

The **Music Box**

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue

Mobilis in Mobili

Automatic Dreams

A Visit to Musée Baud

*Obituary - Dr Jan Jaap
Haspels*

*Fourth Supplement to
Musical Box Tune Sheets*

*ANRI's Little Musical
Treasures*

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Cover photo: A three train fusée driven musical clock playing seven tunes on twelve bells with 13 hammers, the quarter striking on a further four bells and hour striking on one large bell, 17 bells in all. Made by S & J Joyce (note – not S & C), of Lombard Street, London, around 1825 – 1830. It has a painted dial and a pull cord repeat. It is mentioned on pages 302-3 of *Musical Clocks* by Arthur Ord-Hume.

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'A common challenge for mechanical music associations is to spread their knowledge and passion, especially to the younger generation ...'

Flavio
Pedrazzini
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'The result is a film posing the question why musical boxes, so detached from 21st century means of creating music, still have a unique and captivating charm ...'

Florence
Kennard
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One of the world's greatest experts in Mechanical Music, Dr Jan Jaap Leonard Haspels, had died. His obituary by Arthur Ord-Hume



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A small party from the Teme Valley Winders went on a one-week tour of Switzerland last year, which included a visit to the Musée Baud at L'Auberson.



John Harrold
P188



Officers of the MBSGB and their duties

President: Alison Biden
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01962 861350 ali_biden@hotmail.com

Joint Vice-President: Robert Yates
901 Glenshaw Ave, Glenshaw, Pennsylvania PA15116 USA

Joint Vice-President: John Phillips
Eastham Grange, Eastham, Nr Tenbury Wells,
Worcs WR15 8NP
Tel: 01584 781118 phillipsjohn398@gmail.com

Treasurer & Subscriptions Secretary: John Farmer
8 The Lea, Kidderminster, Worcs DY11 6JY
Tel: 01562 741108 john@musicanic.com
(to whom all enquiries about subscriptions should be addressed)

Membership Secretary: Kevin McElhone
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01536 726759 kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com
(to whom all applications and enquiries about new membership should be addressed)

Correspondence Secretary:
Nicholas Simons
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01332 760576 njasmbs@btinternet.com
(to whom all correspondence should be sent)

Meetings Secretary: Position vacant.
Please consult another Committee member for details of who to contact regarding meetings enquiries.

Recording Secretary: David Worrall MBE
Tel: 01962 882269 worrall@ercall87.freemove.co.uk

Editor: (Non-committee Member)
Richard Mendelsohn
18 Quarry Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 0JG
Tel: 01962 855068 richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com

Archivist: Alison Biden
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
Tel: 01962 861350 ali_biden@hotmail.com

Advertising Secretary: Mark Singleton
preesallpremier@aol.com

Auction Organiser: John Ward,
johnlawrenceward@btinternet.com

Webmaster: Position vacant
Until further notice all enquiries regarding the website should be addressed to Robert Ducat-Brown,
robert.ducat-brown@virgin.net

Member: Nicholas Newble
nichols@newble.co.uk

Registrar (Non-committee Member): Arthur Cunliffe
MBSGB, PO Box 373, Welwyn AL6 0WY
adcunliffe@btinternet.com

Editorial

There is a great variety of interesting articles in this, the first edition of 2016. We have several of importance and note. First off we have an article from Flavio Pedrazzini, the talented maker of musical instruments in Italy, about his mission to make mechanical music interesting to young people. He took his latest instrument to the Maker Faire in Rome where he entertained many people of all ages. Then we have a report on the young film maker, Florence Kennard, who is so inspired by mechanical music and the craft that goes with it. One of the Society's key aims is to stimulate the interest of younger generations to become musical box lovers. Then we have a short report from new member, Jenny Weaver, on how you can make feather brushes, an essential tool for restoring musical boxes. Elsewhere you will enjoy the pictures taken during a visit to the Musée Baud at L'Auberson.

It with great sadness that we report the recent death of Dr Jan Jaap Haspels, one of the greatest exponents of mechanical music. His passing will be regretted by many, but his enormous contribution to our field will be widely appreciated and reflected upon. You will find his obituary in this edition.

Richard Mendelsohn

Please submit all material to the Editor for publication in the form of Word documents, JPEGs or PDF files, at richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com
Material in the form of hard copy is equally acceptable, in which case please post it to me at my address at left.

The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal which relate to the study and appreciation of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments. The Editor reserves the right to amend or refuse any submissions. Any contribution is accepted for publication on the understanding that the author is solely responsible for the correctness of the facts stated therein, and also for any opinions expressed within. Its publication in the Journal does not necessarily imply that the Society, its officers or the Editor agree with those opinions. The Society, its officers and the Editor do not accept, and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in contributions which are published in the Journal. The Music Box is published by the MBSGB quarterly.

