

The

Music Box

Volume 26 Number 7
Autumn 2014

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

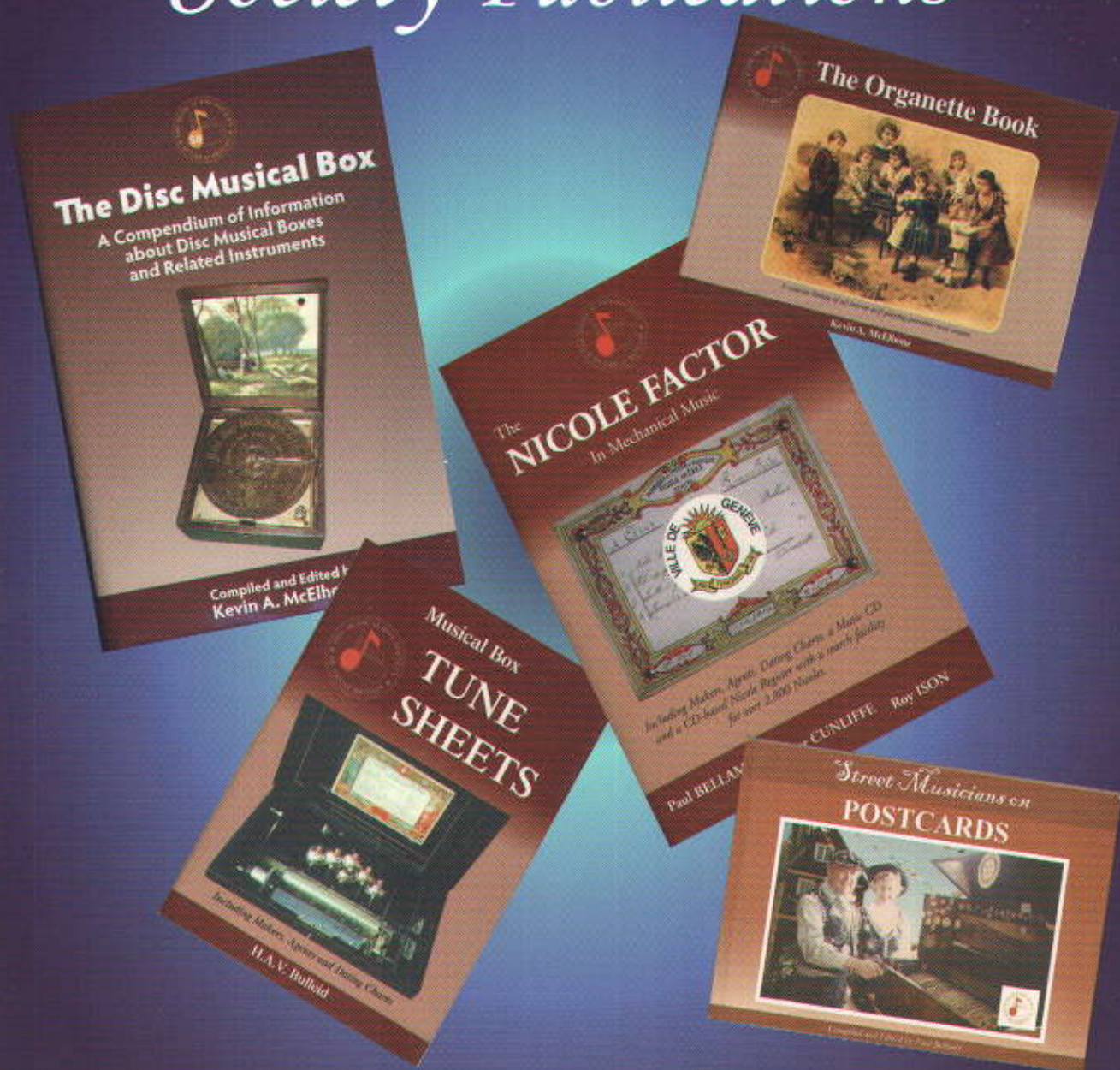


In This Issue:
Tributes to Keith Harding
Small musical boxes
Polyphon repairs
La Charmeuse organette
The Lecoultre Family Part 2
Restoration Matters!

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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The MUSIC BOX

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Front Cover illustration:
A musical box cylinder in action
(SAS photo)

Editorial Notes

Welcome to the second issue of *The Music Box* edited by me, and I am extremely grateful to all those who responded to the call for copy. The gratifying result of this is that we had, by the July 1st deadline, far more material than we could fit into 44 pages, and I can only apologise to those whom we had to disappoint by holding articles over for the next number.

The death of Keith Harding (on the very day of our AGM) marks the end of an era for those of us who have been members of this Society since the 1970s, when Keith had his shop in the Hornsey Road. Somewhere,

SUBSCRIPTIONS INCREASE – BACKGROUND

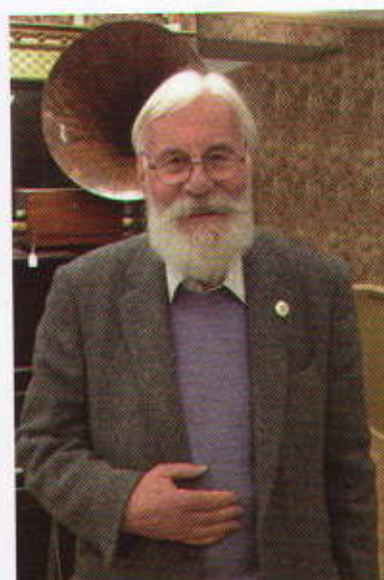
The 2014 AGM voted to increase subscriptions for the first time in 20 years. The reason for this was that, for the last 7 years, the Society has been losing money at the rate of about £2000 per year. End of year funds have fallen from a high of £43,000 in 2007 to a forecast £29,000 this year. Over that period income from all sources has fallen, particularly subscriptions, auction sales, donations and bank interest. At the same time operating costs have increased, particularly postage which has increased by around 70% in that period. This affects the overall costs of supplying *The Music Box* to members, as well as other administrative costs.

The increase approved by the AGM is lower than that required to cover fully all the excess costs, but the Executive Committee will be exploring ways to increase membership as well as more ways to reduce overheads (journal printing costs for the current

I think I have a roneo'd magazine printed by Steven Morris, who sold phonographs from another shop in the same road, showing work in the Harding workshop being carried on by lamplight in the power cuts of the 1973 three-day week.

Yet again, we have received no letters to the Editor (although there is a welcome letter to Alison Biden, published on Page 292). Please don't feel that the lack of a permanent Editor means you cannot contribute to a Correspondence column; you can!

CP



Our Vice-President, John Phillips, attended Keith Harding's funeral on June 26th, and took with him this A4-size memento.

In memory of our good friend

Keith Harding

From all the members of

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

To which he contributed so much for so many years.

May he rest in peace.

Signed on behalf of all the members by
John Phillips – Vice President

Back numbers obtainable from Kevin McElhone (see *Officers page for contact details*)

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Volume 26 Number 7 Autumn 2014

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THE MUSIC BOX

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President's Message No. 5

It has been an eventful time since I last wrote this column. I would like to thank all those who attended the EGM & AGM for coming along to make their views known. It was very gratifying for me to be endorsed as President to serve for another year. Although we said 'goodbye' to Bernard Weekes, a very valued member of the Committee, who did not want to stand for re-election, the Committee has been considerably strengthened by some new faces, all of whom I am pleased to welcome in joining the rest of the re-elected Committee.

The Editor's position is still vacant, and although Christopher Proudfoot has once again kindly put this edition together, there is an urgent need for a permanent Editor. Despite the plaudits, Christopher does not want the job; we are currently dependent on his goodwill, which is in danger of wearing thin! Please get in touch if you are willing to take it on, or know of someone else who might.

You will find brief reports on the general meetings elsewhere in this edition of *The Music Box*, and additional material relating to the EGM is posted in the 'Members only' section of the Society website. This will be for a limited period only, in response to the many requests for further information about the EGM. I hope now everyone will be able to satisfy themselves and we can concentrate once again on enjoying our mechanical music.

Also in this edition you will find a number of tributes to Keith Harding. One of our longest-standing members and former Society Archivist, Keith sadly passed away on 7th June. Meanwhile on page 292 (and on the website) you will find a copy of the letter I received from the South Bank Centre in appreciation of all your contributions to its 'Pipe Up!' project (the cards you filled in

at the Devon meeting); details of a meeting of our French sister society, AAIMM are also on the website. I recently received a very warm invitation to this meeting in Lille from senior representatives of AAIMM, who would be delighted if any British enthusiasts would like to join them on 11th/12th October. Unfortunately it clashes with the MBSI convention in Florida, but if you fancy a little trip abroad, it might be just the ticket.

Despite some sceptics, I have already had one successful experimental 'gig' at a local Methodist Church, with the congregation singing along to my Celestina. You may recall my asking recently if anyone had hymn tunes on their organettes. Thank you to the half a dozen or so who responded. Although not tried this time in conjunction with Magic Lantern Slides as originally planned, the organiser was very pleased all the same and is keen to develop the idea, so please stand by!

Following an interest in mechanical music can be an amazing 'voyage of discovery', one where you're never quite sure where you will end up, but the journey is at least as exciting as the final destination. Membership of the Society affords wonderful opportunities for sharing one's interest, networking, and fostering new friendships. One recent example: en route to Waldkirch for the Organ Festival, we stopped off to meet a young German engineer who had contacted MBSGB several months ago via the website. Although he goes to great pains to emphasise that he is not a collector, he is very proud of his restoration of a Monopol disc musical box. (I won't



say too much here as the intention is to feature the story in a future article.) The rendez-vous led to a visit to an impressive private phonograph and gramophone collection, and a standing invitation to return.

Despite the internet which can facilitate networking and the dissemination of information, nothing can compare with the 'real live' experience. However, we are fortunate that the internet can nevertheless help us, whether it is to effect an introduction or maintain the personal contact once made. In this way it can *complement* membership of a special interest group such as our Society, rather than replace it as might be perceived by some.

I am expecting that over time our new Webmaster, Nicholas Newble, will take our website to another level, and attract more new members. I anticipate a day when it will be as important as our national meetings and the journal. Progress is likely to be slow, but *do* visit the site from time to time to see what is happening, as we plan to use it more frequently to keep you informed. And if you don't already allow your email address to be forwarded to other members, please seriously reconsider in order to facilitate that networking and sharing.

Enjoy!

STOP PRESS

At the time of going to press, we are pleased to announce that the Society has now received the books and Stroud instruments that were being stored on Ted Brown's premises.

William Keith Harding 1931-2014

It is with deep regret that we have to record the passing of one of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain's most significant and best-known members, Keith Harding.

Born on December 22nd, 1931, Keith Harding was brought up in Farringdon, London, where his father was the local General Practitioner. His education concluded with graduation from London University with a degree in Arts which cemented his life-long appreciation of furniture and craftsmanship, in particular clocks.

After completion of his National Service in the Royal Air Force, he began working on clocks and dealing in antiques with a small stall in one of the galleries on London's famous Portobello Road. It was during this time that he bought his first musical box and embarked on that learning-curve to find out exactly how it was made and how it worked.

By 1965 he had joined the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, his membership number being 155. At this time he had begun his musical box and clock repair business with premises at 93 Hornsey Road in North London. During this time he was in a long-term relationship with his business partner, Cliff Burnett who sadly died some years ago.

He took on an apprentice, Terry Raggett, and they both studied together for the British Horological Institute's examination certificates pulling off a rare 'double'. Raggett was awarded the Arthur Tremayne Prize for the year's best apprentice indentured under

the BHI scheme, and his apprentice master, Keith Harding, received the British Watch & Clock Makers Guild Prize for 1968.

At the time, Keith said: 'I had never taken a specific course in horology. My knowledge of music[sic] boxes and automata has been culled from a wide variety of sources. For example, at school I studied science, much of which is directly applicable

to the workings of the clockwork movements that control the better musical boxes.'

Keith went on to make a considerable name for himself as a repairer of musical boxes and, while he had no musical qualifications, he set himself the target of being the best restorer of mechanical musical instruments, an aspect he was proud to bring to the attention of members of the MBSOGB through his regular and most valuable advertising support for its journal.

Ever striving to achieve something fresh, he played an important part in the construction of the World's first twin-disc 15.5-inch table Polyphon which he exhibited at a Society meeting. He also made novel clocks, an achievement rewarded in 1990 by the award of the British Horological Institute's Certificate of Merit.

During the 1980s impending area development



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dictated that he vacated his shop and workshop premises in London. He moved to Northleach in Gloucestershire where, in 1987, he opened a museum and workshop as 'Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music' at The Oak House. He also married Eva, a widow with three young children which Keith happily adopted as his own. Soon there were two more children but the marriage was destined not to be a success and by 2007 they had divorced. In

that year Keith entered into a Civil Partnership with John Ferris who also became a director of the Museum.

Keith Harding's Museum became one of Gloucestershire's principal tourist attractions and certainly put the picturesque but otherwise unspectacular village of Northleach on the map.

In recent years, Keith Harding's health began to fail and he was diagnosed with an inoperable cancer. He restricted his work load to acting as an occasional tour guide, imparting his knowledge of each instrument as part of his instrument demonstrations.

On Saturday, June 7th, 2014 he succumbed to pneumonia as a direct result of his illness. The funeral took place on June 26th and was attended by many friends from the world of horology and mechanical music. The Museum that still bears Keith Harding's name will be continued under the directorship of John Ferris.

AWJGO-H



Members recollect Keith Harding

I first met Keith early in 1970. I had recently become a volunteer at the Musical Museum and I went with Frank Holland to Keith's premises in Hornsey Road. At that time Keith, and his partner Cliff, were in the forefront of musical box restoration. Musical Boxes were not a significant part of the Museum's collection and so we didn't see each other often but we met at various Musical Box Society Meetings where Keith usually had one of his latest projects on display. I admired the skill and attention to detail which were so obvious in the restoration of his instruments.

Selling-up the Hornsey Road premises, Keith moved to Northleach where he combined his restoration business with a public display of various self-playing instruments and where he soon made a name for his collection. Many visitors to the Musical Museum speak of previous visits to Northleach.

In later years we met on one or two of the MBSGB trips to the continent and we soon discovered that we shared a wicked sense of humour!

Richard Cole

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Keith Harding on 7th June 2014. I worked at Keith Harding's Shop at 93 Hornsey Road from September 1973 until May 1981. This was at the time of growing interest in Mechanical Music and antiques in general.

Keith was one of the first to be involved in Musical Box restoration and an early member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain and also the International Society. He realized early on the system of Gamme numbers and programmes of tunes played on Nicole Freres musical boxes and collected these, and he also recorded details of all the Nicole Freres boxes he came across.

This was a very busy time in the shop, there were auction viewings and sales to attend, customers in the shop, several MBSI group visits led by Hughes Ryder, restorations coming in and out, many inquiries to be dealt with and even new machines made; the Jubilee Polyphon, a new 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch Polyphon, was made in 1977 to celebrate H.M. the Queen's 25th Anniversary. A double disc 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch table model was also made.

Keith was more involved in directing the firm and administration of the office; his business partner Cliff Burnett was more involved in the workshop. They were among the first people to work out how to repin a musical box cylinder, to do partial re-pinning and also repin organ box cylinders.

As well as musical boxes and many spares there were clocks in the shop; Keith developed a Code of Ethics for restorers, emphasizing conservation rather than wholesale restoration, and he delivered this lecture to the British Horological Institute some time in the 1970s. He was also their Chairman at one time.

Some years after I left, Keith and Cliff moved to Northleach in the Cotswolds and set up a Museum and workshop, this still continuing today. Keith certainly made a large contribution to the increase in knowledge of mechanical music and interested many others as well.

Alan Godier

Having starting my employment at the World of Mechanical Music in 2006, with no experience or knowledge in the musical box field I quickly began to realise what a special and unique business had taken me on. And the driving force behind this was a brilliant and unique man – Keith Harding. He took a chance on

me as he had done with his many previous apprentices and that's one reason why I'll be forever grateful to him. One of Keith's qualities and the one that will stay with me as long as I'm restoring musical boxes is the pursuit of perfection. He would always push me to be the best that I could be, to produce results which would rival and better anything or anyone else in the business and to produce these results quickly and efficiently – the difference between amateur and professional he would tell me. He could be tough at times, sometimes stubborn and sometimes clashed with people but if you looked closer you could see it came with the best intentions and from a kind heart. Through the years as I gained an understanding of the world he had created and the influence and input he had on others around him I began to realise just how important he was to the industry, especially in the early days giving lectures to the Musical Box Society and pioneering new restoration and conservation methods with the late and great Clifford Burnett. My only regret is that I missed out on the many amazing feats they had achieved long before my arrival: works such as the Silver Jubilee Polyphon, the Gemini Polyphon, the Oriel house and Jubilee Clock were and still are admired by many and are a testament to their abilities as craftsman and engineers. I'm just thankful I got to be an apprentice trained and taught by the masters of their field. My aim, with the help and support of Keith's partner and business owner John Ferris, is to carry this knowledge and work ethic forward, to continue the restoration of these wonderful machines. I'm proud and thankful to say I knew Keith Harding, a boss and a friend. You won't be forgotten.

James Preddy

The BHI Automata Forum

26 April 2014

On 26th April 2014 the British Horological Institute held its first forum dedicated to automata, at its headquarters at Upton Hall in Nottinghamshire. This event had been advertised in *The Music Box* because a large number of our members are either interested in Automata or actually collect them. In an effort to foster closer links between our two societies, and, we hope, gain more members in the process, the MBSGB arranged a display of the variety of automatic musical instruments collected by our members along with a display board showing the benefits of MBSGB membership. Back-issues of *The Music Box* were given away along with the new information leaflet and application forms.

The forum was held in the magnificent ballroom of Upton Hall, which also houses the BHI collection of long-case clocks. The MBSGB display was set out within the impressive bay window, overlooking the gardens, conveniently situated at the back of the seating, allowing easy viewing by those attending. The display created much interest, showing as it did the similarities between the two disciplines of clock making and musical box restoration. It is hoped that some of this interest will be converted into new memberships. The display was manned by John Phillips and Nicholas Simons, who had brought along a wide variety of items from their collections.

After a coffee we were welcomed by the chairman for the day, Jan Wright FBHI, who introduced us to the five presenters for the forum. The first speaker was our own Alan Pratt, who gave a short overview of his masterful unicycling clown automaton. Some MBSGB



Alan Pratt and John Phillips with the MBSGB display at Upton Hall

members will have seen the progress on this piece at Teme Valley Winders meetings or at a previous national meeting. Here, the piece was available for close inspection and Alan explained some of the difficulties and his solutions. We look forward to its completion.

The next speaker was Philip Gale FBHI who now specialises in restoring singing bird boxes. He spent much time showing, in detail, the restoration of a very small fusee movement bird box which had become immersed in dirty water by being kept in a floor safe. This had been sent over from Canada as the owner was not aware of any suitable restorers of these items over there or in the USA.

Next we had MBSGB member Michael Start and his wife Maria, who had driven down from the north of Scotland to be present. They gave a long and very interesting presentation showing how automata over the years had represented different actions of life by

mechanism. This was illustrated by a large number of automata from their own collection and workshop, many being in a partially restored condition which helped to show how they worked.

