portrait head ('10').
(€ 35,000 – 45,000 / US\$ 45,000 – 60,000)



Paper-Roll-Operated Musical Box by 'Arno Co., Boston', c. 1900
Extremely rare. Only 5 examples are known to exist today!
(€ 4,000 – 6,000 / US\$ 5,500 – 8,000)



Narghile Smoker Musical Automaton in Arabian Dress by Leopold Lambert, c. 1920s
Excellent working condition.
(€ 8,000 – 12,000 / US\$ 10,000 – 16,000)



Early Signed Fusee Cylinder Musical Box by Ducommun-Girod, in Inlaid Escritoire, c. 1820
Important historical document for the development of the Swiss musical box.
(€ 4,000 – 6,000 / US\$ 5,000 – 8,000)



Contemporary Automaton by Michel Bertrand: 'Dresseur des Chien'
After an original Vichy design.
(€ 12,000 – 15,000 / US\$ 16,000 – 20,000)

...and many more!

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Coin-activated Triple Singing Bird Automaton by Reuge, c. 1940s
Excellent interactive exhibition piece.
(€ 1,500 – 2,000 / US\$ 2,000 – 2,700)

Console Disk Musical Box 'Mira', c. 1900

By Mermod Frères, Switzerland, (47 cm / 18 1/2 in.). With 20 discs. – Superb original transfer-decorated cabinet finish!
(€ 6,000 – 8,000 / US\$ 8,000 – 11,000)