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'Mobilis in Mobili' A Mechanical Music Ensemble for the Younger Generation

by Flavio Pedrazzini

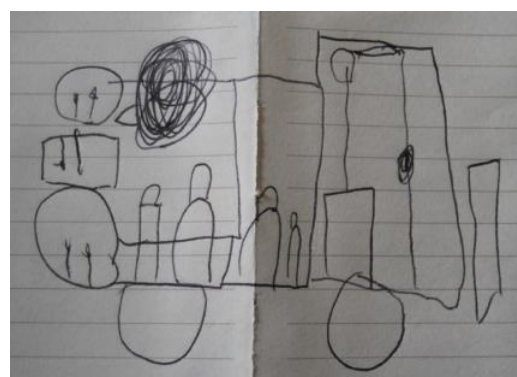
AMMILAB is the laboratory of the Italian Mechanical Music Association (AMMI). Convinced of the cultural and historical importance, of the AMMI's activities, the AMMILAB team provides its experience and passion to develop technology-based devices to record, archive and revive old music and mechanical musical instruments. We are musicians, technicians and programmers, automation and music lovers, dedicating part of our free time to actively supporting the AMMI mission to preserve priceless musical treasures.

A common challenge for mechanical music associations is to spread their knowledge and passion, especially to the younger generation. Events called Maker Faires are a great opportunity for this. They are visited by many young technology enthusiasts who are amazed by an organ that works by perforated cardboard. We realised this during the Maker Faire in Rome in 2013.

So to take to the Maker Faire in Rome in 2015 we had invent something new, which was obviously related to mechanical music, but at the same time technologically modern. We decided to build a new 'Automatic Musical Group', which was made up of a street organ with 29 notes, a percussion set and a slide whistle, or lotus flute. The organ could be operated by either a MIDI system or by perforated cardboard. For young technologists it was surprising to see the encoding of the music crossing from one side of the organ to the other by turning the crank handle. We had assembled the set of instruments on a vintage-style cart, designed and built to allow us to transport it everywhere easily. (See pictures to the right.) Like a small fairground organ it could play while being moved from one booth to another within the fair.



The bass drum was installed on the underside of the cart, just off the ground, vaguely recalling an old steam machine. The tambourine, a wood block, a cymbal crash and a cymbal HiHat were placed on the upper side.



How a 5-year-old child sees mechanical music



The main novelty was the slide whistle: 'Mobilis in Mobili' ('Moving in a moving thing', motto in the *Nautilus* by Jules Verne). People stop to listen if something plays, but if something is moving they are even more excited. In the past, few organs exploited the lotus flute to add a different sound, which is a bit ancestral and reminiscent of the Theremin. The set works very well. The slide whistle plays song themes accompanied by the organ, or they can play a duet. The slide whistle has been realised using a steel tube with its external part covered with wood. The drawstring (a brass cylinder) runs inside the tube.

The instrument has an extension of two octaves, allowing great flexibility in arrangements. In order to obtain a good sound quality it was necessary to adapt the air pressure to the position of the drawstring: low notes require low pressure, high notes require high pressure. The air is taken from the organ bellows, and a second reserve bellows, with variable pressure, is connected to the slide whistle. One motor moves the coulisse, and another motor adjusts the pressure of the bellows, both position controlled in a closed loop.

The custom-designed software permits the tuning of each note, and sets the amplitude of the oscillations and the frequency of the slide, so

generating a vibrato effect. A valve controls the air flow to generate the staccato or the slide effect. Finally, to entertain the audience further, the software controls an RGB LED strip, varying the light colour depending on the note being played, from red to blue, visually representing the sound frequency.

But all this work would have been incomplete without

proper music. Either classical or modern, it is not enough to carry or fit the music to the scale of the instruments, but *ad hoc* arrangements are needed to be played in streets and squares. As for ancient fair organs or barrel pianos, not only sound and timbre but also arrangements were conceived for this purpose. Therefore for our little ensemble also we needed specific musical arrangements. We were very lucky since Maestro M Gianotto collaborated with our team. In addition to being a musician and music arranger, he is also a real noteur and is able to get the most out of the music machine.

In October 2015 we brought this mechanical music instrument to the Maker Faire in Rome. More than 100,000 visitors of all ages attended the event (the biggest in Europe of its kind), but most of them, especially young people, did not know before of the existence of mechanical music.



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You can watch and listen to this remarkable machine in action on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/tch?v=W57t9IVeYIc>

Editor's note: This article was commissioned by the MBSGB and has subsequently been offered to other organisations.

The experience was fantastic, a lot of people were fascinated by the mission and the activities of AMMI and AMMILAB, and we are proud of having been awarded two 'Maker of Merit' Blue Ribbons at the Rome Maker Faire.

In this technological world, a street organ working with perforated cartons ... is still able to astonish people!



Flavio and Matteo (AMMILAB)

Automatic Dreams

An update on Florence Kennard's film

By the time this magazine reaches you it will be just over a year since young filmmaker, Florence Kennard, first sent her initial message to MBSGB

'I am a film maker currently studying for my MA in Experimental Film at Kingston University. My practice is focused specifically within the field of collections - both institutional and personal collections of objects.

I have recently acquired twelve Reuge 'composer busts' and I have the following twelve composers: Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Beethoven, Handel, Bach, Wagner, Chopin, Mozart, Brahms, Schubert, Haydn and Mendelssohn.