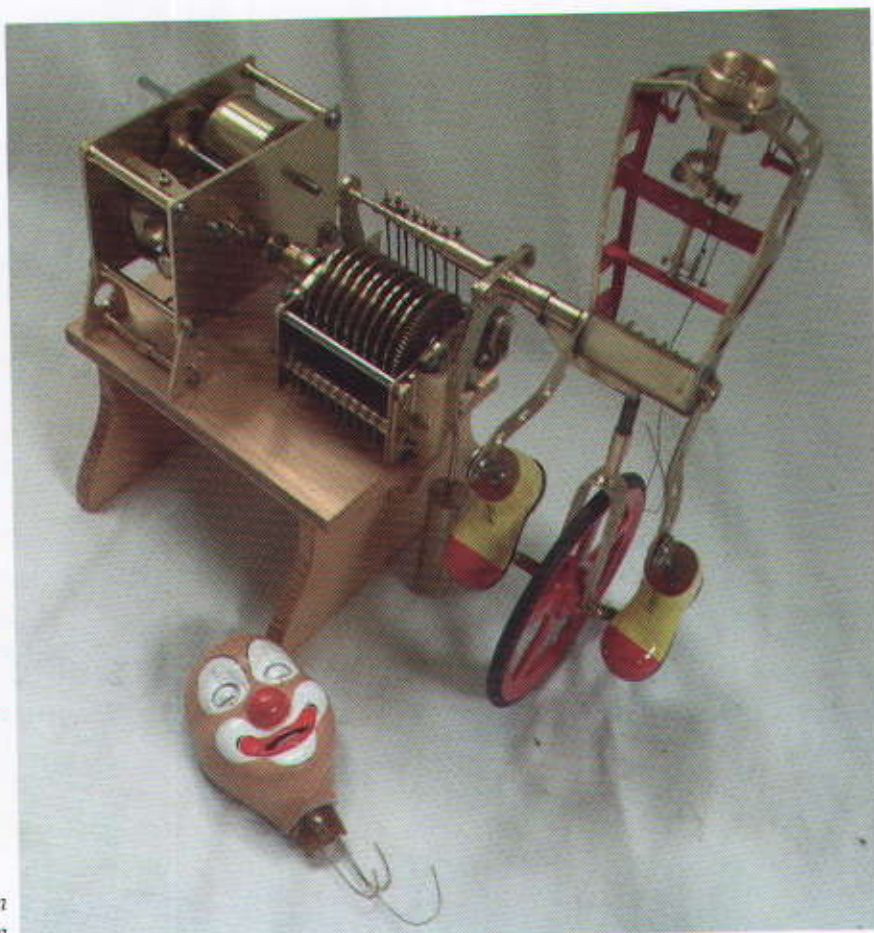
After lunch, Matthew Read, the clocks programme tutor at West Dean College, gave a talk about his involvement in the major restoration of the Bowes Museum Silver Swan, a job completed prior to his present employment. This world class automaton will be the centre-piece of the forthcoming MBSGB visit to Durham, where we will be treated to a showing of the Silver Swan in action followed by two lectures on the workings of the automaton and its history.

The final speaker was MBSGB member John Moorhouse, FBHI. John is familiar to members of the Teme Valley Winders, where he has presented his progress on his double singing bird in Faberge style enamelled silver egg automaton. Here, for those unfamiliar with the

project, John gave an overview of the entire project which covers the wide range of disciplines that John has mastered, resulting in a world class piece. The constituent parts were presented in modular form in one of the display cases in an adjoining room allowing people to admire the workmanship.

And so ended a most enjoyable and educational day, in grand surroundings, in the presence of like-minded enthusiasts, with the possibility of gaining a few new members for our society. John Phillips and I certainly enjoyed the day and look forward to future collaborations between the BHI and MBSGB.

Nicholas Simons



Alan Pratt's Unicycling Clown mechanism

Stray Notes

No. 46: Small, by Luuk Goldhoorn

What you see in the picture is the smallest Swiss musical box I have ever seen

Looking at the outside the guess will be a big tabatière, or cartière as Blyelle baptized oversized tabatière-movements, but opening reveals a normal cartel movement of abnormally small proportions.

But a tabatière is recalled by that glass sliding cover, a typical tabatière feature.



The bed-plate is 16.5 cm long, the cylinder measures 9.5 cm with a diameter of 2.6 cm.

There are four melodies, and because the tune card is still there, we can see that at least three are sacred songs composed by Bischof (sic), Hayes and Thomas.

The comb has 51 teeth, of which 34 have steel dampers!

The work can be dated around 1885 and is made with excellent carefulness.

And why a restriction to Swiss, you may ask? Well Austrian boxes built in the twenties and thirties of the 19th century are known with cylinders of less than 8 cm.

Markings on a musical box

Niko Wiegman

A part from a maker's name and serial/gamme numbers you can also find so-called craft marks on earlier movements. Little is known of how exactly production was structured in around 1840 but it must have been largely a cottage industry with home workers who made parts for the main firms. Those firms probably had only a small number of employees who did the final assembly. To know who made which part the home worker must have placed his mark on it so that it was identifiable when something was wrong with it.

We will probably never know the names of these workers but the marks are interesting enough to mention them.

One box with more markings than normal is this very nice 4-air Forte-piano box with 21 cm cylinder (fig 1). It is stamped in the top left

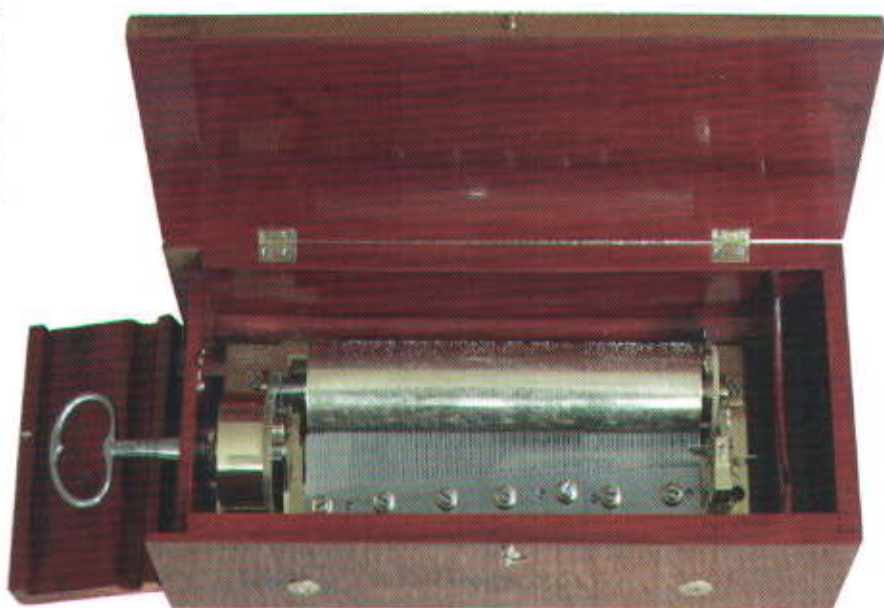


Fig 1: Ducommun Girod Forte-Piano musical box

the DG names a very small letter "J" is stamped. The DG serial number 24466 places it at around 1848, but that serial number is also stamped over another number which has been

scratched on many parts and written in ink on the case bottom. I was not able to date the box more accurately by the very nicely arranged tunes, but the case already has an endflap and that together with the earlier type of Geneva cross suggests a date around 1840.

Besides these marks it has many other markings, some of which has been recorded before but others I have never seen or read about. Repairers leave also marks on movements, but usually a date is added to indicate when the work was done; no such markings are on this movement.

The box was still in working condition with no comb damage when it came in for restoration. All parts appeared to be original with no repairs.

Listing of marks found

- The initials "J.J.B" in an oval are stamped in the bedplate below the

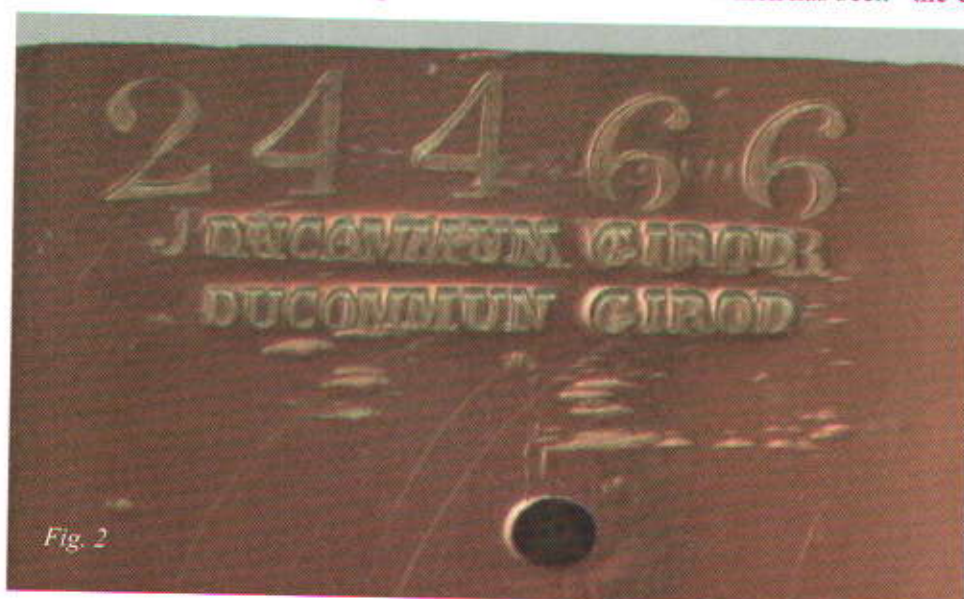


Fig. 2

corner Ducommun-Girod (DG) (fig 2), but it is questionable if that is the maker. The DG stamp is placed over another name (you can just make out the writing: J--A-A---A VOUR) and then a second DG stamp is below the first one, at the lower left side of

filed out. That all indicates the box was not original made by DG but earlier by another maker and DG made it his own in 1848. That also explains the tack holes for the two tunesheets it had, sadly both gone. The DG serial number is further



Fig. 3

forte comb, and next to it the number 734 (fig 3).

- Next to the governor in the bedplate is a scratched hourglass motif and the stamped number 52 (fig 4).

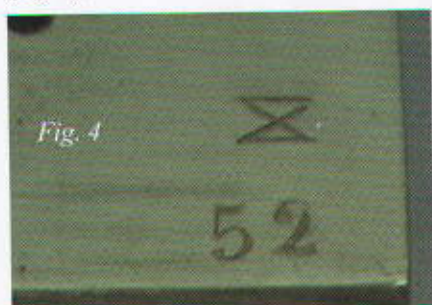


Fig. 4

That number is also scratched in the lead of the forte comb lowest note and the left cylinder end cap. Most probably 52 is the gamme number, but why place it also on the bedplate?

- The number 23 with a point is stamped in the underside of the governor, left side of the bedplate and scratched on many other parts,

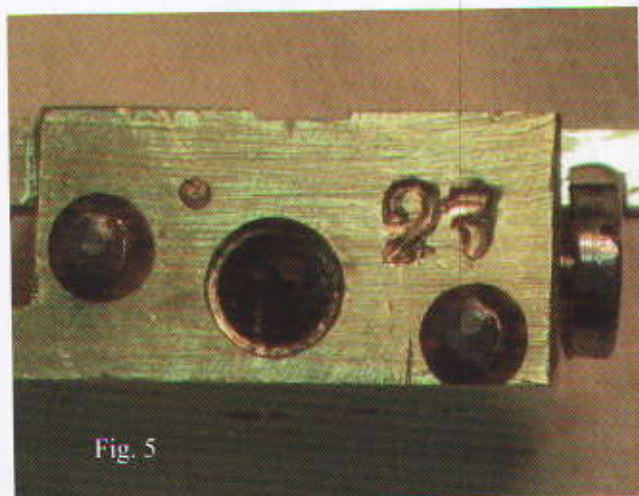


Fig. 5

probably the blank number (fig 5.)

- The number 4 together with an F is stamped on the great wheel of the cylinder (fig 6).



Fig. 6

The 4 is also stamped on the pinion of the cylinder and on the left side of the bedplate; the 4 is also scratched on many other parts.

- The most curious markings (figs 7 & 8.) are on the first wheel of the governor and its housing under the Y-stop, where is stamped "B.B.B.B.B.", no idea what it could refer to. The only other markings I know of on a first wheel are the small "NF" stamp which you find on boxes by Nicole Frères. These markings are much bigger and will

distort the thin wheel when you hammer them in, so they must have been placed on the wheel blank before turning and cutting the teeth.



Fig. 8



Fig. 7



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

- In the brass base of the forte comb the name "Boujol" is stamped (fig 9.), Larry Karp has reported this name before on a Ducommon-Girod box, so could it be the person who worked on the box for DG?

- Also in the brass of both combs the number of teeth is stamped, 86 forte and 37 piano (fig 10 & 11).

It suggests that a series of different comb sizes was worked on and teeth numbers were placed to

indicate which brass base belongs to which size of comb before soldering them together.

- On the inside of the spring barrel and its lid a kind of bubble mark is stamped (fig 12.).

- A foundry number 8 in Arabic and Roman numeral is cast in the underside of the bedplate.

Later in time when production was more standardized and suppliers

like SBI came on the market, the use of craft marks become much less; what was left was a maker's name or mark (sadly not always), serial, gamme and blank numbers and foundry marks.

But these are the marks of the unknown workers who had the skill to make these fine musical machines we still enjoy today, and this box is certainly a joy to listen to.

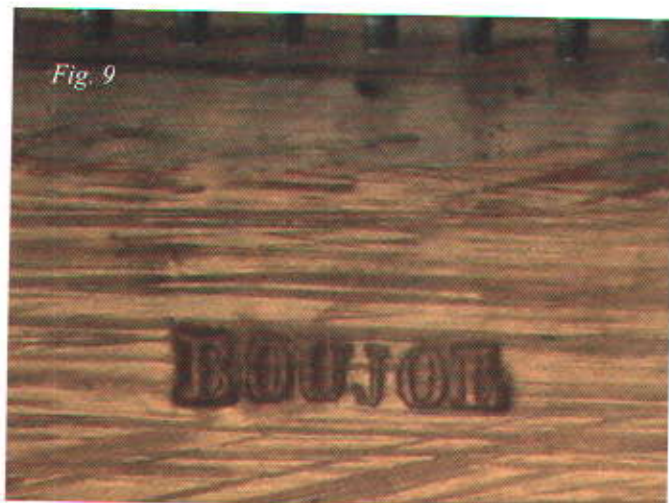


Fig. 9

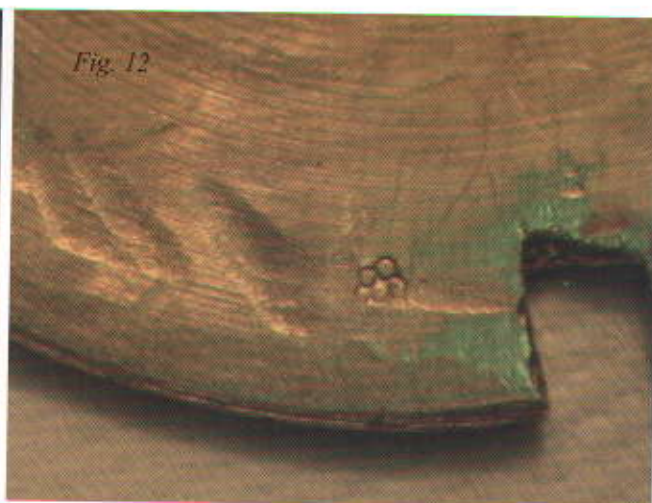


Fig. 12

Register News No. 83

On this occasion I wish to have a look at those musical boxes attributed to Ami-Rivenc, Bremond and Greiner as more information has been coming into the Register since the Tune Sheet Books and their Supplements were first published.

Anthony Bulleid suggested that Ami-Rivenc took over from T. Greiner in 1869 when the serial numbering system was around the 19,000 mark. The Register records now show that this proposition was incorrect and that boxes known to have been made by Rivenc began at the 14,000 mark and possibly a little before. This information will change the dating charts slightly.

Many of the boxes between 14,000 and 19,000 had plaques or other advertising features proudly proclaiming that they were made by Rivenc et Cie Manufacturers, Geneva. He appears to have made some fine boxes at this time carrying on with similar quality boxes to those made by Greiner. Serial No. 14679 was a large orchestral box whilst S/No: 16200 was a large bell box with a matching table with a silver name plaque to the lid. There are three, with possibly more as yet unrecorded, *Piece à Oiseau* boxes of excellent quality within this range.

All the boxes with tune sheets have the type as illustrated in the Tune Sheet Book No. 44. Quite quickly, Rivenc began to change how he recorded serial and gamme numbers on the cards. In the beginning, only the serial number was quoted, then after that the gamme number was added separated by a forward slash. Later still the serial numbers were written at the left hand side of the cartouche and the gamme number on the extreme right hand side. Look in your Tune Sheet Book No. 44 and 137 for examples. Eventually, Rivenc changed the style of the tune sheet to

the well-known Brunswick Memorial type with the winged lion trade mark. Initially, Rivenc appears to have followed Bremond's example of not recording composer names on the tune sheets.

Another strange fact that has turned up very recently is a Rivenc interchangeable box with six separate tune cards. There was one card for each of the six cylinders each noting a different serial number. This would be fine if they had given six different gamme numbers. The box and movement was marked 27961, but of course the cards marked 27962 through to 27966 have no movement to match the numbers! I presume that these

movements were never made and there will be a gap in the Rivenc numbering system. We will never be certain if this is the case unless one of the gap boxes turns up in the future and the chance of that happening is very remote. My thanks go to Breker Auctions for providing information and photographs to illustrate this point.

I have come to the conclusion that there is a very strong case to be made for believing the boxes with the type 44 Tune Sheet were made by Rivenc. There is just a chance Greiner used this tune sheet in the early days but no examples have been verified. In over 500 Bremond boxes on the Register, I have yet to



Ami-Rivenc 27961
(By kind permission of Breker auctions)

find a box that has the type 44 tune sheets. Indeed many years previously, and probably from the start of their manufacturing days, Bremond had produced their own design of tune sheets with the earlier designs marked with their name and Lyre trade mark, so why would they revert or change to using a tune sheet being used by a rival maker?

All these theories stand up at the moment and are supported by the information in the Register but I would like to ask all those who have Rivenc, Greiner or Bremond boxes to check and see if my ideas are confirmed or contradicted by any information you have.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to be absolutely certain about who made a musical box and often it is only possible to make an educated guess. I would also like to ask those who have repaired musical boxes, or who have seen a large number over a period of time, to put forward suggestions or information to me on

this topic so that together we can advance our knowledge further. If you wish to contact me directly on this subject use my email address

adcunliffe@btinternet.com and mark the e-mail subject "Rivenc boxes" so that I know that the message is not just spam!

Arthur Cunliffe



A separate card for each cylinder on Ami-Rivenc 27961

(Photo by kind permission of Breker Auctions)

Do you have the correct insurance?

By Kevin McElhone

Mechanical musical instruments, like most things, have a value, and if you cannot afford to lose the value you have in your collection, then the items in it need to be insured. And if you are going to bother with insuring your instruments, it makes sense to spend a little time and effort making sure you have the right insurance, in terms of risks and cover.

This may sound very basic advice, but there are some people who think that their collection will be automatically covered simply if

they make a calculation of house contents worth X, collection worth Y, add the two together and reach a total value. It is unlikely that by using this simplistic approach their items will be insured, or at least insured adequately.

When choosing a policy to suit your needs, there will be lots of terms and conditions to check

over and many types and levels of cover. For example, some insurance



companies will only cover your collection if it is worth over a certain

limit on condition that your house has a burglar alarm. Others will only offer cover if each item is separately listed. In some cases your items may not be covered if you take them out of your house.

Twenty years ago I tried putting my collection on my household policy but the insurance company wanted printed photographs of anything worth (in those days) over £500. I did not want to risk these photographs being housed in a filing cabinet in an insurance office where they could be looked over by anyone, particularly young staff who might gossip 'down the pub' etc. I therefore have one policy for the building and household contents and a separate one for musical 'stuff'.

Eventually I found my present company, and have now been insured through them for about fifteen years. I have two policies with them.

One policy is Public Liability Indemnity and the other is 'all risks.' Between the two I am covered for most eventualities, be it dropping something on someone when demonstrating it, damage in transit to a meeting, talk - or even a restorer - and most risks including fire, flood, theft etc.

One frequently hears 'horror' stories about people who have been 'caught out' by a policy's small print. This applies to all types of insurance, and it is worth bearing in mind that insurance companies are there to make money, and they don't do it by paying out if it can be avoided.

One condition of my own policy is nothing is covered if left in the car overnight, unless it is locked in a garage. (This is one of many reasons why I often leave home before 6 a.m. spending a very long day visiting



Polyphons were not intended to come as 'flat pack' - this is the result of an earthquake. Does your insurance cover you for 'Acts of God'? Earthquakes are not normally felt in Britain, but things might change if 'fracking' becomes widespread here.

people. In effect I am squeezing two days in to one so nothing is left in the car at night.)

To keep my cover up to date (another thing that should be done periodically), I list my collection once a year with prices based on what they cost, including any restoration. I adjust the values up or down every couple of years, which is important in the current falling market. Whilst purchase prices are dropping, restoration prices and waiting times are increasing each year. I pay a percentage premium, plus tax, for each policy - and that is all there is to it.

When choosing which company to insure through, make a list of your needs: are there times when you take any items out of your house, for example? Has the winter flooding in this country impacted either on your

cover, small print or premiums? As well as carefully checking the small print for exclusions and conditions, it is also worth investigating what sort of reputation a company has for being reasonable or fair, dealing with customer complaints, and customer care. Does it have a high customer satisfaction rating? Does it come recommended by someone you trust?

My particular company, like any other, had no idea what they were insuring so they actually bought a copy of *The Organette Book* and some other musical box books from me. They now have a much better idea of what they are providing cover for. Sometimes it is just a question of referring them to a particular page in a book and telling them I have a similar example.

Fewer instruments have been stolen in the last ten years than during the previous twenty, but it is important to record all serial numbers and take photos of your collection for your own reference. The easiest thing is to record instruments the day they arrive. If you subsequently have them restored, photograph and record them again on their return. Ideally all discs, rolls, cobs etc. should also be listed. If you keep the list on the computer it can also help you avoid accidentally buying duplicates, because you can easily check what you already have.

Finally, if you have not already done so, it is helpful to register your musical boxes. Going through the exercise of supplying the information will give you a checklist of the helpful details to have on record. To find out more about registering your box, contact the Registrar (see contact page.)

Midlands Group Meeting

17th May 2014

It was a warm sunny day when nineteen members and family met at the home of Roy and Mary Ison in Lincoln. Roy is a well-known, long standing member of the MBSGB and has a wide ranging collection specialising in early cylinder musical boxes. Roy and Mary had offered to provide a buffet lunch for visitors, which was appreciated by all. This is by no means a requirement for hosting a regional meeting and new venues are always welcome, where a 'bring your own sandwiches' lunch is the normal fare. Once everyone had arrived, we thanked Roy and Mary for opening their home and for the buffet to come.

Roy started the proceedings by playing a number of fine examples from his collection, including two overture boxes and a number of snuff boxes. Of note was *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and *Der Frieschutz* on two turns, both on an early F. Nicole box. Next up was Alan Godier, a long way from home but delivering two restored boxes to customers. One was a Nicole Frères two-per-turn but the star was a Nicole Frères

mandolin box with 197 teeth and an 18.5 inch cylinder playing six tunes.

A very nice Nicole Frères forte-piano box, playing eight tunes (below), was brought along by John Harrold. Further musical boxes were played by other members present, including those made by Lecoultre, Alibert and Langdorf.

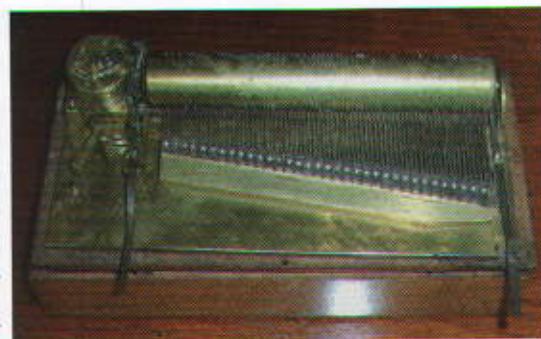
Nicholas Simons played a number of tunes he had arranged for the 30 note strip playing musical box, built into a large scale Racca piano. A small number of these had been made by John Phillips for the 50th anniversary souvenir team members. John Phillips had travelled a long way cross-country and brought a small, thin cylinder movement with a sectional comb in twos, which he had bought from the famous Ward collection (shown on the next page). Interestingly, the bass teeth are at the opposite end to



convention. John also brought along an object lesson in how not to restore a musical box. This was a well playing, and apparently well restored cylinder box by David Lecoultre. Originally it had been a rare forte-piano box with two-length pins, but had been repinned with all pins the same length. Much discussion was had into the technical difficulties of repining this correctly.

Keith Reedman had just returned from a holiday in Australia, but as we all know, holidays are just another excuse to search for instruments for our collections. Keith had visited the widow of an old friend, and came away with an upright Polyphon Sirdar combined musical box and amusement machine. The Sirdar model is an upright 11-inch Polyphon above a

working model of an army rifleman aiming at a target. When the penny drops it lands in his gun. The operator can aim the gun at the target, pull the trigger and fire the penny. The target has a slot so if successful, the operator has his penny returned. According to Kevin McElhone's book, the model represents 'Tommy Atkins at Bisley' and the patent is dated 1899. We show the complete instrument, but Keith only brought along the lower working model section to demonstrate the penny firing mechanism. We look forward to



seeing the complete restored instrument.

To finish the meeting, Roy demonstrated his George Pyke barrel organ bureau, a majestic piece of furniture that is not only useful but plays a good range of tunes. It has

32 keys and 160 pipes. A photo of it can be seen in *The Music Box*, Vol 9, page 130.

And so ended a most enjoyable day in Lincoln, and being only a stone's throw from the cathedral, some of the ladies were able to nip out for some sight-seeing and shopping. The next meeting of the Midlands

Group will be on 18th October 2014 at the home of Nicholas and Eileen Simons in Derby, where Nicholas will unveil his latest restoration project, a Helios orchestrion. Full details are given on Dates for your Diary (below).

Essex Group Meeting

31st May 2014

This sixteenth meeting of the group again brought eighteen friends to Doddinghurst on a beautiful sunny day. After a hot drink and biscuits served by kind lady members, Robert Ducat-Brown welcomed us and outlined arrangements for the day.

Don Busby opened by presenting his bespoke musical box which had taken him from 2006 until 2012 to design and build. He has yet to fit a spring drive unit, but the instrument can be played manually via a handle fitted as an aid to development. Don's first cylinder is currently in dry dock for correction after he allowed very slight eccentricity between pin-end envelope and cylinder arbor to creep in. After correcting tooling and procedures, his second cylinder pinned with "Skaters' Waltz" is now playable. He explained that he is not satisfied with the quality of sound he is achieving; also, his fitting of dampers leaves much to be desired, but more about these problems in the next part of this report. Don then gave his first public rendition of his arrangement of two variants of the waltz.

Fitting dampers to comb teeth was explained and demonstrated by Alan Godier. He said that Nicole were the first to use wire dampers, when previously materials such as triangular shavings of drum sticks and veins of bird feathers. Goose feathers provided large dampers for bass teeth, smaller birds gave feathers for lighter treble teeth. Alan explained that the angle between plane of tooth and tangent to cylinder at point of contact determines shape of dampers. He showed us several tools which he has modified to handle, cut and shape damper wires, including a pin vice for holding and pushing pins into holes in tooth anvils; an end cutter with adjustable stop to cut wires to a little more than tooth tip

length and tweezers with curved tips for shaping wires. Alan explained how cylinder pins, having contacted wires, should push them along the tooth tip; having cut a wire to length, he wipes a flat-stone over the end to polish it to facilitate the sliding motion. If a wire is being replaced it is necessary to clean out old material with a drill bit; in the case of a newly drilled hole the entry should be slightly tapered with a burr to remove sharp edges. The brass pin is flattened on the side which will contact the wire, by holding the pin in a groove in a block of wood and wiping gently with a fine flat file. The wire and pin are pushed firmly home into the hole and the wire is cut to length and finally, after bending to shape, it is lined up with tooth tip. Recommended wire thicknesses are 6, 7, 8 and 9 thousandths of a millimetre. Alan pointed out that dampers can be soldered-on if a tooth has been slotted and re-tipped: also that steel pins and brass damper wires are to be found on L'Épée combs.

Daphne Ladell played some tunes from a box of unknown make and age, serial number 770, thought to be from China



Daphne Ladell's
Orpheus

as evidenced by its tune sheet and style of tuning. The case displays a nice marquetry lid and formal inlaid pattern.

Later Daphne showed her mechanical zither made and sold in Germany around 1904 for 166 Deutschmarks. [Orpheus piano? - Ed.] This model suffers from wobbly legs which are difficult to fix because they pass through to the sounding board. She would prefer the short-legged, table-top model. The base has been repaired and cleaned up, but the lid has bowed over time and several attempts over a long period to straighten it have failed. Daphne explained how the first twenty-three strings are in tune, but the 24th and last is far too highly pitched and cannot be correctly tuned, calling for a re-string. Unlike Chordephons on which all strings are pre-damped only the first twelve notes of Daphne's are so treated for no apparent reason. Chordephons also play their own discs whereas hers uses Ariston discs.

Roy Russell played several airs from a two-per-turn Nicole Frères box, with a nice marquetry lid. Later he played a similar box which had needed total re-build after being posted to him as a brown-paper 'parcel'!

After lunch, Alan Godier told how he had investigated one title on a tune sheet, "Vital Spark". Music and verses were found in a Bloomsbury Chapel hymn book, "The Treasury", published in 1887. Further delving found that Emperor Hadrian's deathbed utterances had been set as a poem by Alexander Pope in 1712, later transposed in 1786 by Edward Harwood into a 3-verse hymn sung at funerals. Alan also played to us a YouTube posting of a lady singing this, many decades ago. A lot can be found from a tune sheet title, concluded Alan.

Three videos, kindly supplied by Nicholas Simons, were screened. One showed fairground organs filmed in 1962. It featured George Cushing with his large Fairground Organ and the Chiappa factory in London. The other videos were from YouTube,

titled "Bottled Music" and "Xylophone in the Woods". The first showed two long parallel lines of glass bottles set along a downhill road: the bottles had been tuned, presumably by adding water, to produce a melody as sticks protruding sideways from a roller skater's ankles struck the bottles.

The 'Xylophone' comprised narrow wooden steps on posts and running downhill in wood-land. A wooden ball rolling down the steps produced music: length of note was set by length of tread of a step; timing was effected by varying slopes of steps.

Terry Longhurst entertained us by describing and playing a selection of small to medium-sized cylinder movements made by Ducommun Girod (D G) whose products came in various guises over twenty years in the early-to-mid-19th Century. Firstly we saw a 100-tooth, sectional comb, with teeth in fives, in a plain unpolished wood case. It was made around 1828-1830, serial number 3977 and played 4 airs: controls are exposed at the rear of the case. A mandolin box with nicely veneered lid from 1854 had four airs on a 13-inch cylinder with 184 teeth, and a slow runner, playing for 1 minute 20 seconds. D G mandolin boxes come with groups of up to 9 teeth. Terry's fourth box with veneered lid has a 9-inch cylinder playing four overtures on a 132 tooth comb.

An organ grinding threesome of Kevin McElhone, Steve Wedge and Roger Booty played four organettes embracing three different models. It was pointed out that these were sold as Cabinettos in the UK and as Chordphons in the USA. Kevin's machine stands on short legs and

played hymns and contemporary popular songs such as, "Swanee River" and "Old Folks at Home". Next, from Steve's machine which has

no legs we heard "None Shall Part Us" and, "Into Parliament Ye Shall Go" from *Iolanthe*. Then along came Roger with more modern tunes such as, "O, O Antonio", "Puppet on a String" and, "Lady of Spain" from a legged machine. Finally, Kevin played, "Zena, Zena" and themes from, *My Fair Lady* and *Mary Poppins*. Kevin showed how manual 3-volume control is obtained by releasing, restricting or not touching the air outlet valve.

John Odgers entertained us with two carved wooden whistling figures. John Natrass's 'shed' again produced several musical treasures. On his Tanzbär, an automated accordion, with a paper roll mechanism, John played *O Sole Mio!* by Eduardo Di Capua, now horribly used as "Just One Cornetto". Much effort is needed to pull and squeeze this instrument. Next, John unwrapped three objects which, turned out to be similar 15 inch high, carved whistling men standing by a lamppost. John found them, having forgotten about them, while searching for things to bring to the meeting. One is without his whistle. John would like to hear from anyone who can advise on a replacement: perhaps someone has a whistle missing its man, lying idle in another 'shed'. He explained that he still has a hoard of mechanical and musical devices: at one time he owned around 500 clocks which called for two Transit vans when moving home from London to Hockley. He is now down to a dozen time-pieces.

Don Busby



John Natrass and his Tanzbär

Teme Valley Winders

Summer Meeting – 21st June 2014

A beautiful Midsummer Day saw 22 winders, including newcomers Sue and Francis Clark, and Sue and Les Childs welcomed by John Phillips to another enjoyable day in the music room. John started the meeting with a few tunes on the Weber Duo-Art grand, controlled through a MIDI system with instruction from Van Basco's Karaoke Player. John had fitted the MIDI system some time ago and now had some 4000 or more tunes available, all on a CD instead of the space required for paper rolls.

Also electronically controlled was a Decap Herentals MIDI accordion, demonstrated by Nicholas Newble who, fortunately for us, had moved many of his instruments to John Phillips' music room temporarily while moving house. The Decap accordion, a recent acquisition, is a genuine Marzioli accordion mounted on a plinth and modified to play from midi signals sent from a small integrated MIDI player. The unit also incorporates a synthesiser which can produce a variety of other sounds such as drums, cymbal, saxophone, flute pipes and slide whistle. The accordion is supplied with air from a hidden pump, which can provide a varying air supply to give realistic movement of the accordion bellows, as well as variable volume and expression. With the synthesiser as well the unit is capable of providing a similar sound to a full 105 key Decap organ, but occupying a fraction of the space.

John Farmer demonstrated his recently acquired 40 note Weltmeister accordion from Theuringer Musikantenschmiede, who also produce the well known Concertinas. The 40 note has the same MIDI system controlling the reeds and can communicate with other instrument via a wireless link. This

small 40 note accordion has been recently introduced by Theuringer and is smaller and lighter than their larger accordion, but a little larger than the early 40 note instruments. An original 28 note Tanzbar self-playing accordion was then demonstrated by Eric Hartley who had carried out extensive restoration work to bring it up to its present fine playing condition.

Nicholas Newble then demonstrated some of his instruments currently in the music room, namely a 5½" Symphonion, a 9½" Britannia, a Mermod Frères cylinder hymn box, an 11" Polyphon, a Euphonion 8¾", an Amorette 16-note organette (with unusual case decoration), a Cabinetto (Nicholas' first restoration project), a large 17" Lochmann with 8 tubular bells, and a 24½" Polyphon Mikado (which has now been acquired by John Phillips).

Les Childs showed us a large cylinder movement, probably by Bremond, sporting a drum and 8 engraved and engine-turned tuned bells. The movement was out of its case, while the case was being re-finished. When Les had received the instrument (an on-line purchase) it played for a few seconds only. After

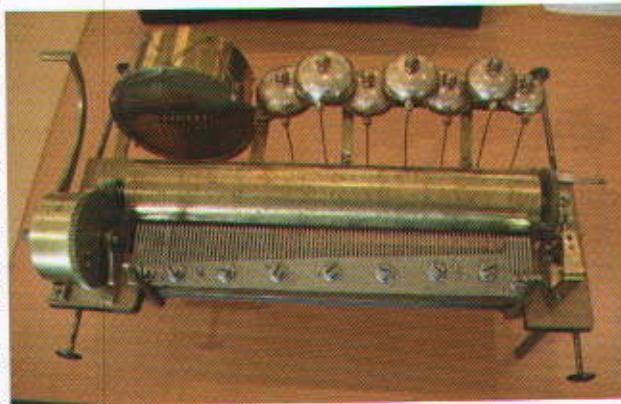
tuned bells enhancing the melody well (the drum, of course, was quickly switched off!).

After lunch, Roy Evett gave a talk on the art of safely removing and replacing springs in spring-barrels using a spring winder. His metal spring winder, home made from various parts from the scrap bin, was demonstrated in detail, as was his wooden spring winder. Realising that some people might not have the equipment for making a steel unit, he had designed this wooden alternative which is within the capability of most DIY enthusiasts. For someone who only replaces springs now and then, Roy showed that it was quite capable of doing the job. It is hoped that construction and use of the tool will appear in *The Music Box* in due course.

Bob Dyke showed his Lochmann disc box which was the same size as that previously demonstrated by Nicholas Newble but the block of 8 teeth which would have played the bells were tuned teeth. Bob was not sure whether recent restoration had resulted in proper tuning of these teeth, or whether this was actually an original arrangement. Discussion ensued and the consensus was that it might have been a lower cost option to have tuned teeth instead of bells.

Nicholas Simons demonstrated two rare novelty items. The first was a Japanese "Grand Piano Celebrate", a miniature 12 note grand piano which plays from its piano keys, but also plays from punched paper loops. The electromagnetic mechanism has small keys reading the paper strips and

solenoids activating the piano keys. Nicholas had carried out extensive repairs to the circuitry. His second item was a "Musicano", a musical mechanism similar to the common card strip playing movements, but



bringing it to John Phillips it was discovered that the Geneva stop was damaged and installed in the wrong position. With the stop reshaped and re-positioned, it now plays well. Several tunes played faultlessly, the

using metal strips, which have tapped holes in each possible note position, and a quantity of metal pegs which screw in to the holes. Thus it is possible to arrange your tune by inserting pegs in the appropriate holes. The strips are pulled through the mechanism by a winding handle. John Moorhouse gave an update on his engine-turning exploits and showed his latest attempts to create a top for the singing-bird egg, as well as his designs for engine-turned dials for a watch he hopes to build. With the help of the camera and projector we were also able to see close-ups of one of the decorated bells from Les's cylinder box demonstrated earlier. John also told how he was now planning to give training on engine-turning to a suitable young enthusiast after being approached by a company who currently make the eggs for Fabergé, to help with the popular demand for their products.

Piano roll performances followed, first from Keith Reedman, who played Under the Double Eagle, originally composed by Joseph Wagner, not Sousa as often claimed in the USA, and secondly from Nicholas Simons who played Stratford Hunch by Jelly Roll Morton. John Farmer then gave a short presentation, A Tale of Two Fortunas. The Adler Fortuna is an upright 26¼" disc box incorporating a 14 note organ, drum and triangle. John had initially been approached by Kevin McElhone to restore the organ and drum in a Fortuna. Later, during a visit to Keith Harding, Keith had revealed that he also had a Fortuna but it was missing the organ pump, drum and triangle. Thus John had agreed to make new parts for Keith's machine, using Kevin's parts as patterns. John showed slides of the components of the organ section, including the unusual reed arrangements, together with the finished pump and drum for

Keith's instrument. Keith died on June 7th 2014, but the restorations continue and Keith's Fortuna will eventually be on display in the museum in Northleach. It is hoped to write-up the restorations once both machines are finished.

John Phillips played tunes on the Imhof barrel organ and then invited Francis Clark to explain a little about what he does. Francis is a miniature painter, producing painted porcelain as well as enamelled work. He built his skills working at Worcester Porcelain before starting his own business. He spoke about how things were done in Worcester, including some amusing anecdotes. John Phillips is hoping that Francis will produce a suitable painted lid for John's long term silver box project. For more information on Francis, see www.francisclarkporcelain.co.uk

John Farmer

STOP PRESS

See the website for more details of: The BBC's filming of John Phillips's collection for a new TV series *The Great Antiques Map of Britain* (to be broadcast probably in October) ... and Planned Organ Festival for the Dean of Winchester's Cathedral windows appeal.

This, That and T'Other

No 9: Musical Toys of Not Quite Yesteryear

By Arthur Cunliffe

Those who were around 5 years old in the early 1960s may well remember Fisher Price musical toys and possibly playing with them. Older members too may remember grandchildren and others

deriving much enjoyment from these items. They were well made toys of the period and seem to have been able to stand the hard use and abuse regularly dealt out by any young child.