They are such intriguing pieces, and my plan is to use the medium of film to investigate the physical details, enliven the objects, explore their sound and their beauty, but also explore the history of these objects.

And this is where I'm hoping you might be able to help me out. I was wondering if it would be possible to speak to someone who would be able to tell me more about not only the history and legacy of this particular collection of music boxes, but also the musical box in general?'

locations, from people's private collections to MBSGB national meetings, and on location in Switzerland. The MBSGB was instrumental in helping Florence obtain funding by directing her to MMD (Mechanical Music Digest) to promote her *Kickstarter* crowd-funding bid. MBSGB and several members as individuals backed her, enabling her to travel to Ste Croix, where she filmed at the Reuge factory, and recorded the profound reflections of author Jean Claude Piguet.

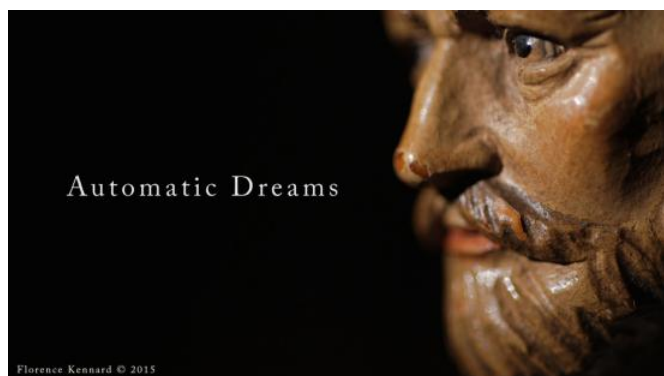


Anyone who has ever been involved in creating something will be familiar with the dilemmas posed by having to make a selection. The more raw material one has, the harder the choice. Although Florence was intrigued by the passion mechanical music could inspire in its adherents and considered developing this as the theme of her film, in the end she returned to her original objective.

The result is a well-constructed and accomplished achievement, which poses the question as to how and why musical



boxes, so detached from 21st century means of creating music, still have a



This was the start of a huge journey of discovery, as Florence learned not only about the little musical figures she had acquired,

but also the whole gamut of mechanical musical instruments, an overwhelming and bewildering array. Florence's interest leapt from musical novelties to cylinder boxes, to singing birds, automata and player pianos – and those people who collected or were just plainly passionate about them.

Hours of film were shot in several

unique and captivating charm. It also goes some way to briefly answering this, and although the viewer is left begging for more, Jean Claude Piguet articulates very eloquently the thoughts which many musical box enthusiasts must share, and muses on the magical quality of these special instruments.



On the technical side, Florence demonstrates considerable talent in the combination of shots, sound and commentary, many sections

of the film developing their own rhythm. An example is where the camera lingers on the fabrication of a comb, then switches to another subject, then back to the comb. Elsewhere the camera lingers over machinery mesmerizingly moving back and forth. The effect is both to convey a sense of timeless continuity, and remind us that we are dealing with machines – but machines with a beating heart of their own.



Although it was previously shown at the Autumn 2015 national meeting in Derby, the MBSGB hopes to provide other opportunities for viewing this delightful little gem. We look forward to Florence producing more film on this subject, and wish her many hours of pleasure from her new-found interest.

To watch a 49-second trailer for her film on-line, go to:

<https://vimeo.com/144386831>

Editor's note: Florence's interest in musical boxes was piqued by finding at a sale a set of ANRI composers busts, which today would be considered inexpensive musical novelties. The suggestion that an interest in cheap musical novelties can lead to a better appreciation of quality musical boxes is not new. Back in 1967, our sister society the MBSI reprinted an article from a London newspaper where MBSGB founder member, Samuel Sunley, expressed the same opinion – and we are here reprinting that article.

Samuel Sunley was a well-known restorer of watches, musical boxes and automata who demonstrated some of his collection pieces to both the public and royalty including Queen Elizabeth II. One of his achievements was to restore the Bowes' Collection's famous automaton the Silver Swan which members of the MBSGB had the opportunity to see in action during our 2014 national meeting. On that occasion we also had a presentation about a more recent restoration of the Swan.

Some of Mr Sunley's papers are in the MBSGB archive, and he features briefly in the society's 50th Anniversary DVD film compilation. You can also see online more extensive film footage (presented as a set of stills) of Samuel Sunley at

www.britishpathe.com

and entering his name in the search page, or by simply Googling his name.



Viewing the Bowes' Collection Silver Swan

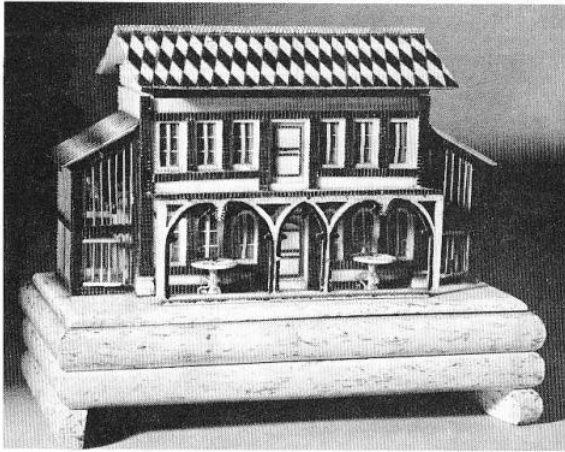
Meet the Members in the News

THE following is from an article in the London SUN, with the title "The Booming Sound of Small Music," by Alec Snobel.

It must be the sweetest commercial in the business - the tune of an advertising jingle tinkling away in a quaint Victorian musical box. Master-craftsman Samuel Sunley, sixth generation of a family of Swiss watch-makers, built it into an antique snuff-box for a tycoon.

In his tiny shop in George Street, Marylebone, London, Mr. Sunley told me that he has also made cigarette boxes that play *Wouldn't It Be Lovely* from *My Fair Lady*, a medley from *West Side Story* and *Tea for Two* cha-cha-cha. A musical box in the shape of a television set which shows six scenes from the Coronation and plays the National Anthem has sold in thousands. "These novelties, with cheap modern musical boxes from Japan and holiday souvenirs from Spain and Italy, have stimulated interest in antique ones," said Mr. Sunley. "I've never known such demand for old musical boxes in a lifetime in the craft."

He was sitting surrounded by his mechanical models - pretty dolls and pierrots dancing to minuet music, little birds with fluttering



INKSTAND REPRESENTING FRANZ SCHUBERT'S HOUSE PLAYS 'AVE MARIA' (Photo by Universal Lens-Craft, London, England)

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SAMUEL SUNLEY WITH MUSICAL ACROBAT THAT DOES A HANDSTAND (Photograph by THE TIMES, London, England)

plumage trilling bursts of song, rosewood cabinets playing hurdy-gurdy tunes, ebony jewel cases tinkling *Home, Sweet Home*. The pride of his pieces - he is a collector as well as a dealer - is Schubert's inkstand, carved from ivory in a miniature reproduction of the composer's house, from which emerge the fluting notes of *Ave Maria*.

He showed me a French clock with a Swiss movement, made in 1770, which plays a tune every hour. It has needed repair only four times - 1813, 1840, 1940 and 1960.

Another treasure is an acrobat who, performing to music, bows low, moves her right hand and arm, and then slowly proceeds to balance upside down on her left hand. Mr. Sunley values the piece at 2,000 pounds. But it's not for sale. An 18th century Swiss gold and enamel bird cage containing singing birds fetched 1,800 guineas at Christie's. Many such family heirlooms on thousands of British parlor mantelpieces could bring in 500 pounds upward.

Queen Victoria was presented with a musical bustle that played *God Save the Queen* when she sat down. For once, she was amused. ■■

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A Brief Look at the Art of ANRI's Little Musical Treasures by Mark Singleton

When I first contemplated this article, my outlook was primarily focused towards a theme of introducing fellow members to a product which includes items of mechanical music that are not only great fun but can be collected on a shoe string budget. However, it's important to stress that these items, despite their relative low value and whimsical nature, are on closer examination fantastic examples of intrinsic folk art that mercifully still turn up both online and in the local saleroom, where a keen eye will pick one up across the room.



It all began in the late 19th century when Alois Riffesser travelled to the major European cities to sell the carved wood figurines and toys which were bought from the farmers of the Gröden Valley located in the Dolomite region of the Alps (see picture left). This area in South Tyrol was part of Austria-Hungary at the time until being annexed by Italy in 1919.

In 1912 Josef Anton Riffesser founded the ANRI Company, which he named using the first two letters of his second and last names. After World War I, where he was in a prisoner of war camp in Siberia, he formulated his plan for a woodcarving company.



He created his own models which he distributed successfully, mainly in the Alpine region. Josef's wife, Carolina Riffeser, ran the company during the difficult years of the war and in the absence of her husband. She was especially influential, as her social position was well accepted and she gained the confidence of the home workers.

When Anton Adolf Riffeser took over in 1945 he transformed the ANRI Company, adopting a more industrial model which allowed for better quality control and distribution to new markets. He was followed by Ernst Riffeser, who was able to enlist the services of many well-known artists including Juan Ferrándiz, Sarah Kay and others. The ANRI Company today is run by Thomas Riffeser of the same family.

The majority of ANRI's output was, and probably still can be regarded as, souvenir items. All sorts of pieces have been crafted, from fabulous solitary and group figures, to the whimsical corkscrews, bottle openers, stoppers, pourers and desk sets, hand carved from wood native to the area (alpine pine, lime, ash, pear and maple). Many items display the same attention to detail as do those of the somewhat earlier, and without doubt pioneering master carvers of the Swiss industry centred not that far away in Berne and Brienz. I have noted that one or two of the wood carvers employed by Ed Binder were in fact from the Gröden Valley.

One product line from the home of ANRI that's becoming increasingly collectable and is still available, is the impressive collection of twelve busts depicting some of the world's best-known composers. First produced in the 1950s and 60s, and they are fitted with a 38-note Reuge or Thorens (Swiss) musical mechanism, housed within the wooden pedestal base upon which each bust sits.