The late 1950s through to the 1970s was the time when transistor radios were the "in thing", the youth of the day being loath to be seen without one about their person. Fisher Price realising the appeal of



such objects produced a series of items they described as a "Pocket Radio." They came complete with a single-air wind-up musical movement and a carrying handle. Most of the tunes they chose were nursery rhymes but occasionally they selected a popular tune of the day as an alternative. Tunes such as, "I Whistle a Happy Tune" and "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" are known examples.

Two patterns were made; one was rather more up market than the other in that it copied a pocket radio design of the period rather than being just an oblong box. The original movements were of Swiss manufacture, playing a single air on a 14-note comb. The normal screw-on type of winding key was changed to a push-on type of knob closely resembling the knurled tuning knob found on radio sets of that period. Fixed behind the winder was a circular disc that rotated as the tune was played. This was viewed through an aperture in the front of the case. By the early 1980s, Fisher Price replaced the Swiss movements with those made in Japan. They made a point of stating every production change, quoting a new copyright registration for each and every one.

To anyone looking at the novelty end of mechanical music one of these could be a good buy. They are among the last "wind-up" musical movements before tape and electronic items came into being. Of course these toys were not made to last for ever but somehow they seem to have survived in quite large numbers in

spite of being thrown about, bitten and occasionally used to stir rice pudding or porridge! The gears and wheels are all plastic in the later versions, so repairs are almost impossible. Do always look for an example that still plays. Remember also they can be given to grand-children and great grand-children to play with rather than your favourite overture box.

Fig. 1 shows the 2 types of musical radios made, with the earlier one on the left. Fig. 2 shows the reverse of these, listing the words of the song or rhyme; Fisher Price were obviously keen to encourage parents to go down the educational path by teaching traditional nursery rhymes. Fisher Price also mentions that these toys were connected with Scots Porridge Oats.

Figure 3 shows another 2 examples of their work but it is interesting in that the words given for "Pop Goes the Weasel" are not the words that are in common use today. There were many variants of this this song which probably originated around the 1700s. A Church of England pamphlet of 1855 describes

the song as being, "universally popular being played in the street on barrel organs but with senseless lyrics." In the London textile industry a spinner's weasel was a mechanical thread measuring device in the shape of a wheel which made a popping sound when the correct length had been reached. No one for sure will ever know the true origin of this once popular song and dance. Other verses



in the rhyme suggest that it was a song about the cycle of poverty in the Victorian age.

The Mulberry Bush nursery rhyme seems to have evolved from a children's game around the middle of the 19th century. Another rather bizarre suggestion is that a mulberry bush grew in the grounds of Wakefield prison and that female prisoners took their exercise round it. I think that idea is far-fetched and it is far more likely that the song evolved from a traditional circle game for children, but who knows?

Figures 4 and 5 show one of these toys in pieces. The base is made out of chipboard with a section hollowed out to take the movement. The whole is kept together with special ring groove nails that were designed never to be taken out again! In this instance the movement came from Switzerland and was made by Matthey. As mentioned before, the winding mechanism has been altered to accept a "push on" yellow knob.

I hope that I have encouraged you to look again at items that at first glance could be thought to be trivial. Someone eventually will have to keep an example or two for posterity and they could be the pathway to introducing the children of today to the world of mechanical music.



The Golden Wedding Polyphon

By Roy Evett

I was at an auction recently with friends Eric and Yvonne. Yvonne spotted a little 8" Serpentine Polyphon and promptly fell in love with it. Eric said that as she liked it so much he would buy it for her for their Golden Wedding Anniversary, which was the following Saturday. They were not able to stay for the auction and so I was seconded to bid for it on Eric's behalf. Due to a somewhat limited viewing time, neither of us had the chance to examine the box in great detail. However, the case appeared to have been restored, the comb was not broken, the motor ran and it seemed to play. Because of the noise level in the room and my dodgy ears, I could not tell how well it played but with fingers crossed I went on to buy it.

The following day I tried it and pretty soon realised that my crossed fingers hadn't worked. It did not always start, the governor sounded like a concrete mixer, many of the dampers were permanently on, the disc frequently rode up on the star wheels and sometimes jammed up and it sounded like a hand full of marbles rattling around in a biscuit tin. Ahhhhhh. What to do?

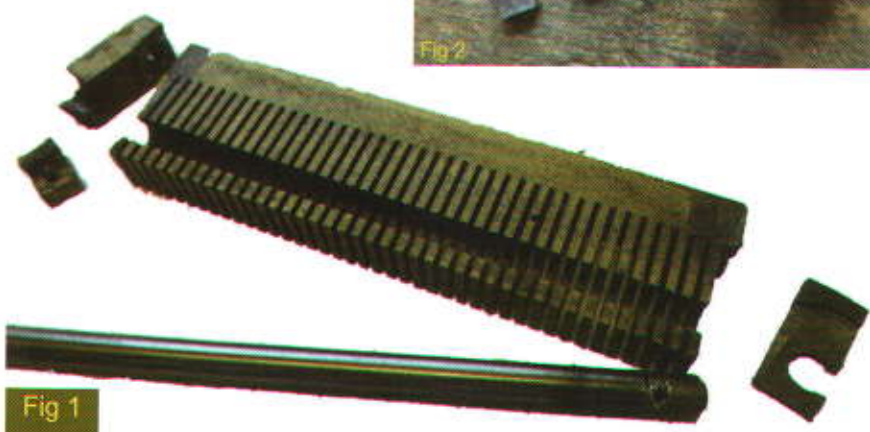
Oh well, if I adjust the dampers and the pressure bar it will probably be OK. Maybe Yvonne has to accept a noisy governor. So the next day I took it to the workshop convinced that I could fix it in a couple of hours. How wrong I was!

When I came to remove the comb I could see it was not positioned correctly and one of the dowels was missing. Ummm, this looks ominous.

Before I started to adjust the dampers I found four base end star wheels to be damaged and the end one was flopping about so much that it did not engage with the projections. Investigation showed that the end of the gantry had been broken off and someone had tried, years ago, to glue

it back on again. Then I noticed the other end of the gantry looked rather strange. When I cleaned off the years of dirt and paint I could see that end had also been broken, this time into two pieces. Figs 1 and 2.

One piece had been drilled and



screwed but was out of alignment. The other piece was glued and the glue was failing. This was a major problem and a search of my spare parts stock failed to find a replacement gantry.

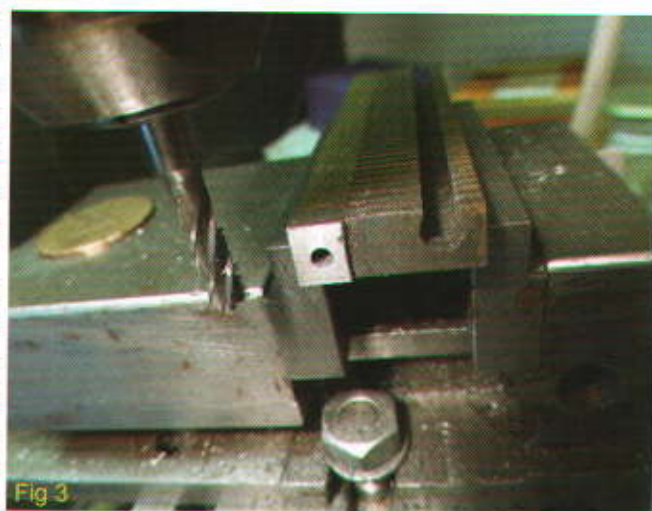
I decided that as Eric and Yvonne were not aware that I had bought the box, perhaps the best plan would be to cut my losses, put it on eBay and say nothing to them.

But after a restless night with nothing but broken gantries on my mind I had decided on a way to repair the gantry and with luck should be able to get it going before the big day on Saturday.

First job was to remove and strip the gantry. Next was to mill each end of the gantry so that it was absolutely square and leave precisely enough on the length to form the slots for the



star wheels when the new pieces are fitted. Fig 3.



Although the gantry was made from cast iron it was decided to make the new pieces from brass. It would be preferable to screw both new pieces into position before silver soldering. At the treble end, the fixing from the previous repair could be used and at the base end there was the original screw for the height plate. The pieces were milled to shape and left a little oversize to eliminate the need for accurate



profile measuring. The star wheel axle holes were milled to ensure a perfect fit. Fixing holes were carefully measured and drilled clear for the screws. Fig 4.

The treble end piece was the first to be fitted. A short length of 5mm steel rod was passed through the gantry and the new piece to ensure perfect alignment. The fixing screw was now tightened and the repair silver soldered into position. Fig 5.

The soldering process also bonds the threads of the fixing screws after which they cannot be removed. This is a problem at the bass end because the height plate screw, which I intend to use to secure the repair piece, must be removable. This was solved by using a longer screw with a nut to

leaving them with the correct profile Fig. 7.

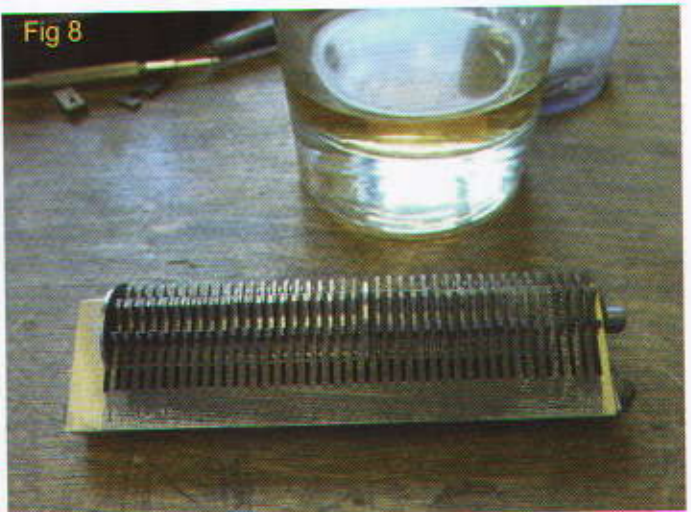
The gantry was now thoroughly cleaned, a new axle fitted and loaded with star wheels. A hole was drilled through the treble end repair and the axle for the retaining peg.

The repair is successful, time for a drop of whisky! Fig 8.

The next day I began cleaning the bedplate. As layers of paint were removed I discovered a small, filled, cut out in the edge of the bedplate. This is where a 'Tempo Regulator' was fitted in boxes with a normal square case. The regulator was fitted through the side on Serpentine cases.

It poses the question, did Polyphon fill this cut out or is the movement from a different case? Fig 9.

I noticed the resonators of the comb were a bit furry. I cleaned them up but decided the corrosion would probably have altered the tuning, so



hold the repair. Fig 6.

After soldering the screw head could now be cut off and the nut removed leaving a short length of screw protruding from the gantry. The nut can now be used to retain the height plate

The gantry was then returned to the milling machine and the excess material removed from the repairs



another job broke out. The tuning was checked and it was out, in some cases towards the bass, as much as a full note. The comb showed very little wear and only needed a very slight honing to correct it. I then proceeded to tune the comb. Not a five minute job.

After tuning the comb and painting the bedplate, the motor was part assembled with just the centre drive shaft. The gantry and comb were fitted and the tracking and timing



I carefully punched the teeth back to position and dressed them with a file to remove the burrs. The result was not the best but it worked and I think it will probably out-last me.

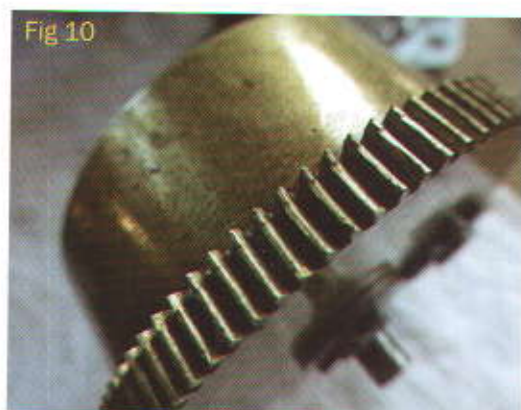
Just the governor to look at now. It is very dirty but runs most of the time. Ah-ha, the stop sprag is too long and the wrong shape.

adjustments made. As I pulled the disc around by hand, it would occasionally jam. I thought nothing of it at first as the pressure bar and dishing wheels were not in position but then I saw the real reason. As I rotated the disc I could see, by the position of the star wheels against their respective punching holes, that the tracking was altering. This can

has cut off all the brakes! To make matters worse, there has been a mistake along the way. It has a damper at the centre height wheel position but none on the adjacent star wheel. There was not enough time to make a new damper rail so I must settle for moving the

Fig 11. It touches one of the air brake blades and restricts its movement, hence putting it off balance and causing the noise. An easy fix at last.

The governor was clogged with dirt and hard grease so it was stripped for cleaning. Fig 12. Then I



centre damper and hoping the star wheels will stay in position without brakes. Dampers are just about my least favourite job but eventually I had them working and



only mean one thing..... a bent shaft. Yet another job!

I put the shaft in the lathe and measured a 30 thou' bend (30 thousandths of an inch). I gradually pushed it straight while holding the shaft in the chuck of the lathe. I got it to within a couple of thou' and decided that would be close enough. Of course now I must move the gantry again to correct the tracking and it follows that I must move the comb and reset the timing. The air was blue but a really good 'grouse' had a calming effect and I decided to leave the job until the morning.

The set up was completed next day and I moved on to the dampers. I can't believe my luck, or should I say bad luck? Someone has replaced all the dampers but for some reason

seemed to have got away without brakes. Even better, its beginning to sound good.

Almost finished now or are we?

I assembled the spring barrel into the motor only to find it jammed part way through a revolution. I stripped it down again and found a section of worn and bent teeth. Fig 10. The shaft must have been bent for a long time and it had caused the barrel gear to almost come out of mesh in one section, engaging just on the tips of the teeth. The teeth had become worn and bent across this section. Now the shaft is straight, the teeth are required to mesh at their normal depth but are no longer able to do so due to the damage. Yet another job breaks out and the air turns blue again.

found the jewel end of the endless was flat and scored. This is a bearing surface and must be domed and polished to run successfully. Now it is necessary to remove the air brake assembly so I can get the endless in the lathe for doming. Did I say 'an easy fix'?

The governor was re-assembled with the refurbished endless, adjusted and fitted to the motor. Now it works, nice and quietly!

Oh! I forgot the pressure bar. Can't be a problem can it? Yes it can. The wheels were like cogwheels and would not rotate freely. Fig 13.

I found some used pressure wheels and turned them all to the same size in the lathe. The replacement wheels, although turned



Fig 13

put on to play and it worked at last, even sounded good. But hang on, what's wrong now?

The disc was bobbing up and down on the dishing wheels. Nooooooooooooo, not another problem!

Some quite good repairs have been done to the woodwork around the dishing wheels but I think it is incorrect. I believe the point where the dishing wheels fit should be scalloped out but the restorer has made it flat. This means that when

the wheels are screwed on, they stick out too far and so the top treble projections of the disc ride over them. Time was now so short that I had to settle for recessing the wheels into the woodwork so that they ran on the edge properly. A little job for Eric sometime.

I selected a couple of discs suitable for the occasion, namely 'Sweetheart' and 'How Sweet', and cleaned and varnished them to look the part.

down, were a little bigger than the originals but the diameter is not critical because the pressure bar and clasp can be shimmed and adjusted to suit. The pressure bar was cleaned, oiled and re-assembled with the new wheels. Fig 14. It was then shimmed and adjusted for the correct clearances, after which the discs ran through correctly.

The movement was then assembled back into its box, a disc



Fig 14



At last it worked and sang like a bird.

Just in case I could not complete the repairs in time I had let Eric and Yvonne think that I did not buy the box. Eric was delighted when I managed to secret the box to him with a day to spare. He had been wondering about an alternative anniversary gift for Yvonne. Problem solved.

He duly presented it to Yvonne at their Golden Wedding celebrations.

The little Polyphon played 'Sweetheart' for her and there was not a dry eye in the house!

Don't you just love a story with a happy ending?

Yvonne and Eric celebrate with the Polyphon

Restoration Matters!

16 – Humidity, how it works and its effect on our instruments

By Nicholas Simons

Humidity is something that most people have heard of. What is it and how does it affect us and our possessions? In this short article I will try to explain the basic physics of humidity, how different humidities affect our instruments, and what the ideal environment for our collection may be. This is not a scientific treatise on the subject but a personal reflection, given in everyday language, so please do not be too critical if you are a physics professor or an expert in air conditioning.

Firstly, what is humidity? The air around us is a gas, well actually a mixture of gasses, predominantly Nitrogen and Oxygen, with 78% of the former and 21% of the latter. Interestingly, the dreaded Carbon Dioxide, that politicians are getting so excited about comprises only one twenty-fifth of one percent of the air around us. Another gas found in air, not usually thought of as a gas, is water vapour. This can be of a proportion by volume as low as zero or as much as a few percent. The amount of water vapour in air is dependent on many factors, such as climate, altitude, temperature or surrounding environment. The amount of water vapour that a given volume of air can support is dependent on the air's pressure and temperature, and there will always be a maximum, when the air is said to be saturated, and any further water will condense out of solution and appear as a liquid. If we ignore the effect of pressure in this discussion, as its effect is minimal for the very small percentage changes of atmospheric pressure experienced day to day, we need only concern ourselves with changes of temperature. The relationship

between the air temperature and its capacity to accept water vapour is exponential, i.e., its capacity increases greatly with temperature. The accompanying graph shows the amount of water, as vapour, that can be supported in air of increasing temperature. The red line shows the amount of water if the air is saturated, i.e., it cannot take any more. For



example, a kilogram of air at 30 degrees Centigrade can support 28 grams of water. If the air temperature rises to 40 deg C it can support 50 grams of water, whereas if it falls to 20 deg C it can only support 15 grams as a maximum.

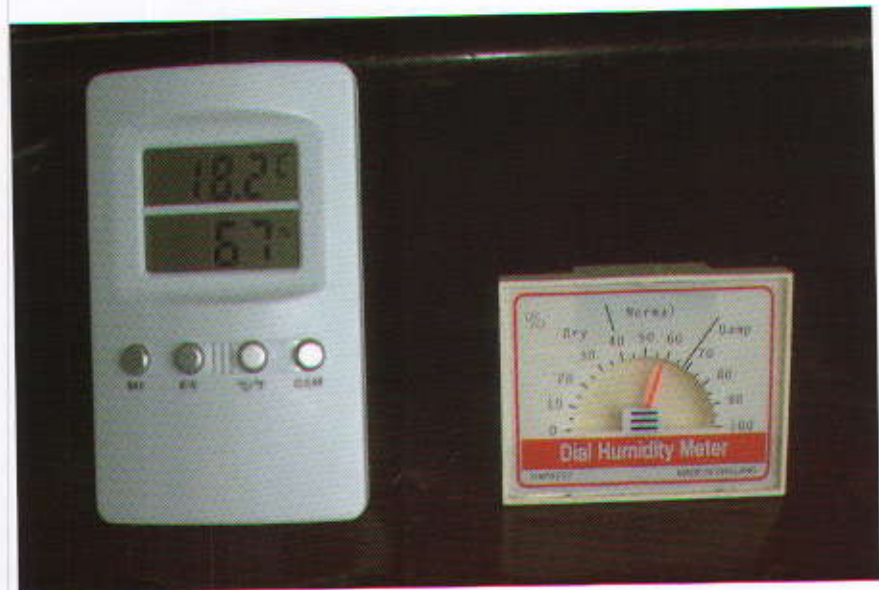
So far we have considered how water vapour can be mixed with air. Remember that water vapour is a gas so the air around us is a mixture of many gasses, one of which is water

vapour. The water held by the air is not in its liquid phase and the resulting air does not contain water 'in suspension'. We are all familiar with air holding water droplets in suspension in forms such as clouds and fog, and we shall see how changes of humidity and air temperature can cause these phenomena.

It is at this point that we must introduce the concept of relative humidity. The way human beings and artefacts respond to humidity is dependant not on the absolute humidity, i.e. the actual amount of water vapour held in the air, but by the relative humidity (RH). RH is defined as the ratio of the partial pressure of the water vapour in the mixture to the saturated vapour pressure of water at the given temperature. In simple terms this means the actual amount of water vapour in the air as a proportion of the maximum that the air can take at that temperature, i.e., its saturated level. Look at the graph again but this time at the green line. This shows the amount of water in the air if the RH is 50%. Air at 25 deg C with an RH of 50% will hold 10 grams per kilogram. If this air is subjected to a temperature drop its RH will increase, but when it gets to 14 deg C it will have an RH of 100%, and we know that the RH can never exceed 100%. The air has now reached what is called the 'dew point' and any drop in temperature below this point will result in water coming out of solution and depositing itself on suitable surfaces. It can be seen, therefore, that RH and air temperature are very closely related and understanding that relationship will help us appreciate how best to preserve our instruments.

We must now consider the interaction between the instrument and the air around it. Wood is a porous material and therefore has the largest response to changes in RH. Metals can be eliminated from this discussion but are obviously affected by condensation when the temperature drops below the dew point. Some plastics can also be affected by changes in RH, but hopefully there are no plastic components in our musical boxes and pianos. Coming back to wood, I am reminded of an incident at my old school when a few boys were messing about with pieces of wood. The woodwork master admonished them with the famous words 'it doesn't grow on trees, you know'. Straight off the tree, wood has a very high moisture content and it then goes through a process called seasoning. This is most usually done in a kiln, where the moisture level is reduced to the level required for use. Traditional air seasoning takes about one year per inch of thickness in an environment appropriate for the end use. Getting the moisture content correct is very important since wood moves when its moisture content changes. Not only that, but it moves twice as much across the grain as along it. This can lead to general shrinkage when the wood dries out but also to bending depending on how any piece of wood has been cut from the tree in relation to the growth rings.

Because wood is porous, water vapour is continually being exchanged between the wood and the air around it, and a state of equilibrium exists if the conditions remain unchanged. If the RH of the air increases, the wood will take on more moisture and dimensional changes will take place. A very dry atmosphere, say in a house equipped with under-floor heating and little fresh air input, will cause the wood to shrink. A traditional house with radiators or even a coal fire, and with leaky windows, will have a higher RH somewhere around 50% - 60% and



wooden items will remain happily in their designed state for long periods. So much for conditions of constancy but what about transient conditions? As we have seen, if an instrument is residing happily in a normal room temperature of 20 deg C with an RH of 50% and the room temperature drops to 10 deg C the air will now be at the dew point, or at 100% RH, and water will start to condense out of the air. Even before the temperature drops to the dew point the RH will be rising to dangerous levels for the wood, especially if these conditions remain for a period of time. It isn't the change in temperature that has the effect on the instrument, but the change in Relative Humidity that this temperature change causes.

So what is the ideal RH for our instruments? My opinion is that the ideal RH in this country (Great Britain) is somewhere between 40% and 60%, and that the environment should remain reasonably constant. This is for domestic environments where musical boxes, organettes and pianos are kept. Fairground organs and barrel pianos can tolerate a higher RH as they are designed to be taken outside regularly. I try not to let them experience an RH exceeding 70%. Indeed, I am happy to let my pianos, orchestrons and organs live in an environment of RH 70% but this really is the maximum for long term storage. Any higher an RH could lead

to light 'blooming' on the surfaces of the wood which if not removed regularly will cause damage to the finish. This will be exacerbated if there are significant temperature changes in the room for the reasons given earlier, so sudden temperature drops must be avoided. Too low an RH will lead to shrinkage of the wood and this can cause breathlessness of pneumatic instruments. Wooden chests can shrink away from their sealing gaskets and a very small gap over the long length of the chest can cause significant air leakage, resulting in failure to operate correctly. All too often one hears, on the rally field in hot weather, that an organ has failed due to the heat and low humidity. All too often this is due to bad restoration or an old and marginally playing instrument, so a small leakage causes failure. A correctly designed and maintained organ should play under all conditions found in this country.

How can we maintain the correct RH in our music room? Firstly, one needs a hygrometer. There are two types, the old fashioned mechanical variety and the modern electronic type. These can be bought either from your local garden centre or over the Internet. I prefer the simple mechanical type. These can be calibrated if required by placing in a jet of steam above a boiling kettle and adjusting the screw so the needle

shows 100%. I have found that the electronic type can be inaccurate and they are also uncalibrateable. If the humidity is regularly too high it's best to invest in a small dehumidifier. These work on either the fridge-type compressor and evaporator cycle or the solid state Peltier principle. The latter tend to be cheaper but are only available in the lower rated designs. Make sure you buy one that is rated

for at least the volume of your room. Good ones use a humidity-stat to turn on and off as required. If the RH is regularly too low, i.e., around 30% or lower, it is best to increase it by using one of the many designs of humidifier available over the Internet. Use this in conjunction with a hygrometer so you can control the room to the desired RH value.

In conclusion, I hope I have explained the basic principles of humidity and what makes it change, and also how you can best protect your instruments from the damage that incorrect levels of humidity can cause. A few simple precautions will allow you to protect your treasured instruments and enjoy them for years to come.

Miniature Musical Mechanisms and their Boxes

By Luuk Goldhoorn

It is documented that Favre in 1796 presented to the Société des Arts in Geneva a musical mechanism containing a carillon without bells or hammers and playing two melodies. The report mentions that this was placed in a snuff box with normal proportions. That means about 7 cm long.

The inventor was a horologist and he believed that his invention could be used in musical clocks. But musical clocks went out of fashion at the end of the 18th century. That is most probably the reason why it took quite a long time before Favre's invention came into production. The tuned steel tongue, however, intrigued Isaac Daniel Piquet, who around 1802 managed to make a musical movement with tuned steel teeth in a ring. To reduce space, he cleverly combined the spring barrel and cylinder by placing the pins directly in the barrel circumference.

A further development of the musical movement can also be attributed to Isaac Daniel Piquet, this time in co-operation with his brother-in-law Henry Capt. Around 1805 they substituted a disc for the cylinder. With this very flat construction watches were produced which were only a little bit thicker than watches without a musical mechanism.

We have however to wait until 1809 before Favre's finding was

realized. It is a work made by Désire and Chapuis and dated 1809 (depicted in *Klangkunst* p.156. Number LM71556).

All the very early musical movements were housed in gold and only affordable for the very happy few. As export to England (a rich country) was not allowed under Napoleon's regime, the size of the trade was very limited



However, after 1814 Geneva was liberated from French oppression and became part of Switzerland, ending a period of poverty, and a happy and prosperous future appeared.

Thus, not only the very wealthy people, but also the middle and lower upper class could be interested in musical gadgets.

The manufacture and sale of musical boxes were in the hands of horologists, goldsmiths and silversmiths, but now other craftsmen saw an opportunity to interest people in musical snuff boxes fitted in less expensive materials.

These craftsmen bought the musical works at the horologists and

to transport these delicate mechanisms safely to their workshop a cheap tin box was developed, a blank tin-plate box. Remember, that was the housing in which Favre presented his invention! But that was only a start.

A musical movement in a tin plate box, couldn't that be sold by itself? Especially if it could be made more attractive with a lithograph on the lid? Some manufacturers thought so and they opened a new market for these miniature musical movements. It turned out to be very successful.

Tin-plate boxes were made during a very long period. In the early years the lid was not connected to the box, but soon they were coupled with a hinge. The start was around 1820, and the last

ones were sold around 1875. Remarkably, there is hardly any difference in the scenes printed on the lids of old and more recent ones. Rural landscapes, town views, but never a view of famous building or a tourist view.

They were just part of the unknown world which surrounded the owner. Certainly not tourist souvenirs. That impression is strengthened by the existence of big tin boxes in which a smaller musical tin box was housed. One such is known with a view of Mannheim on the top, captioned in German, and a view of Zürich, in French, on the smaller box. Another tin box with a view of Zürich was

The *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* for 1883-4 (p. 430) said of small musical boxes:
Diese Industrie welche Musik wie Sardinen in Dosen aufbewahrt
 (This industry which stores music like sardines in tins)

stamped with a mark of a Bautzen firm. (mid Germany). So definitely not a souvenir.

As the market for those lithographed boxes declined a last attempt was made by putting real paintings on the lid. They can be dated from 1880 to 1890 but they did not stop the decline.



A box within a box, the inner lid for the 2-air movement showing Zurich from the north, the outer box (seen closed on previous page) showing Mannheim.

But the musical snuff box didn't disappear. Gold and silver-gilt ones stayed on the market, and tortoiseshell and beautiful wood were also used. Sometimes a small miniature painting under bevelled glass decorated the lids of these boxes. (Not *Hinterglassmalerei* or reverse-painted glass as sometimes stated. With that technique the painter painted the subject on the back side of the glass)

Around 1820 in France a process was developed by which strong boxes could be made from resin-like materials. As tortoiseshell was expensive, this new composition material was an excellent substitute. First, plain black boxes, similar to the tortoiseshell ones, were made, sometimes with a simple shield (to engrave the name of the owner in it, which seldom was done) but soon a technique by which pictures could be pressed in this black composition was developed. Attractive boxes were made, at first with floral and mythological motifs, a bit later with town views, specifically from Paris. Although there is no proof, we may

assume that France sent the Swiss manufacturers the black boxes. They fixed the movements in the boxes and the results were exported to France and from there on were distributed all over the world.

Was there a difference in the tunes these two sorts of box played?

No. Operatic as well as popular songs are found in both sorts with no emphasis on one kind of song to one kind of box. Nor did the quality of the musical movement distinguish the tin box from the composition one. But examples of both sort are found with works by Nicole Frères.

Remarkably, tune cards didn't come into use before 1855, and even then most of the boxes didn't have one. So one bought not a specific melody, but a box that made music.

A strange exception are blank



tin-plate boxes with a separate (unhinged) lid, which are also quite early. In some of these boxes the tunes are scratched, in the lids.

Around 1850 musical snuff boxes were sold to the public for 14/6 and 18 to 40 shillings. (A W J G Ord-Hume: *Clockwork Music* p. 65). As almost all the tin boxes played only two melodies may be it is not too bold an assumption that a composition box with two tunes was 3/6d. more expensive than a similar tin-plate box.

Until about 1910 a market for small musical boxes existed, but the case was no longer in tin-plate or



Two types in one: fine burr-wood, with a painting on the lid.

composition but in cheap wood. The era of the musical (snuff) box was over.

At the end of this survey let us summarize the different materials used for the boxes.

It started with gold, often decorated with enamel, but that material was hardly used after 1825. It seems that silver was not 'good enough' for the rich. This material was used from about 1815 for no more than 10 years.

Tortoiseshell boxes were popular between 1820 and 1835, but had a hard fight and finally lost the battle against the boxes made from composition. That material came in use around 1825 and was used for a very long time. 1870 may be considered as their final year. Tin-plate boxes were on the market a bit longer than composition; they started in the early 1820s and they remained popular for over 70 years. Expensive wood was introduced around 1815 and that kind of box, often with a painting under glass, was in vogue for over 15 years. The wooden box saw a revival after 1860, albeit that a far cheaper kind of wood was used. They stayed popular for about 50 years.



A typical late 19th century plain wood box. Centre: a tortoiseshell box, with metal cartouche in the centre of the lid.

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The Early History of the Lecoultre Family

By John Harrold

Concluding John Harrold's article on the Lecoultre family, the first part of which appeared in Vol 26 No 6.

The second son of Abraham Joseph II was François Louis, born in August, 1782. He was listed as a watchmaker and musical box maker – the first reference to musical boxes I have found during this research. He married Françoise Louise Elisabeth Nicole on the 28th July, 1815. Born on 9th July, 1793, Françoise Louise was the daughter of François Nicole, of the Nicole Musical Box Company, who was listed as a watchmaker. François Louis and his wife appear to have had no off-spring.

The seventh son of Abraham Joseph II was Henri Joseph Samuel, born in May, 1792. He was listed as cutler, watchmaker and maker of musical box parts. He is listed as the first to make musical boxes with extra cylinders, which he called 'parts revolver.' We know them today as 'revolver boxes', where several cylinders are mounted on a revolving frame, where each cylinder can be played as required. Although they had four children, no-one carried on the business.

Looking at another branch of the family, the tenth son of Abraham was Daniel, born in January, 1715. He first married Jeanne Golay, and then Anne Marie Nicole, the latter on 18th October, 1742. His occupation was unknown. Their second son was David Nicolas, born in July, 1745. He married Louise Margaret Piguët with whom he had eight children. Their seventh son, born on 7th July, 1783, was also called David Nicolas. From 1796 to 1802 he was apprenticed as a watchmaker to his uncle at Yverdon. He was listed as a maker of musical boxes, an assessor of Justice 1815-1836 and a Judge of the Peace in 1836. He married Julie Catherine Piguët on the 17th June, 1804. They had four children.

Of these, their second son, born 27th January, 1806 was named Paul Alphonse. He married Georgette Louise Zélie Nicole, (b. circa 1808.) She was the daughter of David Louis Samuel Nicole (1789-1859) who was listed as 'regent', musical box maker,



Jacques David and Louise Catherine

watchmaker, architect for La Vallée and Captain of the Guard. Paul Alphonse himself was listed as a maker of horological pinions, draper, spice seller, and salt seller to the State, and Councillor.

Another of Abraham's sons, Louis Phillipe Samuel, had a son, François Charles, born on 4th April, 1801. He was listed simply as a maker of musical boxes. He left Chenit in 1826 for Geneva to found the House of Lecoultre Musical Boxes, first in the lower part of the city, then at 39 bis Rue de Chantepoulet.

He used his knowledge to help found the industry that was established in Geneva. He masterminded remarkable growth by his frequent trips to London. There, he created opportunities in India and China. Towards the end of his career, fifty male and female workers were employed in his workshops. None of his children worked in the firm.

Looking at yet another branch of the family, we go from Abraham to Daniel (b. 1682), to Samuel (b. 1717) to Daniel Louis (b. 1744) to Louis Daniel (b. 1775.) This last was first married



Louise Margaret Bourgeois, and then Marianne Demolin. Their second son was Louis Frédéric, born on the 27th

February, 1803, at Le Chenit. He was listed as a watchmaker, musical box maker and a jeweller in 1832. He registered in Geneva as a 'foreigner' in 1833 and became a naturalized citizen of Geneva on 4th August, 1857.

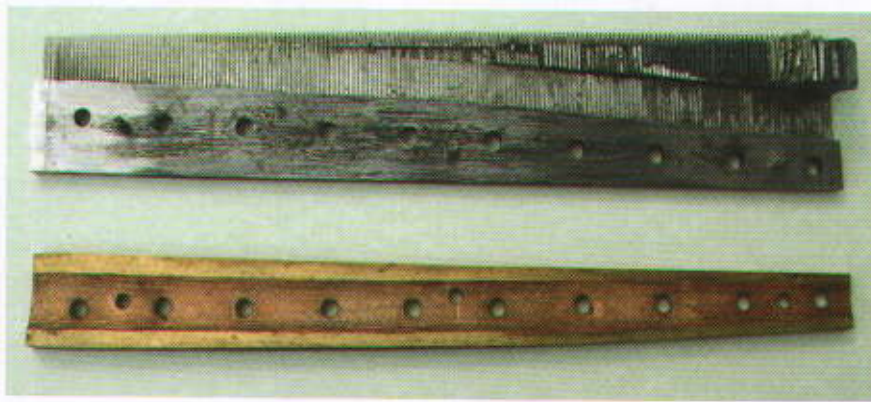
Looking at Abraham Joseph I (1711 – 1776), yet another branch of the Lecoultre family, his descendants were Abraham Joseph II (1746-1814), followed by his son, Jacques David II (1781-1850). Jacques David's fifth son was François Ulysse, born on 16 December, 1813, and was listed as a maker of horological pinions on a grand scale for watches and chronometers. He won first prize at the Universal Exposition in 1850. He married Louise Victorine Nicole, the daughter of David Louis Samuel Nicole (1789-1859.)

There are numerous other family members with widely varying occupations. I have mentioned all the available listed people involved in musical boxes and allied trades.

What a family, from being glassmakers in northern France to making early single tooth combs around 1805, within 20-25 years making beautiful one-piece combs of 160 or more teeth!

They soon became the premier manufacturer of musical box parts and even suppliers of whole *blanc roulants*, that is, an entire movement with an untuned comb and an un-pricked cylinder, to most of the other makers.

In the early days they had a full time worker, just providing combs to the Nicole firm. If you study carefully most of the early boxes their bedplates, governors, spring barrels, etc. are so similar they must have come from one place – probably Lecoultre, since Lecoultre's own items are so like much of the rest. There is no evidence they ever bought anything in. I feel that a lot of the so-called 'makers' bought in the parts or *blanc roulants*, pricked the cylinders and tuned the combs to their own tastes. This is what happened in the watch and clock trade, making a lot of sense. One would have a hard time setting up a competitive rival foundry



no record of any family member working for the firm in a management role from then, it was always run by outsiders.

Charles Victor Adolphe Nicole (born 1812) moved to Streatham in Surrey, where he died in 1876. His mother was Julie Angelique LeCoultre. He married Mary Elizabeth Heberd at St Pancras church on 7th January, 1843. He went into partnership with Henri Capt as watchmakers. This eventually became Nicole Neilson ...but that is another story.

His younger brother was born on the 13th August, 1818. He married Mary Nevill at Windlesham, on the 2nd February, 1846 and died in March,

and machine shop, when there is already a fully developed one selling to others. There are much closer ties between the manufacturing families. Lecoultre had at least one family member married into all the other families in this area. They must have known what was going on in all the other businesses, giving them an advantage. Conversely, the rival firms also knew what was going on. This would explain why the progression in musical box manufacture was very similar in all the companies. This must explain why they had such a large and thriving business (apart from making razors), although from my experience of 45 years of looking at musical boxes, LeCoultre boxes are not as well represented as those of Nicole and some of the other makers.

They also diversified better than most manufacturers, and survive today as Jaeger-LeCoultre, making very high class wrist watches.

It seems that these families built the commune to their own tastes. Some of the street names are interesting. For example, in Le Brassus we find: Cret Meylan, Mas du Meylan, Piguet-Dessous, etc. And in Le Sentier there are: Rue Georges-Henri Piguet, Rue Paul Golay, Rue de la Golisse, etc.

It seems odd, but I can find nothing named after the Lecoultre family. They always seemed to be in the background, despite having several members in places of authority.

During this research, many facts came to light regarding other families and makers: Jules Reymond, son of Auguste Audemars, was the director of

the horological house known as Rochat Reymond, c.1830.

The Nicole Frères business seems to have had quite a few changes of management. They made musical boxes from good quality right up to the



very best. Were they better makers than business people? They seemed to be short of orders at times. There is also no record of property ownership whatever in the early 1840's, the only two remaining directors left for England and never returned. There is

1872. His address at the time was 19 Claremont Square North, Holborn. There is no record of his involvement in any business.

I realise that this article is long-winded and involved, but I feel it is the only way to demonstrate all the family ties, which are so close in some cases.

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, commercial or otherwise.