Each piece measures 5 1/2 inches by 3 inches, ota.

The twelve composers are: Mozart, Brahms, Beethoven, Bach, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, Chopin, Wagner, Verdi, Handel and Haydn.

The composer's name is normally engraved on a metallic brass plate attached to the front of the base.

Currently ANRI wood carvings are available and seemingly enjoying a renaissance. The main market focus appears to be the USA, but I have seen a handful of specialist outlets in the Black Forest in Germany. The pieces produced are of a stunning quality, painted in the traditional polychrome method that allows the grain of the wood to show through.

In a follow-up article we will be looking at the early ANRI pieces from the inter-war period, in particular the comical items that have a function, such as those that involve basic automata, and those with a music box.

Register News No 89

By Arthur Cunliffe

The number of boxes on the Register now stands at over 10,700 thanks to the contributions of several Society members who have put a great deal of effort into sending me information. It is regrettable that there are many members of the Society who have not sent in details of their boxes, and I would ask those members to do so as soon as possible, not only for security reasons, but also for further research.

I understand that Society membership is holding up well with new members coming in all the time. Please play your part and renew your membership if you have not done so already.

I have had a response from a few people offering to become lookout personnel for our 'Neighbourhood Watch' system. I send my thanks to all those who have offered to assist. However, more people are needed and I would ask you all, especially those connected with auction houses and the musical box trade, to respond to this appeal. I know that thefts are few and far between, but it is always safer to be forearmed and ready to respond to an incident. Please let me know if you are willing to take part in this venture as more volunteers are urgently needed.

I mentioned *Pouces* and *Lignes* in a recent Register News and I am pleased that another member, who is also a very well-known restorer, has given me a lot of help in sorting out the old system into something we can understand today. It would seem that using the old French metric system, a *ligne* is one half of a *pouce*. A *ligne* is 0.216 cm

so a *pouce* would be 4.264 cm. *Lignes* were mainly quoted when measuring the diameter of clock and watch glasses and I understand that is still so today. Looking at various boxes that have this sort of information listed about them, I find that most seem to be inaccurate, having a cylinder that is shorter than one would expect given this information. One has to ask it if really matters anyway. Nowadays I believe that it would be sensible to work solely in centimetres and not use inches or any other measurement. I know many British, especially the older members of Society, are still going through the change from Imperial measurements to metric, but we all have to move on with the times.

Most manufacturers made cylinder boxes that played National Airs or Hymns as they often described them. It was interesting to get details of a box that played a National Hymn I had never heard of before. It was a Ducommun Girod box in the 33,000 series and one tune was *Hymno Patriotico de Chile*. The box was known to have been in an embassy in Chile and it was brought back when the owner finished a tour of duty there. It must have been special order and taken out to Chile by an embassy member of staff when new. I cannot imagine there will be another one in existence or that another one was ever made.

Another unintended use of the Register that has come about is that it helps to establish the provenance of any box. I never thought in the early days that the Register would be widely quoted and the information passed on to a new

owner, but this has happened. Thinking about it, I suppose that once recorded on the Register, such information can add a great deal to the box and become a talking point in the future. What is now clear is that the Register is the only source we now have for building up the history and provenance of cylinder musical boxes. The Register is part of the MBSGB, which has supported the task over many years. I will always give priority to current members when answering their queries. It would be most helpful if a membership number is given when making a request for help.

For those of you who are unfortunate enough to have a box without a tune sheet, the Register can offer a glimmer of hope especially if the box was made by Nicole Frères. The information stored may just help especially when another box with the same gamme number is discovered.

Some tunes that were popular in their day are now unknown and there is little chance of finding out what those tunes were. For instance who would know the melody for the *New Iris Waltz* or the *Pearl of Peking*?

Many boxes recently reported for registering are now coming in via the internet or Ebay. A lot of these do have photographs of tune sheets posted, and so the tunes and the design of the tune sheets become part of the Register. Now there are supplementary files of over 9,000 photographs to go alongside the Register. All this is made possible by the advances in computer technology and the advent of very large storage disks.

There are quite a large number of boxes that play *The Carnival of Venice*. Many do not mention a composer but there are a few that credit the melody to Paganini (1782-1840). Although he was a composer and arranger, Paganini was most famously known as a violin virtuoso. It is likely that Paganini's arrangement of *The Carnival of Venice* was used by musical box arrangers but Chopin's variations *Souvenir de Paganini* may have been another source. *The Carnival of Venice* was a long-established folk tune which would have been known to many. What is certainly true is that Paganini had exceptionally long fingers which enabled him to play the violin in a way that most other violinists were unable to do. It is said he was able to play three octaves across four strings in a hand span which was truly exceptional.

To conclude this Register News, I have illustrated a type of tune sheet that is on two identical E. Karrer Hoffman boxes with serial numbers 6567 and 6568, along with a print of the manufacturer's plaque on 6567. The amazing thing is that both boxes are in the same country and are housed less than 80 miles from each other. Where they have been during previous years is anyone's guess. Without the advent of powerful databases and computers finding these facts would have been an almost impossible feat.