NEWS from OTHER SOCIETIES

Compiled by Alison Biden and Nicholas Simons

Mechanical Music, Vol 60, No.3, May/June, 2014

(See also www.mbsi.org)

From the MBSGB perspective, this edition gives a sense of *déjà vu!* Members of our EC might identify with the MBSI

President's message where he describes the longest Trustees meeting in recent memory as they reviewed the Society's entire Policies and Procedures document. Julian

Grace notes that MBSI finds its website is the most effective recruiting tool, and it is considering making it more attractive to visitors. MBSI have recently got a new Editor, and buried in his column is a reference to a MBSI member who promoted the Society at a regional meeting of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors. (Later in the magazine a page is dedicated to this event.) Six pages, including several photographs, feature the Orchestrion Palm Court Restaurant in San Jose, California. This has appeared previously elsewhere, notably in the AMICA bulletin, although this article is probably more directly

engaging. The concept is based on the Palm Court Salon popular in the early 1900s, 'an example of which can be seen in the Barbara Streisand film "Funny Girl".' For premises, the owners Mark Williams and Russ Kriegel found an old car repair garage, which needed much work, including retro-fitting it for earthquake safety. Williams and Kriegel between them had built up a collection of some large mechanical instruments, and when storage became a problem, they put them in the restaurant, where they add to the atmosphere and provide entertainment. Many are coin-operated, but the owners have adapted them to play by remote control. They include: Mills Violano, a Coinola X, an Electramuse jukebox, a Steck Duo-Art baby grand, two Coinola A machines, a Wurlitzer Model I and an Imhof & Mukle Commandant 2 Orchestrion. On a more practical note, Jonathan Hoyt writes about his restoration of the badly burnt case of a musical box. The case was deemed salvageable as the main structure still had enough strength on which to rebuild. However, it was weakened to the extent that traditional furniture construction was not an option. A new upper door had to be made from scratch. Another article with a practical perspective is by Sally Craig, who offers the novice advice on how to spot woodworm. Like something from a horror film, they can go undetected for ten to thirty years as they chomp their way through a prized piece of furniture (or, in Sally's case, a musical box.) Ron Bopp then describes his 40 year addiction to mechanical music, in a six-page article entitled



Imhof & Mukle Commandant 2 Orchestrion

'Experiencing the Spectrum of Mechanical Music – Confessions of a Mechanical Music Junkie.' He divides his interest into several categories: Seeing and Listening; Obtaining; Displaying; Writing; Presenting; Leading and finally, Participation. Occasional contributor Hendrik Strengers delivers a short history of Mason and Hamlin, whose Boston-based company made organs. (Henry Mason's father, Lowell, composed 'Nearer my God to Thee.') Victor Lia writes about his barrel orchestrion, made by E Dienst & Co of Leipzig. The biggest challenge for Victor was replacing the missing pins (about 5%) on the barrels.

In the first of two articles, Dr Wayne Finger demystifies some of the terms describing the different types of cylinder musical boxes one finds: Overture, Grand Format, Longue Marche, and so on, with up to twelve features. His second article is the Watch and Clock Collectors' event already mentioned. The NAWCC has 15,000 members, and the meeting was mainly a glorified 'mart.' There are reports of a Golden Gate and two Southern California Chapter meetings, before the magazine ends with an obituary (Irene Hurley), and the regular feature, 'The Hunt', this time another contribution from Wayne Finger, about a Seeburg KT special.

The AMICA Bulletin, Vol 51, No 2, March/April 2014
(see also www.amica.org)

More *déjà vu*: AMICA too has recently had a change of Editor (it must be catching!), Kees Nijsen, of the Netherlands, writes a letter about the museums in Speyer (Germany), reminding me of a visit I made a couple of years ago, there is an 8-page feature about the Krughoff collection, Illinois (part of last year's MBSI Convention itinerary), a feature entitled 'Meet the Younger Generation' has as one of its subjects, Mikey Mills (encountered at the Krughoffs' last year, and whose enthusiasm leaves one breathless), while the Chicago Area Chapter visited the Sanfilippo Collection (also on the 2013 MBSI itinerary) and the Texas Chapter held a meeting at Ken Long's collection, which I visited privately last September. For the less-travelled, I will divulge a little more detail: Four young men are the subjects in 'Meet the Younger Generation.'

Coincidentally, Andrew Barrett of Southern California first had his interest piqued on a visit to the Technikmuseum in Sinsheim, Germany. Andrew Fraser is the youngest AMICA member. His age is not given, but if his photograph is up-to-date, it looks as though he hasn't finished growing yet! However, he has started his own small collection of mechanical music, and one day hopes

to be able to restore band organs and player pianos. (That's what we like to hear!) T J Fisher completes the quartet. Nine pages are devoted to the Wurlitzer Style 180 Band Organ, and in particular six individual examples. Link Style A orchestrions then become the focus of attention: Editor Glenn Thomas describes his acquisition of one, and then Paul Manganaro describes how he restored it for Glenn. Restoration is the link with the magazine's next item, how to repair or replace piano roll leaders. Author Douglas Heckrotte details how use of modern technology, i.e. the computer and scanner, can assist in preserving the accessories of the older technology. Another relative 'youngster' (relative, note) is 38-year old Kenneth E Hodge, who relates how he enhanced the appearance of his Pell Harmonette Monkey Organ, by making it a façade. In all there are six Chapter reports and four obituaries.

The AMICA Bulletin, Vol 51, No 3, May/June, 2014

Following on from the previous feature on 'Meet the Younger Generation', this edition kicks off with an article by one of the younger generation, T J Fisher, and his endeavours to educate the public about band organs. His theory is that if overly-familiar music is all that is played (e.g. 'Entry of the Gladiators') it becomes 'white noise' and people stop listening. In his eight page regular column 'Nickel Notes' Matthew Jaro describes how to set up data bases for music rolls. It is not often one reads contributions from Australia, so it was good to learn about an all-night event in Melbourne in February, at which an estimated 14,500 had attended a number of recitals of Rachmaninoff, playing a Knabe Ampico reproducing piano. Outside the concert hall more crowds had enjoyed the music from a Verbeeck travelling concert organ, the only one of its kind in Australia. Another international author, Kevin McElhone, appears in a reprint of his article on looking after the future of your collection. Siegfried Wendel then contributes six pages in glorious Technicolor on the 'incredible story how the Welte Concert-Orchestrion No 6 of the Machine Factory of the Royal National Railroads of Hungary in Budapest was recovered and restored.' When Siegfried finally found it, it was in hundreds of pieces, scattered over 150 square metres. The pieces were from a massive orchestrion built from the parts of a Paganini Orchestrion, the Welte Cottage Orchestrion in question, and various other pneumatic instruments. Finding the case for it required further searching. All this took place while Hungary was still behind the Iron Curtain, adding to the challenge, and requiring much paperwork to get permission to export all the parts. Eventually the Welte was reconstructed along with the Paganini. This beautiful Welte machine is now in the Gilson collection, Wisconsin. John Ulrich introduces us to Tim Brier, who displayed musical talent from the age of four, and now composes new music for piano rolls. A highly useful seven-page article on how to photograph mechanical musical instruments is contributed by Ned

Walthall. 'In Memoriam' for the late Doug Hickling and Randolph Herr complete this edition.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXXII, No.3

(See also www.reedsoc.org)

The rationale for receiving this periodical became apparent one day as I was browsing through the archives, and delved into Arthur Ord-Hume's tome, 'Automatic Organs', and I realised the overlap. It seems a while since I reviewed one of these magazines, possibly there were delays due to production 'snafus,' but here are two to make up for lost time. The first is easy: it consists almost entirely of photographs from the Biennial ROS Gathering at Woodstock, Ontario, 3 – 6th October, 2013. The other contents contain the Editor's message, the Society's accounts, and Minutes of its general meeting and that of its Executive.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXXII, No.4

Now here's a piece of interesting trivia: 'Noodling.' This is the improvisation by a church organist during some of the quiet moments of the service, especially (in a Protestant church) when the collection cap or plate is being passed around and hasn't reached the end of its tour around the congregation! Most popular for this exercise is variations on the Old Hundredth. Apparently,



you need to be even more adept if you are playing in a Catholic church, as there are even more silences to fill. Allen Myers writes how he managed to salvage enough details from a scrapped Loring and Blake organ, found on a bonfire heap, to be

able to record it fully on the Reed Organ register. Another organ, a Carpenter, beyond repair and found in an old school to be restored by the local Historical Society, has also been immortalised in the register, with some of its usable parts being recycled. There is an extensive review of a CD of music composed and arranged for the American reed organ, performed by Michael Hendron 'on historic instruments.' This is followed by a list of catalogues to be found in the ROS archive. The regular item featuring the score of a piece of music, has as its subject *Élévation* by Adolphe Adam, who, incidentally, composed *Giselle*, *Les Corsairs*, the Christmas carol known in English as 'O Holy Night', and thirty-nine operas! There is a fair amount of ROS business covered in this edition. 'Finding (and Retrieving) "The Holy Grail"' is the title of an article describing how an Estey Grand Salon reed organ came to light. This model is the *ne plus ultra* of reed organs. It has no fewer than 23 knobs across the stop-rail. The article is

singularly short for an organ of such large size – somewhat inverse proportion. However, the author, Jim Tyler, promises us more in the future when he gets around to restoring it. A whole page is given over to a letter from Allen Myers, concerned that the future of many reed organs is threatened, as their current owners no longer wish to give them house room. 'We must ... face the possibility that many reed organs will be destroyed over the next few years for lack of space, and/or lack of significant economic value.' Myers goes on to urge as much detail to be recorded as possible, to be conserved on the register. This leads on to what information is it desirable to record? It is reminiscent of what one reads frequently about player pianos. Finally, Mr Myers says: 'we need to think carefully about Article II of our Bylaws – "Purposes" – and the ways we can implement each one of them.' In the 21st century, as we move further away from the era when these instruments were made and became extremely popular, perhaps it is something all (mechanical music) societies should be putting their minds to. 'A Reed Organ goes to the Opera' details how a member of ROS lent one of his instruments to appear in an opera called 'Oscar', a contemporary work, on a period in Oscar Wilde's life. The author writes 'It is the first major opera where one man sings of his love for another man.' The reed organ would be played in a scene depicting Wilde's imprisonment. There is then an update of the Estey Grand Salon database. The contents conclude with publicity for a book by Milton Bacheller, on Reed Organ Patents 1800 – 1910, containing 1400 entries of reed organ related patents.

Organ Grinders News, No 89, Summer 2014

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

This issue starts with an interesting article on the busy life of Members' Representative, Terry Pankhurst. Not only does he make self-build organs of the highest quality but he rebuilds full size aeroplanes, makes clocks, rocking horses and sets for the local dramatic society. Truly a busy man!

The bulk of this edition is a report of the recent AGM. As with all societies of this type the membership appears to be dropping, but the association continues to be healthy financially. The BOGA Summer meeting will be held at Bressingham in Norfolk.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 207, Winter/Spring 2014

www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk

This society publication continues to struggle in the absence of a permanent editor and the results are clear to see in this issue. Only one member's meeting is reported, that of stalwart Reg Richings, who at 90 must have been holding PPG meetings for longer than most. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of forthcoming meetings publicised, with only one during the summer. Luckily they have included five from the NWPPA to give their members something to do during the summer!

Articles include a reprint of a critique of Meloto rolls from the early 1980s, technical tips on how to set up your play and rewind brakes and how to make replica roll box labels from roll leader labels. Modern computers and home printers have made life so much easier for those of us interested in making bespoke labels for our rolls, boxes and instruments. We should all embrace the future while celebrating the past!

North West Player Piano Association Journal – Spring/Summer 2014

(www.nwppa.freeserve.co.uk)

Although only published twice a year, this issue is another bumper at 65 pages. A healthy list of forthcoming meetings is included along with reports of recent meetings. All the regular articles are here; Internet Pages, Player Piano Notes from The Musical Times, When They Were Young deals with Yehudi Menuhin and Famous Musicians covers nine pages with a biography of Clara Butt.

There is a report on the recent player piano concert given to the Annual Convention of the Piano Tuners' Association by the celebrated pianist Rex Lawson, who is probably the world's leading professional pianist.

Elsewhere we have an article on E.S.Votey, the inventor of the Pianola, followed by details of Aeolian's move into remote control gramophones with the Aeolian-Vocalion Graduola, in which a Bowden cable allowed you to alter the volume of this acoustic gramophone from as far away as 44 inches!

The Editor contributes an article about domestic reed organs, once popular but now impossible to give away, and also articles on Tonic Sol-fa and Marshall and Wendell pianos and player pianos, always a good buy for an upright Ampico. As always, this magazine is a tour de force for its editor, who contributes most of the articles, many under pseudonyms. Well done Terry Broadbent.

Non-English Journals

Het Pierement – April 2014

www.draaiorgel.org

Who but the Dutch would come up with a Minister for Crank-Organ Affairs? Organ-playing is such a part of the Dutch culture, that that is what they have. The incumbent, Ronald

Plasterk (right), wants to see even more organs out on the streets. 'Adventures in the Organ Barn' is the title of a piece about the memories of Ed Nijpels, as told by Marc Veeningen. Nijpels came from an organ-loving and



owning family, one of eight children. Not surprisingly, he has loved organs all his life. In the third of the series '50 years ago in Amsterdam' we are treated to some unique photographs from the 1960s. The next item is in a similar vein, again a regular series, this time No 19 of 'From the lost Archive.' Marten van der Vlugt dedicates four pages to the 2013 MBSI convention (another opportunity to catch a glimpse of Bob Gilson's Welte Cottage Orchestration Style 6 in a photograph!) This is followed by another instalment (no. 4) about arranger Eugène de Roy. Having worked out that the word 'stadsvernieuwen' must mean something like the town, in this case Rotterdam, undergoing renewal, 'slopershamer' conjures up visions of demolition hammers – and demolition it is. This was the fate of No 58 Molenwaterweg (Watermill Way), which had been the location of the organ hiring business of Louis Holvoet. The article goes on to relate many of the fascinating details surrounding this enterprise, whose premises have long since been replaced by a school. Jacques van Tol, who wrote songs, is the subject of the next item. The previous edition of *Het Pierement* carried an article 'Orgelsprookjes van de Efteling', which provoked several columns of reaction. The future of the collection housed in the Gaviolizaal in Helmond has been uncertain, but there are now new volunteers to give it more security. Of several brief news items, the most interesting for me is the fact that Tilburg, renowned for decades for having the largest dance organs in the world, has just acquired a fifth example, a 121 key Decap, and that organs are featured currently on postage stamps.



90, 2nd Quarter, 2014 (www.aaimm.org)

Once again, I get a slight sense of 'déjà vu' having been asked a while ago to 'polish' the English version of the index (which was unnecessary as the Editor's English was almost perfect.) President Jean-Pierre Arnault, always exuding enthusiasm, excitedly reports that over 100 people attended the AAIMM general meeting in Mirecourt in March, and anticipates next January, when AAIMM will be celebrating its 40th anniversary, by bringing out a CD. A striking feature of this magazine is the number of advertisements, most of them relating to the manufacture or restoration of small hand-cranked organs and/or the production of music rolls for them. Is it coincidence, or indicative of the fact that there is a cultural tradition in France of people singing to such accompaniment? The AAIMM Spring 'trip' in June consists of a visit to the Abbaye de Collonges. I had never heard of this until recently, when I read an extensive account of it from a member of the Belgian Society in his magazine. The first article proper is a brief one about clock-phonographs. This marriage of technology was the

brain-child of Henri Lioret, and we find him once again in the next article, which features his 'La Cigale' alarm watch. Linking themes, the next piece is about the first talking watch, by Casimir Sivan. This contained a tiny disc on which were recorded the 48 quarters, halves, three-quarters and hours to render the time, on the same principle as Hiller's clock of 1911. Few of these watches were made. The Franco-Swiss genius Sivan did not escape the attention of Jules Verne, in whose book '*L'Isle de Helice*' the character Calistus Munbar takes out his watch, 'a master piece by Sivan of Geneva' which is a 'talking watch' and clearly says the words '*quatre heures treize*' (4.13.) As the article's author observes, this was Verne's imagination getting the better of him, as the watch only recited the quarter hours! We return to Henri Lioret for the next article, about his clock-phonograph, containing a cylinder and a resonator. The Paris house of Farcon et Wandenberg produced a carriage clock in the Louis XV style, and commissioned Lioret to provide celluloid cylinders with a resonator, following on from the successful technology used in the 'Bébé Jumeau' phonograph of 1893. The cylinders were compatible with the Bébé Jumeau, and also the Merveilleux phonograph. This is based on a concept of Edison's from 1878, which he never properly commercially exploited, and a number of other inventors brought out similar items. From this we move on to the first talking clock of Bernhard Hiller, of Berlin. Because it used a celluloid film, and this has not survived intact, it has not been possible to hear this clock. It is now in the Museum at Les Gets. Still on the theme of clocks and alarms, we are treated to a brief article about the 'Peter Pan' gramophone-alarm. The night before use, one would get out the mechanism, place the sound box on the disc and set the desired wake-up time on the clock. This machine was made in the 1930s by Thorens in Ste-Croix (although there is some scepticism as to whether this applies to the sound box), and there are even those who think it was made in Great Britain for the French market. As with Sivan's invention, the Peter Pan Clock had its moment of literary glory. However, the mechanism itself was so noisy that one was likely to stay awake all night anyway! The rationale to its name was that although very compact, it was so efficient, it had no need to become bigger. Ingenuity knew no bounds, and the article refers to a small clock on a phonograph case, which served as a jewellery box, from 1924. A couple of pages later there is mention of a promotional cuckoo-type clock, which on the hours proclaimed not 'cuckoo' but 'Pepsi Cola! Pepsi Cola!' The mind boggles! There follows a fascinating little article about some very large instruments: a 98-key Gaudin, a 54-key Lemoine and a 89-key Limonaire. The first two supplied the music in the Breuil dancehall, the third in the Depalle dancehall, in the Auvergne region, in the early years of the last century. There is a story that the Gaudin was walled up at one point, to protect it from the German invasion. It is now part of the Paul Bocuse

collection, at the Abbaye de Collonges, where it entertains the thousands of clients at Bocuse's restaurant. Having just translated the article about the Charmeuse organette, I didn't know whether to be thrilled or daunted to see that Gérard Décoret and Sébastien Schuetz had written about another mysterious organette, which Jean-Marc Lebout subsequently identifies as a 'Clarabella.' Thanks to Kevin McElhone's *Organette Book*, Jean-Marc discovered that an article about the Clarabella had been written by President of the German Society, Ralf Smolne, which he was able to reproduce in translation. One thing led to another, and Ralf was also able to supply an empty case, allowing the French enthusiasts to furnish their example with an original cover. That's net-working and co-operation for you – Euro-sceptics please note! Without going into yet another full-scale translation here, the organette plays six tunes on a pinned barrel, accompanied by bells. Another curious organ is the subject of the next article: a half-size serinette, signed 'Pierron 1785.' In addition it can be seen on the AAIMM website. Pierron had given his address as near the Church St Nicholas in Brussels. The author, René Claeys, enlisted two willing 'detectives' on site, who carried out further research, and came up with a mini-biography of Pierron. The serinette was restored by Luciano Caira, who provides a technical description, and lots of photographs. It doesn't stop there: there are three pages from the two 'detectives', Hugo Simonart and Albert Mehauden, on the result of further research on Nicolas Pierron. It is impossible in a brief account of the next article, '*Qui va piano ... trouve Marcel Mino!*', to convey the sheer joy which Philippe Beau experiences with his interest and writing about it. He takes the reader with him as he recounts the acquisition and restoration of yet another automatic piano by Marcel Mino, who has earned the nick-name 'King of the piano.' When collected from its previous owner near Grenoble, the instrument turned out to be a coin operated orchestrion, 'Little Jazz-Band.' Another brief piece, ostensibly about a postcard, explains the significance of the railway linking Sainte-Croix with Yverdon in 1893, and thence into the rail network between Geneva and Lausanne. The magazine's bumper contents conclude with a review of CDs of organ music, a round-up of some sites of interest on the internet, and two pages on the annual gathering at Grammont (Geraadsbergen in Belgium), the home-town of the Hooghuys organ building firm. Effectively, the gathering is a yet another mini organ 'festival.'

In his preface, Ralf Smolne comments on the falling values of mechanical musical instruments, and how now is a good

DAS MECHANISCHE MUSIKINSTRUMENT

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www.musica-mechanica.de

time to be starting a collection. Karl Altenburg reminds us that 2014 is a year of anniversaries: 25 years since the fall of the Berlin wall, 75 years since Germany's invasion of Poland, and 100 years since the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the start of World War I. He then describes the effect of this latter momentous event on the mechanical music industry. Next we find the original article by Siegfried Wendel about the Welte Cottage Orchestrion Style 6, the English translation of which appears in the AMICA bulletin (see above.) Wolfgang Huller gives us the fourth instalment of well-known Welte-Mignon pianists, in this instance featuring Septimus Webb. Ernst Volk, a master carpenter for the A Ruth & Sohn organ builders is the subject of an article in the series on the 'Forgotten.' Member Helmut Lallinger poses the question: Popper against 0-Roll-System, or, why not both? Esther Menke tells us that neither she nor her husband are restorers, but collectors, so they took advantage of a workshop by René Spinnler to learn more about repairing organettes. Oh that we had some of these! Halfway through this edition I thought my understanding of German had suddenly improved – then I realised I was reading the article in English! Titled 'The Wonders of Chemistry', the chemistry itself takes some understanding, and refers to piano parts made of brass which have been tin-plated. Author Jan Grossbach describes how he experimented to reproduce the same. The section entitled 'New Technology' is dedicated to the Italian SISAR project, a report of which appeared in the last edition of *The Music Box*. In the next item, in the series 'The Special Instrument,' Ralf Smolne writes about a small, unknown crank driven disc musical box. There is a portrait of Hans Kuntz, and obituaries for Franz Oehrlein, and Wilfried Hömmerich. The remaining contents for this edition consist of letters, and items of news/announcements, concerning the German Society's annual meeting, a redesign of the Bruchsal museum, an event in Waldkirch for young children to introduce them to organs, the Philippe Rouillé collection sale in Chartres last Autumn, an organ grind in Switzerland last January, this year's Organ Festival in Waldkirch, and a new church organ funded by the Waldkirch Organ Sponsors.

Associazione
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1, 2014



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

This edition heralds the donation by President Franco Severi of his four collections to the new Fondazione Onlus, in order that they will be preserved forever by the town of Cesena. 5th April, 2014

was the day of the big ceremony, attended by the mayor of Cesena. The principal collection consists mainly of the instruments on display in the Museum of Mechanical Music Musicalia, based in the Villa Silvia-Carducci, showing 500 years of mechanical music. The others are: the Barbieri Collection, with machinery for recording and the playback of music, on rolls and related archive material; the Racca Collection of 23 instruments and related archive material, and the Barrel Piano Collection. In addition there is the library, the most complete in Europe on mechanical music, which is available to the public when the Museum is open. The 4th May is the birthday of the Musicalia Museum, to be celebrated with various events, including puppet shows for children, and extracts from opera. This magazine also focuses on the carillon in the 'new' Town Hall of Monaco. (Completed in 1909.) The historical scene chosen to accompany the carillon is the wedding thrown by Albrecht V, Duke of Bavaria for his son and heir, William, and bride, Renata di Lorena. Several column inches are dedicated to this, with references to contemporary accounts. The author, Albert Loetz, also describes the musical mechanism itself, again full of colourful detail. The metal for the bells is in part recycled from canons made at the Berlin-Spandau foundry in the 1770s for the Bitch Fortress of Lorena. Some of the bells, which were made in Monaco, had to be recast. The carillon was finally inaugurated in February 1909. In 2008 it was completely restored to commemorate the 850th anniversary of the founding of Monaco. Costing €750,000, the citizens raised 90% of the funds. The bells were taken to Holland to be re-tuned. The music is programmed on a barrel 100cm long and 35 in diameter. It can also be played by keyboard. There are six four-tune barrels, mainly of popular songs and marches. The barrels are changed each month. Several column inches are dedicated to describing in detail how it all works. The centrefold is dedicated to the Smoking Monkey Automaton acquired by President Franco Severi last December in Chartres. Franco Costi then writes about the difficulties of finding those important pieces for your collection. Many dealers have moved or gone out of business, and auctions are almost unknown in Italy. He laments the lack of opportunity for buyers to verify the authenticity of items on eBay, for example. One enterprising Italian is Nicola Simeone di Benevento, who is well-known for visiting and exhibiting at the main European mechanical music and antiques fairs. You may see him at Newark! Following its success at the Makers Fair in Rome, AMMI and AMMILab were invited back in March of this year, where they demonstrated various mechanical musical instruments to the younger generation. Frequently asked questions included 'Where is the electricity supply?' and 'What software does it use?' (I think we have heard this before!) Apparently it was a big hit. Manuela Cesana is also the author of the next feature about the Barbieri Project – a Work in Progress. This is prompted by Franco Severi's donation of the Barbieri

collection. Angelo Barbieri was born in 1875, and was ordained in 1898. During his ministry he dedicated himself to developing machines for the writing and reproduction of mechanical music. The object of the project is to reconstruct in a museum setting the roll-making factory



and a church with an automatic organ.

**Newsletter from Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde,
No 119, April 2014 www.sfm.ch**

The first main article in this edition is a translation from English of an article by Christian Eric, first published in the MBSI journal *Mechanical Music* in November/December 2011, about his restoration of a rare Bontems silver bird automaton. This article has been reviewed before, and the bird featured previously in *The Music Box*, although I don't remember the photographs being quite so graphic, showing the mechanics as well as they do. This is followed by a report about a special Christmas in Zell am Wiesental, a town in the Black Forest about 20 kilometres north of Basel, where a little Christmas market was complemented by a concert of cranked organs in a church. These included a Stuber, a Harmonipan and a 31 note Raffin with six registers. Esther Menke's account of the organette workshop with René Spinnler, published in the German magazine, and reviewed above, is also published here, though curiously with different accompanying photographs. 'Dream organ concert in the castle tower' is the intriguing title of the next item. The cranked organ which played at this concert was the source of much interest for the audience of 120 people. Organs seem to be the order of the day, as we move on to a report of the second Winter Organ Gathering in Lausen, on 26th January, 2014. This attracted over 600 people, young and old alike. Anton Pieck, featured in passing in the Dutch magazine reviewed last time, is the subject of an article here. Famous for his illustrations, particularly of children's books, it has not escaped notice that he often shows organs and barrel pianos in his pictures. Two pages are dedicated to describing the Fair in Weert, Netherlands, at which organs were a major feature. Raphael Lüthi writes at length about the famous Waldkirch organ builders, starting with the Bruder family, identifying where they were based around the town. These include Limonaire, Ruth, Weber, Gavioli, and Carl Frei. Finally, with the aid of some very explicit diagrams, Jürgen Ehlers demonstrates how damaged projections on musical box discs leave your star wheels scrambled. This is part of an article on problems with discs which crackle and are jerky.

'La Charmeuse': an organette of Germanic origin

These articles first appeared in *Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes*, the magazine of the French Society, Association des Amis des Instruments et de la Musique Mécanique, No. 82, Second Quarter 2012. Written by Gérard Décoret and Sébastien Schuetz, they posed something of a mystery, solved in the edition of the Third Quarter, 2012, No. 83, by Arthur W J G Ord-Hume. All items are reproduced here by kind permission of AAIMM, and the respective authors. With many thanks also to Jean-Marc Lebout for his considerable assistance in obtaining the permissions and forwarding the various elements.



Chapter One

This reed organette was found, with a strong element of luck in its recovery, in the French region of Burgundy.

It was sleeping in a cupboard with its 31 discs, probably for about 80 years, undoubtedly having been put aside during the 1920s; it no longer worked as it was badly damaged.

This 'Charmeuse' ['Charmer'] well deserves its name! It was made in Leipzig, Germany, a little before 1900, by Jules Heinrich Zimmerman, principally a maker of musical boxes by the name of 'Adler' and 'Fortuna.' His initials are found on

the discs but not on the machine itself, which has no maker's mark.

The metal discs, 41 cm in diameter, are punched annularly, the key-frame for reading them being found on the left side at the top of the inside of the organette. Their projections are 1.4 mm high and are often set in an alternate manner to obtain held notes without tremolo.



situated in the lower part of the instrument. The exhaust valve is formed by means of a skin, which runs in front of the openings as in certain church organs. This

system has the added advantage that it does not create any additional force on the exhaust, and allows a more stable wind to be obtained.

The titles of the discs are representative of the era, the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries: *La Mascotte*, *Carmen*, *Blue Waltz*, *Home Sweet Home*, *Les Cloches de Corneville*. These tunes are very well rendered as the bass is doubled by the octave as well as the accompaniment. The 28 notes are doubled in unison, but tuned in *voix celeste* with a slight beat. One revolution of the disc lasts about 80 to 90 seconds.



They are arranged for 26 keys with double reeds, making 52 all together, divided between four frames mounted in slots. The 27th key, the one nearest the centre of the disc, controls a curious Piano/Forte device, opening or closing a movable cover of light metal, situated above the key levers.

It works by very gentle pressure by means of two bellows linked to the pressure chamber

This organette was restored by our friend Sébastien Schuetz who showed great *savoir-faire* and sorely tested patience, for example in the reconstruction of the scale

So, this is what I can tell you about my 'Charmeuse.' In more than fifty years of research and collecting, it is the first time that I





have had the opportunity to find such an organette which, I believe, at least in France, is not very common and its mode of functioning is very different from ordinary organettes.

G rard D coret

Chapter Two

La Charmeuse: the restorer's point of view

'*La Charmeuse*', what a pretty name for a musical instrument! And in fact, it is very apt. I discovered an instrument of as great a musical quality as the level of its conception. Unlike other organettes such as the *Ariston*, (in which the aim was to simplify and so reduce production costs) one senses that the *Charmeuse* has been realised with the desire for a beautiful musical result, using the best advances and concepts developed in the production of other instruments.

The discs and their reading are worthy of the better musical boxes, such as *Polyphon*.

As with disc musical boxes, a pressure bar keeps the disc in place at the level of the keyframe. The crank drive is at the front of the instrument; it guides at the same time the rotation of the disc and operates the bellows.

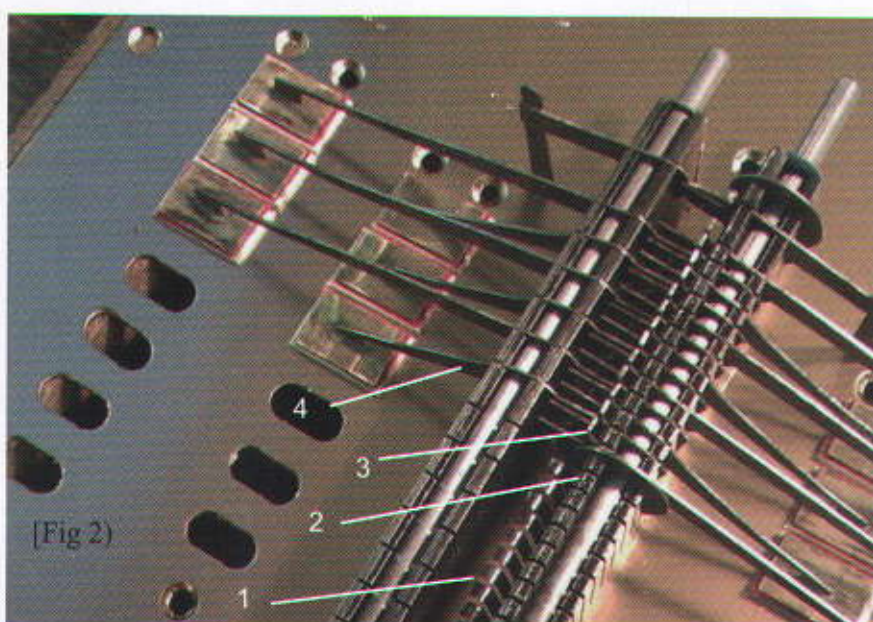
Two cast supports, reamed with precision, carry the levers and keys with their springs finely calculated in order to obtain a rapid and important opening of the valves, and make the reeds vibrate.

Each of the 26 keys which correspond to the playing of a note



View of the dismantled reading system before cleaning.

The levers on the right are directly activated by the projections on the disc. The levers on the left are raised by an intermediate piece (visible amongst the levers on the right). The last levers at the top of the photograph, have a different shape. They raise the two tin plate caps which cover the reader and give a 'piano' or 'forte' effect according to whether they are raised or lowered



The cleaned reading system partly re-assembled

- 1 The leaf springs for the direct control of the levers on the right or the control of the intermediary piece for the levers on the left.
- 2 Right hand lever with its little perpendicular extension which catches the disc's projections
- 3 Intermediary piece which makes an articulation with the corresponding left-hand lever; it presents the same perpendicular extension as the right-hand levers.
- 4 Left hand lever.

(composed of two reeds) is linked with two contiguous tracks of projections on the disc. This original feature allows for maintaining a prolonged note. The disc has 54 tracks, 52 destined to the raising of the 26 keys and the first two, commencing from the axis of

rotation of the disc, activate an expression key.

This expression is obtained by two shutters on the inside of the housing, which open and close. This modulation of the sound clearly increases the musicality of the instrument.

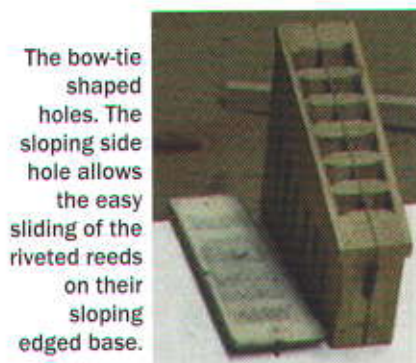


Frame with sloping sides on which the new reed is riveted (r.h.)
left: a classic reed frame from which the replacement reed was taken.
Centre: the old broken reed

Below left: various elements of the musical mechanism: the 26 pairs of reeds, the 4 resonators and the 4 sealing covers. These covers are maintained by simple springs for eased of access to the tongues (tuning and cleaning)



The reassembled musical mechanism ready to be replaced in its housing. The two tinplate caps which go over the reader rise up to create a 'forte' effect. Their edges are sheathed with a white leather which prevents a metallic noise when they return to the 'piano' position. At the front of the housing, the curtain for the exhaust.



The bow-tie shaped holes. The sloping side hole allows the easy sliding of the riveted reeds on their sloping edged base.



The regulation of the 'wind' (pressure of about 20 mm) is also particularly neat. The exhaust functions like a curtain, without adding any extra force and thus ensuring good regularity.

The only small grouse, the operating rods, in the shape of a duck's bill, have a tendency to clatter lightly.

The choice of brass reeds is also symptomatic of the search for musical quality. The bass notes and accompaniment are doubled on the octave. The *voix celeste* effect is the result of tuning, with a light pulsing, becoming progressively more and more rapid towards the treble notes. The reeds are mounted on blocks made of spruce with large resonators. They are mounted on 'V' shaped frames, sliding in an adapted groove. To replace the broken tongues, it was necessary therefore to keep these unique frames and adapt new tongues by means of riveting. The *Charmeuse* has a great sound with the roundness of the velvety *voix celeste*. It is powerful without being aggressive.

Sébastien Schuetz

Chapter Three

Arthur Ord-Hume Comments: 'The instrument [*Charmeuse*] is identical to that sold under the name of Orgophon, also made by J H Zimmerman of Leipzig. There is an advertisement from about 1900 for this machine. It has the same scale as Erlich's Orchestrionette. The Orgophon was produced in four models.

The first was hand-turned, with the disc remaining in view on the top of the machine, like an Ariston.

The second was the same model, but contained in a case with a cover. (French Editor's note: this is the model described by Gérard.)

The third is similar to the second model, but operated by a spring motor.

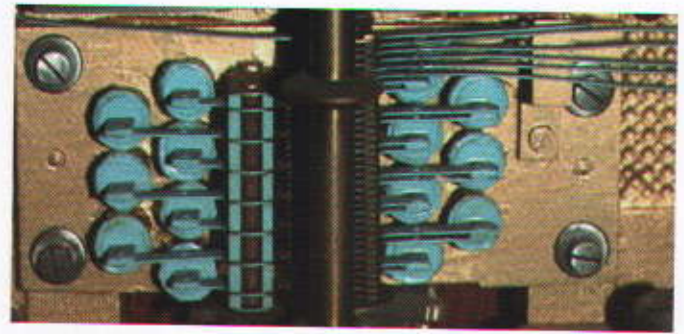
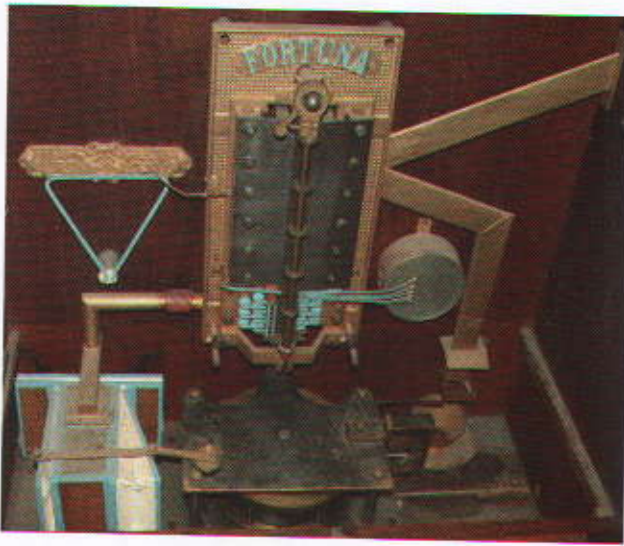
The fourth has 38 keys, the additional 12 keys being used for an accompaniment of drum and triangle – exactly the same as the percussion arrangement found in the large Fortuna disc musical boxes, also made by Zimmerman.

The Orgophon is special in that it has a disc which turns fairly

slowly, thus allowing a very precise arrangement of long pieces of music. Around 1904 the Orgophon was introduced on the French market under the name of 'La Charmeuse.' It remains an extremely rare instrument; very few Orgophons are known. Almost immediately after the first publicity for sales of *La Charmeuse* in France, production ceased in Leipzig. As a result, the model developed for the French market is even rarer. Another unique feature of this organette is that it has a piano/forte effect.'

Illustrations and captions for Chapter 3, added by Jean-marc Lebout:

This 'Fortuna' disc musical box (next page) model 370 or 375 (if sold with a disc storage bin) was also produced by J H Zimmerman. It plays discs of 66.5 cm diameter; one revolution lasts 100 seconds! The two combs of 118 teeth are arranged in parallel and each pair of teeth is played by a star wheel activated by a track of projections on the disc. The percussion section has a lever for the triangle (this is linked to the same



projection track as the first drum level) and the 14 *voix celestes* function on the same principle as those used in *La Charmeuse*. Fourteen double rows of projections to play the reeds and six double rows of projections for the percussion levers comparable to those producing the 'Piano Forte' in an Orgophon/*La Charmeuse*. Price at the time of this instrument: 375 marks or 457 marks with its storage bin.

©Courtesy The Murtoth D Guinness Collection, Morris Museum, New Jersey.

Chapter Four

Spurred on by this, MMV's Editor-in-Chief, Jean-Marc Lebout, dived once again into the literature to retrieve the following:

'Certain details about the Orgophon are available in 'Automatic Organs' by Mr Arthur W J G Ord-Hume, in particular on pages 290, 302, 480 and 486, where the tuning scale for Erlich's Orchestrionette is transcribed, therefore that of the Orgophon /*La Charmeuse* for their 46 cm zinc discs.

The Orgophon is equally cited in the magazine of the time *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau*, 22nd year, on page 983 (bottom of the right hand column) of September 1902.*

On the Mechanical Music Digest site (www.mmdigest.com), Mr Luuk Goldhoorn posted a message on 22nd July, 2005, in relation to the Orgophon. He repeats Mr Ord-Hume's information, and adds a reference from another German magazine from that time, *Musik Instrumenten Zeitung* of 6th September, 1902 (not found on line). MMD does not have any comments in its archives about *La Charmeuse*.

Last but not least, Kevin McElhone's *The Organette Book* confirms the rarity of the Orgophon, (but the author could not have known, at the time he compiled his book, of the French version, which is not mentioned). An example is

referred to (precise model not known) in the Horovice Museum (Czech Republic.) The book also carries an interesting and unusual advertisement from the time [reproduced on the left], which mentions five models, not four as Mr Ord-Hume. In fact, the second model described by Mr Ord-Hume had a standard and a de luxe form, differentiated in this advertisement as 'Kabinet-Orgophon zum Drehen', and 'Salon-Orgophon zum drehen' (*zum drehen* = hand turned), but it is exactly the same mechanism. The basic model, shown in this advertisement, has only 26 single reeds, while the other models are double reeded.

Another internet site, linked to GSM, our German sister organisation†, shows another advertisement for this instrument with details of some dates. A little later than the previous advertisement, this one also shows some of the variations of this family of organettes. What do they say?