Manufacturer's plaque on Karrer Hoffman box No 6567

Stephen T.P. Kember Ltd

B.Sc.(Hons) A.M.I.Mech. Eng.

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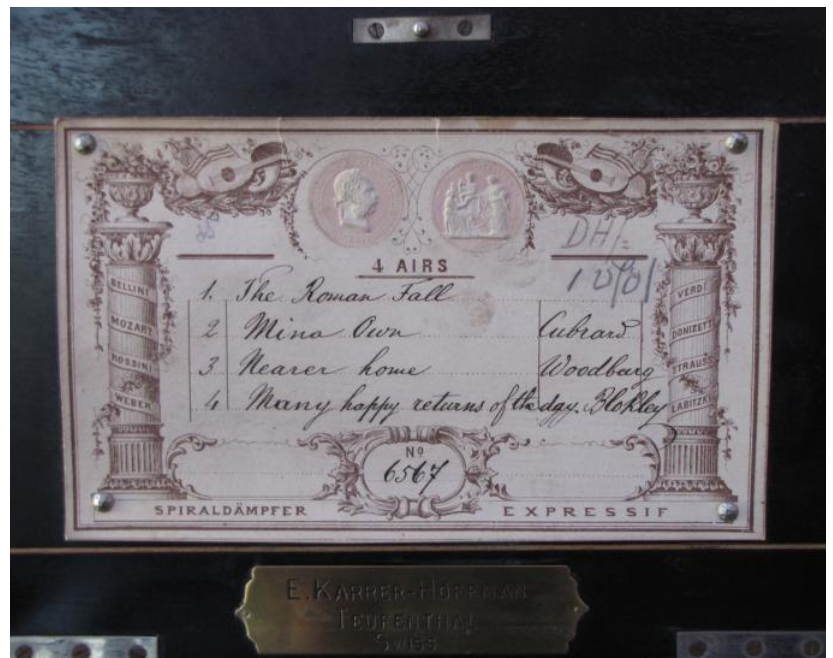
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Tune sheet on Karrer Hoffman box No 6567

Like them or loathe them there is no doubt that the one-eyed monster in the corner of the room is here to stay!

Restoration Matters!

20 - Making a Feather Brush

by Jennifer Weaver

New member Jennifer Weaver (Jenny) obtained a degree in Earth Sciences from the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. She taught science, and



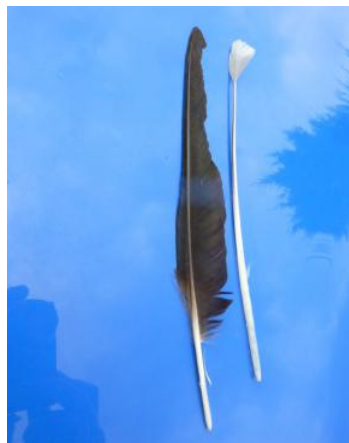
Jenny Weaver - new member

later music as a peripatetic assistant. Showing an interest in musical boxes and other mechanical instruments from the age of two, she was always interested in things mechanical. She recalls pumping the church organ during power cuts in the Second World War. Her father mended clocks and watches as a hobby, and was introduced to feather brushes for cleaning intricate mechanisms such as clockwork by a friend who worked in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter. Jenny gave a talk recently on feather brushes to the Teme Valley Winders, one of our regional groups, presented here for a wider audience.

Everyone knows that feathers will split apart when stroked the wrong way, and reunite when preened from base to tip. The vanes on a feather can be likened to a hybrid of a garden rake and a baby's hairbrush. The hamuli or hooks on the anterior edge of the barbule interlock with the grooved ridges on the posterior edge. The barbules line each side of the barbs, which

together form the vane.

To make a feather brush, you need to select the right feathers. Birds shed feathers in the Autumn, and again in the Spring. Any species of bird is suitable, provided the feathers are firm and tidy, and a good size: fluffy, downy feathers are not suitable.



On the left is a whole feather, on the right a feather stripped to leave a brush and handle.

When they preen, birds deposit a waxy/oily waterproofing on their feathers. This must be removed first by washing with a drop of washing up liquid in half a teacup of boiled water, wiping with a lint-free cloth, and then with surgical spirit. Make sure the surgical spirit is pure, and does not contain any moisturiser. Then wipe the feather again with a lint-free cloth.

To make up the brush, hold the tip of the feather at a suitable length from the top, and strip downwards the vanes below your finger to leave a handle with a bushy tuft at the top. This small brush will pick up minute specks of debris, and those very tiny fine hair particles that find

their way into watch and similar mechanisms.



Close up of tip of feather forming the brush

By using a jeweller's loupe or a strong magnifying glass, even delicate escapement springs can be cleaned with a steady hand and a small firm feather, removing debris which is too small to be seen with the naked eye.



Close up of a feather vane. The barbules, and hamuli of the barbs are clearly seen.

As you work, wipe the brush with a lint-free cloth and a drop of surgical spirit to remove from the feather tip the accumulated debris and any oil film. After use, store the feathers away from direct light.

Journal Jottings No 1

by Arthur Cunliffe

It is easy to forget that the membership of the Society is continually changing, with new members joining all the time. These new members may not have much experience of buying a musical box, so Arthur has put together a few notes to help with choosing one, and also to remind old hands that it is never too late to make a mistake.

There are three golden rules to follow when buying a box:-

- 1) Choose a box that plays tunes you really like.
- 2) Always follow Rule 1.
- 3) Buy the best you can afford at the time.

The really tricky bit comes when trying to define what is best when given a choice of boxes to buy. It might help to start the other way round, and decide what boxes you are not going to purchase.

You may have heard someone say that a box has had a run. That should ring alarm bells immediately. A run is when a box suddenly releases all of its spring power, causing the tunes to be played in an uncontrolled manner and at great speed. This always damages the movement to either a greater or lesser degree depending on how much spring pressure there was at the time of the run. But damage there will be.

The illustration shows a comb with three teeth broken out towards the treble end. This is typical of damage that can happen when a run has occurred. You may be assured by the vendor that it makes little difference to the sound of the box, but out of every tune on the

box there are bound to be at least three missing notes, and indeed these notes may be used many times.

The run will also have caused some of the pins on the cylinder to break off or bend over in all directions. Again this will have an adverse effect on the melody, and so the tunes will sound jumbled with missing or squeaking notes. Added to all this there is likely to be damage to the governor and its wheels, plus associated damage to other wheel work on the movement. Unless the box is desirable for other reasons, the wise person will not be tempted to buy it.

Of course nearly everything in a box can be repaired at a cost. To replace missing teeth will cost upwards of £50 each and take a long time. Cylinders can have all their pins put in again, but again it is a long and expensive job. Add all these together and it becomes obvious that the expenditure would far exceed the market value of the box. Not the wisest thing to do!

If the box plays music that is particularly pleasing or is rarely heard then all the above advice can go out of the window. It all comes down to a matter of personal choice.

Having said a number of negative things, I will leave you with a few words of advice to make sure you play your part in preserving a musical box in the best possible condition. After all, they were made to be played and enjoyed, and so should not be kept as a lifeless exhibit as in a museum. Remember you are only the present custodian of the box, and someone else in the future will no doubt enjoy it too.

- Do not stop or move a musical box when it is half-way through a tune. If it has stopped during a tune, wind it up





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AutomataCon is a newly conceived convention of and for artists, collectors, historians, and enthusiasts of automata and related kinetic art. It is a 2½ day event being held March 18th-20th, 2016 at and in conjunction with the Morris Museum in Morristown, New Jersey, home of the Murtoth D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata. Go to <http://www.morrismuseum.org/mechanical-musical-instruments-automata>. The goal of the convention is to gather people from around the world to share ideas, build relationships, and grow interest in automata new and old. The convention will include a variety of private and public programming, including: social gatherings, museum tours, panel discussions, live demonstrations, workshops, maker-presentations, and an exhibition. There will also be a premier showing of the extremely rare 1928 film *Le Monde des Automates* in the museum's Bickford Theatre. Originally created as a silent film using hand-driven cameras, an accompanying sound track was added afterwards, making this one of the first Swiss-made sound films. It was intended to accompany Alfred Chapuis & Eduard Gélis' foundational two volume book of the same title, and documents some extremely rare automata plus a unique mechanical musical instrument, the *Violinista* by Boreau & Aubry (1918-22) in action. The true value of the convention will be the relationships built and knowledge shared when passionate people of common interest come together. Please visit the newly launched event website www.automatacon.org for more detail and in particular, to make your reservations. We'll be expecting to see you there!

Jeremie Ryder Conservator of the Guinness Collection Morris Museum

sufficiently so that it reaches the end of the tune and stops where it should.

- Do not wind a musical box up fiercely or too much. Those boxes that still have their Geneva stop work on the side of the spring barrel housing will not allow you to over wind or to run down completely.
- A musical box should start by itself when the stop/start lever is operated. If one has to touch the fly to start the box it is a sign that things are not quite what they should be.
- It is easy to be tempted to oil parts of a musical box, but this can cause problems when too much or the incorrect type oil has been used.
- Over-oiling a fly-wheel or governor, or using inappropriate oil, will quickly cause the oil to be flicked out over the right-hand end of the cylinder. This will in turn cause discolouration of the cylinder.
- Assuming the case is in reasonable condition and is not suffering from active woodworm, then polish it with a good quality wax furniture polish at least twice a year. Do this especially in early spring and autumn when woodworm are at their most active.
- Never leave your box in bright sunlight. It will fade the veneers and possibly overheat the workings.
- Never keep the box close to heat or exposed to central heating that is set too high, and certainly never keep it in a roof space where the heat of the summer will soon cause problems.

Please do not be put off buying a musical box and, as mentioned at the start of this article, always buy one that you like.

This, That and t'Other No 14

by Arthur Cunliffe

Arthur tells about an Ami-Rivenc cylinder musical box movement with some unusual features, which will interest aficionados of the genre.