The Orgophon was presented as a novelty at the time of the Easter Fair in Leipzig in 1902. It was a 26 reed instrument. At the Autumn Fair in 1902, the range was extended to the Concert-Orgophon and the Orchester-Orgophon. At the Easter 1903 Fair, the company offered yet another novelty: the Trommel-Orgophon, this one replacing the Orchestral-Orgophon.

The *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau*, 23rd year, page 446 indicates the appearance of percussion at the time of the Easter Fair, 1903.

Is it exactly the same instrument, or has it been renamed simply for commercial clarity? It is difficult to

Orgophon-Musikwerke.

Harmoniumstimmen. Sehr angenehmer Klang. Zur Unterhaltung im Familienkreise u. zum Tanze besonders geeignet.



Orgophon zum Drehen	
26 Harmoniumstimmen	M. 25.-
Jede Note	1.50
Kabinet-Orgophon zum Drehen	
26 Harmonium-Doppel-Stimmen	M. 50.-
Jede Note	1.50
Salon-Orgophon zum Drehen	
26 Harmonium-Doppel-Töne	M. 75.-
Jede Note	1.50
Riesen-Orgophon zum Drehen	
38 Harmonium-Doppel-Töne	M. 100.-
Jede Note	2.-
Concert-Orgophon, selbstspielend	
26 Harmonium-Doppel-Töne	M. 200.-
Jede Note	1.50

Preislisten frei

Advertisement from the end of 1902 for the Orgophon, from *The Organette Book*, by Kevin McElhone. © MBSGB

confirm. The Orgophon models are described therein as in the adjoining column.

Between these two advertisements one notes the disappearance of the Concert-Orgophon model, with spring motor, four times more expensive than its equivalent hand-turned standard model, and undoubtedly too costly to make sufficient sales. It was replaced by the Trommel-Orgophon model with accompaniments, which returned to

hand operation. The second

No. 500: 26 single reeds, 35 marks
 No. 505: Kabinett-Orgophon, 26 double reeds, 50 marks
 No. 510: Salon-Orgophon, 26 double reeds, disc diam. 41 cm, 75 marks
 No. 515: Reisen-Orgophon, 38 double reeds, 100 marks
 No. 520: Trommel-Orgophon, 38 double reeds, with drum and triangle, 150 marks.
 The discs are sold at 1.5 marks each, for model nos. 1, 2, 3, and at 2 marks for models 4 and 5.

advertisement does not repeat the expression 'Selbstspielend' [self-playing], and only has 'Drehinstrument' [hand turned]. The Orgophon range is listed among the products of the Julius Heinrich Zimmerman company in its catalogue.

I must thank Mr Ord-Hume for enlightening us and setting us on this trail resulting in fruitful complementary research.'

Jean-Marc Debout

*<http://daten.digitalesammlungen.de/~db/bsb00004248/images/index.html?id=00004248&nativeno=983>

† http://mfm.uni-leipzig.de/hsm/produkt_detail.php?id=102

You will find on youtube a good recording of an Orgophon organette by following this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT4Pdolcsci>.

At the time of going to print, just one or two copies of Kevin McElhone's *The Organette Book remain*. Anyone wishing to purchase one should contact Kevin directly (see contact page for details.) – Ed.

Photos: Chapter one: Gérard Décoret. Chapter two: Sébastien Schuetz. Chapter three: as credited, chosen by Jean-Marc Debout

MBSGB Visit to Continental collections.

Immediately after the AGM in June 2014 John Phillips canvassed members to see if there would be support for a self drive minibus excursion to the Continent of Europe to see some of the very fine and interesting collections and museums to be found there. There was indeed support.

John has looked at the possibility of organising such a trip this year but in view of the time available to do so he has decided he could make a better job of it if he left it until next year.

The proposed trip will probably be for 7 days (6 nights), fitting in as much as is comfortable, and based on two hotels. Numbers will be limited to 12 including the driver (one of us) so places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. It is anticipated there will be just one minibus but if sufficient numbers wish to join the trip alternative arrangements could be made.

If you are interested please take the initiative and contact John Phillips to register your interest, ensure a place, and perhaps make your preferred dates known. Further details will be published here in advance of the trip.

From the South Bank Centre

(www.southbankcentre.co.uk):

Dear Mrs. Biden,

I received your letter enclosed with several wonderful memories from members of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain. I must say it was quite a delight to hear such varied and interesting stories from your members!

I cannot thank all of you enough for getting involved in our Pull Out all the Stops Festival 2014. I am so pleased that you enjoyed your visit here in March. There were so many people involved in realising this festival ranging from hundreds of school children, numerous artists and designers, to the wonderful craftsmen at Harrison & Harrison to name but a few.

We have received hundreds and hundreds of wonderful memories from the public ranging from performances that people have never forgotten, first dates spent at lunchtime recitals and even a few chaotic wedding scenes! We are in the process of uploading them on to a dedicated space on our website where organ enthusiasts can compare and explore different stories. We will also hang on to your memories and keep them in our archive.

Again, a huge thank you for The Musical Box Society of Great Britain!

Alice Chesterman & The Royal Festival Hall Organ Team

The President, Alison Biden, took the Chair and declared the AGM open at 12.10 p.m. 56 Officers and Members were present.

Apologies for Absence. An additional 23 members sent apologies.

Extraordinary General Meeting 7th June 2014. (reported below, on this page) The proceedings were ratified.

Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting. The 2013 AGM Minutes, with one minor addition, were approved.

Matters Arising. Updates given on: The President's Report, the Audit of the 2012 Accounts, additional CDs for *The Nicole Factor* and Paul Bellamy's proposed book *The Music Makers of Switzerland*.

President's Report: Attention drawn to: support from EC Members; American members' appreciation of *The Music Box*; gratitude to Christopher Proudfoot for standing in to edit *The Music Box*; the need to make decisions on Voting in Absentia; the Code of Conduct agreed by the EC; events at which MBSGB had been represented; outlined plans for the future; and thanks to Members for having faith in the Executive and making the Society what it is and one for which it is worth working.

Secretarial & Officer Reports. Reports received from the Subscriptions, Correspondence, Membership, and Meetings Secretaries.

Code of Conduct: was approved.

Treasurer: the reworked 2012 Accounts together with the 2013 Accounts were reported and adopted.

Reports received from other Officers: Archivist, Auction Organiser, Advertising Secretary, Web Master and Registrar.

Reports on the situation concerning Publications, including the Journal and Authorised Sub-Committees & Working Parties given.

Propositions under Bye Laws Article 1 Section 4: The EC's amendments to The Constitution, including a new Article allowing Voting by Proxy were approved.

Election of Hon. President/Chairman: Alison Biden re-elected President/Chair.

Election of Hon. Joint Vice-president: John Phillips re-elected

Election of Committee Members: The following appointed to serve as Officers of the Society for the year 2014-2015:

Joint Vice-President [US] - Robert Yates *Archivist* - Alison Biden
Membership Secretary - Kevin McElhone *Advertising Secretary* - Robert Hough
Treasurer - Michael MacDonald *Auction Organiser* - Nicholas Simons
Subscriptions Secretary - Michael MacDonald *Webmaster* - Nicholas Newbie

Correspondence Secretary - John Ward *Member without Portfolio* - John Farmer
Member and Recording Secretary - David Worrall

Appointments Unfilled: *Meetings Secretary*; *Editor*. **Note:** Arthur Cunliffe continues as *Registrar* outside the Executive Committee.

Set Level of Subscriptions/Fees for 2015: Membership Fees for 2015 agreed as follows: Single Member: UK- £27.00; Europe (EU)- £32.00; Rest of World (Surface mail)- £34.00; Rest of World (Air mail)- 38.00; Joint Membership - £30.00; Life Member - £Nil.

Date and Venue for 2014 AGM - Saturday 6th June 2015 at 11 a.m. in The Village Hall, Roade, Northamptonshire.

Any Other Business. Members' request to Mr Paul Bellamy to return Society assets held by him; EC empowered to appoint a Trustee of The Society if necessary; EC authorised to report on ways of improving the Governance of The Society.

Vote of Thanks to President and EC: Approved with acclaim

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

Précis Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 7th June 2014 at Roade, Northamptonshire.

Full Minutes (to be approved by the next General Meeting) available from the Recording Secretary.

The Hon. President/Chair Alison Biden took the Chair and declared the EGM open. 56 Officers and Members were in attendance. 23 sent apologies.

An opening statement outlined the background to the Motion, emphasising that Mr Bellamy deserved the award of Honorary Life Membership for his services to the Society; that the motion was not a penalty but a measure to protect the Society, its assets and members; Mr Bellamy's Letter of Defence

had been distributed to the members on arrival; finally, that the crux of the matter was whether Mr Bellamy had been justified in taking the actions he admitted in his letter, or whether the EC had been justified in declaring him "Not in Good Standing." The Motion as notified to members in the EGM Calling Notice was placed before the Meeting:

"That, in consideration of the actions and conduct of former Vice President Mr Paul Bellamy brought before this meeting and which it condemns as unacceptable and prejudicial to the orderly operation of The Society, this meeting hereby revokes the award of Honorary Life Membership of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain made to Mr Paul Bellamy at the 2013 Annual General Meeting of The Society; it further directs that his membership of The Society in any form be terminated with immediate effect and shall be renewed only at the discretion of the members expressed at a general meeting of The Society."

Following a proposal from the floor, the EGM first considered the following additional Motion prior to considering the Motion as published:

"This Meeting views with alarm the level of rancour between members of the previous and present Executive Committee and urges any who hold opposing views to accept the results of the 2013 AGM as constitutionally valid and trusts that the Executive Committee to be voted in at the 2014 AGM may be able to concentrate on running The Society for the benefit of all members without further distraction."

Members accepted the Motion and agreed that all voting at this EGM should be by secret ballot; the Motion was then voted upon with the following result: 54 votes were cast; **For the Motion - 40; Against the Motion - 9; Abstentions - 5.**

The meeting then considered the EC's Motion. A number of members spoke against the Motion considering it unprecedented and vengeful; that Mr Bellamy deserved the award of Honorary Life Membership; that the EC should have found an alternative to revoking the award, that the seeds of to-day's situation were sown by behaviour at the 2013 AGM; and that Mr Bellamy be given another opportunity to reinstate himself by recognising the earlier decision of this EGM concerning the standing of the 2013 AGM and by handing over the Society's property.

In response it was stated that the EC fully recognised that Mr Bellamy's work for the Society justified the award; however, his campaign against individual members of the EC and refusal to accept any decision made by the present EC left it with little option in order to maintain the orderly operation of The Society; had it been vengeful, the EC would have taken some form of action much earlier; had there been another way the EC would have adopted it; the Motion allowed scope for Mr Bellamy to be accepted into ordinary membership at any time in the future and for the award of Honorary Life Membership to be reviewed thereafter.

The Meeting agreed to split the EC's Motion into two parts with each part voted upon separately as follows:

PART A: "That, in consideration of the actions and conduct of former Vice President Mr Paul Bellamy brought before this meeting and which it condemns as unacceptable and prejudicial to the orderly operation of The Society, this meeting hereby revokes the award of Honorary Life Membership of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain made to Mr Paul Bellamy at the 2013 Annual General Meeting of The Society."

PART B: "That, in consideration of the actions and conduct of former Vice President Mr Paul Bellamy brought before this meeting and which it condemns as unacceptable and prejudicial to the orderly operation of The Society, this meeting directs that former Vice President Mr Paul Bellamy's membership of The Society in any form be terminated with immediate effect and shall be renewed only at the discretion of the members expressed at a general meeting of The Society."

PART A was then put to the vote by secret ballot: 54 votes were cast:

For the Motion - 38; Against - 8; Abstentions - 8.

PART B was then put to the vote by secret ballot: 55 votes were cast:

For the Motion - 43; Against - 4; Abstentions - 8.

Members were thanked for their attendance and allowing proceedings to be conducted in an orderly and considerate manner and the EGM was declared closed at 11.55 a.m.

WEB SITE NEWS

WHAT'S ON
the web site

www.mbsgb.org.uk

Have you visited our web site yet?

If not, here are some things that you can find there.

News

Up to date news about the society and members. Please report any useful information so that members can be informed.

Members' Section (user name & password in the latest journal)

The Constitution, a list of past presidents, a précis of AGM and committee meetings. Log of society meetings and an outline history of the society.

Also urgent messages if appropriate. A list of the present Executive Committee, including full contact details.

Subscription Renewal

You may pay your subscription on line using PayPal or most debit and credit cards. New members may also join in this way.

Musical Box Register

Information on how to register your cylinder musical boxes and add them to the list of over 10,000 already registered. You may also download the necessary form to submit your musical box information to the Registrar.

Auction Houses, Museums, Restorers and Suppliers are all listed on separate pages.

Tune Lists

Lists of tunes known to exist for many instruments. You may help update this information using your own collection and using the on line form.

Archive

The Society Archives provide a comprehensive reference source on Mechanical Music. Members can submit enquiries to the Archivist via

this page, who will find matching documentation and provide copies where possible.

Gallery

Pictures of musical boxes owned by our members

Musical Box Sounds

A selection of musical box tunes.

The Journal

Aimed at potential new members we show some examples from a recent journal "The Music Box" so that they may see what we have to offer.

Local Groups

This page lists the areas in which our local groups are situated, with a UK map for quick reference. A click on a particular location will take you to the latest report of that group's last meeting, which should give you a taste of their activities.

Forthcoming Events

A comprehensive list of future national and local meetings of the Society, as well as some other organisations. If you are attending a meeting, contact details and directions are usually supplied on this page. If you know of any activities proposed by other societies, please notify our web master so that they can be included.

WEB SITE INFORMATION

The current user name for the

Members' Section of the web site is

USER NAME:

discbox

PASSWORD:

lecoultre

Both lower case letters

This will change from time to time

NEW MEMBERS

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

3180 Thomas Jansen Germany
3181 Martha Wilkinson U.S.A.

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 we hope that even more members will come along and join in.

FOR SALE

Fine automaton of a monkey, seated beneath trees playing a flute with a dog jumping around in front. Under glass dome. Rare piece. £2950.

Automaton of a beautiful lady holding a mirror in one hand and a powder puff in the other. No. 4 on back of neck. Key marked L.B. large dome. £2950

Lovely rural scene automaton of a ship rocking gently on the sea, a train crossing a bridge, a water wheel turning and a windmill. 2 airs. Glass dome circa 1890. £950.00

Talking book of animal noises. German. £95

Jeu de Course, French horse racing game. £95.00

Busker's reed organ end 19th century. £375.00

Christie's Old Organ, written by Mrs. O.F. Walton. Essential for everyone with a Hicks type instrument!

All open to offers. Tel 029 2056 3605

WANTED

Instruments Coelophone, Chordephon, Double-Reed Ariel Organette, Polyphon 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ inch [50cm] coin-op; Discs for Polyphon 17 inch or 45cm with Bells; Olympia 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch; 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

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2014

- | | |
|---|---|
| 20 th – 25 th August | Musical Museum, Kew. Special 'Open week' - Free admission. Further details at www.musicalmuseum.co.uk |
| 22 nd – 24 th August | Llandrindod Wells Street Organ Festival. Part of the annual Victorian Festival (16 th -24 th August). |
| 6 th September | Essex Group Meeting, St Margaret's Church Hall, Doddinghurst Nr. Brentwood Essex CM15 0QH. 10.30 Coffee, 11.00 Start; Afternoon 2-4pm Organ Grind and Mechanical Music. Bring an instrument to play or demonstrate; and a packed lunch; Details and Directions on Website or Contact Robert Ducat-Brown: 01438 712585. |
| 27 th – 31 st August | Great Dorset Steam Fair, Tarrant Hinton, Nr Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8HX

13 th September Provisional date for next Wessex Group Meeting. Venue in Winchester area contingent on numbers expected. Contact Alison Biden to express interest and for further information. 01962 861350 ali_biden@hotmail.com NB underscore between all and biden |
| 12 th – 14 th September | Bedford Steam Fair. Old Warden Park. Bedfordshire. SG18 9DX. Admission includes entry to the Shuttleworth Collection of vintage aeroplanes. http://www.bseps.org.uk/rally.html |
| 26 th – 28 th September | MBSGB Autumn Meeting, Durham. Includes visits to Bowes Museum Silver Swan, Beamish Museum, plus talks and demonstrations. |
| 5 th October | Cotton Museum Enthusiasts' Day. Cotton Mechanical Music Museum. Blacksmiths Road. Cotton. Stowmarket. Suffolk. IP14 4QN |
| 7 th – 12 th October | MBSI Annual Convention. Weston, nr Fort Lauderdale. Florida. USA. NOTE: MBSI rules now permit MBSGB members to attend even if they are not members of the MBSI. |
| 11 th – 12 th October | Milton Keynes Organ Festival. Milton Keynes Museum, McConnell Drive, Wolverton. Milton Keynes. MK12 5EL |
| 18 th October | MBSGB Midlands Group Meeting, Derby. 11.00 start. Details from Nicholas Simons. 01332 760576. njas@btinternet.com |
| 19 th October | Oktoberfest. Organ rally with traditional German organs. Mizens Railway. Barrs Lane. Woking. Surrey. GU21 2JW (Mizens Railway is 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge, steam, over a mile long) |
| 6 th December | MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. John Phillips. 01584 781118 phillipsjohn398@gmail.com |
| 2015 | Proposed trip to Germany. Contact John Phillips |

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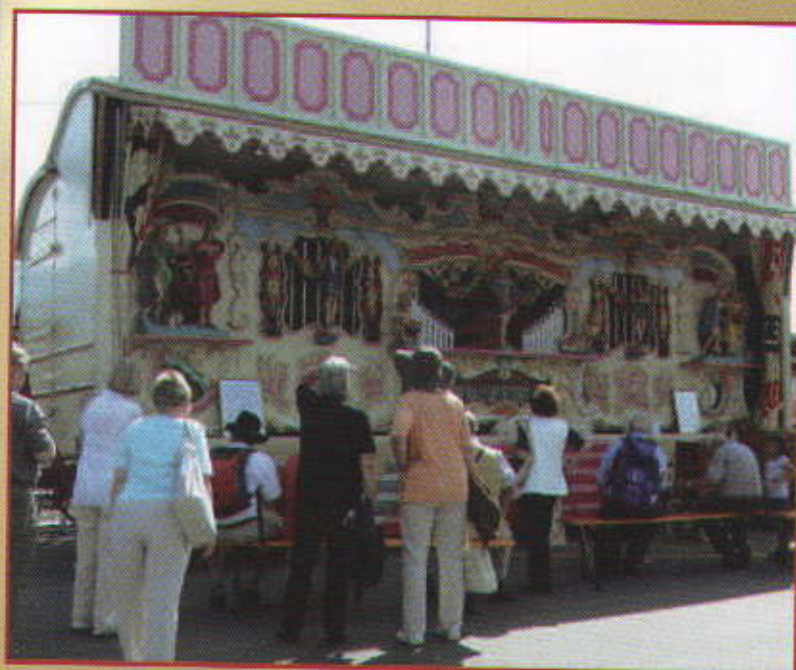
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Espagnole Automaton by Lambert, c. 1885
With Jumeau head, in original costume.
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129th Specialty Auction »Mechanical Music & Automata«

24 May 2014



Early Parisian Silver-Gilt Musical Box with Neoclassical Micro-Mosaic Lid, c. 1840s
With rare Parisian guarantee stamp.
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Musical Box with Dancing Dolls by Langdorf, 1890
Audio-visual late 19th Century parlour entertainment.
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Rare »Piece à Oiseaux« Musical Box by Ami Rivenc, c. 1870
With 16-note organ for birdsong, automaton bird in glazed "bower". Wonderful operatic repertoire!
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Magicienne Musical Automaton by Roulet et Decamps, c. 1885
With stamped Jumeau bisque portrait head ('10').
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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
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Early Cylinder Musical Box, c. 1820(!)
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Contemporary Automaton by Michel Bertrand: 'Dresseur des Chien'
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