Sometimes history is reflected in the music that a cylinder box plays. I know they all play airs of the Victorian era and sometimes of an earlier period, but just occasionally a programme turns up that points to a very specific date.

The *Famous Second Regiment* was a tune that turned up on three recent boxes that were added to the Register. Further investigation seemed to point to the fact that the 59th Nottinghamshire Regiment of Foot were the holders of this illustrious title. They were a distinguished regiment that fought in the Second Afghan War, returning to Britain in 1880. They were disbanded in 1884 when they were merged with the East Lancashire Regiment.

airs are listed below and I would be very surprised if any of you have come across them before.

Larghetto from the 2nd Symphony by Beethoven

Adagio from Sonata No 1 op 1 by Beethoven

Adagio Cantabile from Sonata 8 op 13 by Beethoven

Minuet and Trio from Sonata 18 op 31 No 3 by Beethoven

The rest of the list was made up of melodies by Mozart and Mendelssohn. *Spring Song* or *Song Without Words* by Mendelssohn finished the cycle. Someone somewhere loved Beethoven!

The early boxes attributed to Ami-Rivenc are very difficult to note with any degree of certainty. One can never be sure whether they were indeed made by Rivenc rather than Greiner or Bremond.

The first box on the Register that can be definitely noted as a Rivenc box is serial number 14679. It has Ami-Rivenc on an engraved plaque along with other details that leave no doubt at all as to the maker. From then onwards Bremond, Ami-Rivenc and Greiner boxes begin to differ, which along with other pointers makes identification a little easier.

Recently a movement turned up that threw a spanner in the works. This movement had a bedplate engraved with the name Rivenc alongside the serial number 5460, see Fig 1. It is the first Rivenc keywind box I've seen, and some 7,500 numbers earlier than all the others. Another difference is that the name is marked 'Rivenc' and not 'Ami-Rivenc', but I am sure Rivenc must have had something to do with making it. The movement is heavily pinned for repeat notes at the treble end, Fig 2. Unfortunately no case survives for this it.



Fig 1 Rivenc keywind box No 5460

There are some boxes that must have been made to special order, as their programmes are like no other. Such a box turned up lately that was made by Bremond. It is housed in a very good quality case and fortunately it still has an original *Isle Rousseau* type of tune sheet with the Bremond trade label on the top part of the card. Some of the eight



Fig 2 The movement is pinned for repeat notes at the treble end

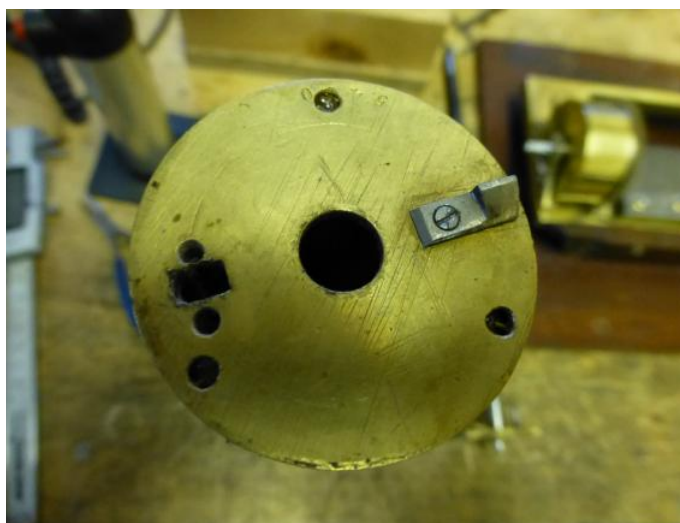


Fig 3 The end of the cylinder and the adjusting cam to get the cylinder into line



Fig 4 There is a tapped hole in the middle of the stop/start track on the great wheel

The photograph of the bedplate and the cleanness of the stamping surely leave no doubt as to who made the box, but why are there not more of these earlier boxes around? I ask all of you to search around everywhere to see if you can find another example of a Rivenc keywind box. Surely there cannot just be one?

There are two strange features about this movement that I have never seen before. Fig 3 shows the end of the cylinder and the adjusting cam to get the cylinder into line. Look carefully and you will see that there is no method of making any adjustments. So how did they do it? The only way I can think is to use shims under the cam.

The second unusual feature is that there is a tapped hole in the middle of the stop/start track on the great wheel Fig 4. Anything screwed into that hole would only have the effect of stopping the movement dead. So why is it there? Has anyone any ideas please?

Many thousands of tunes were arranged for musical boxes with many of them turning up time and time again. However, here are a selection of tunes found on what I presume are later boxes, which many will find just as enjoyable as the time-honoured favourites. As always I welcome help in identifying any arranger or composer, or better still please share it with us all in a letter to the editor.

The Maid of Timbuctoo by Barnard.

I Want to be an Actor Lady by Von Tilzer.

Meet me in St Louis Waltz by Mills.

Babes in Toyland Song of the Poet by Kerbert.

In Zanzibar my little Chimpanzee by Edwards.

Yale Varsity March by Johnson.

Good luck with your searching!

Obituary - Dr Jan Jaap Haspels

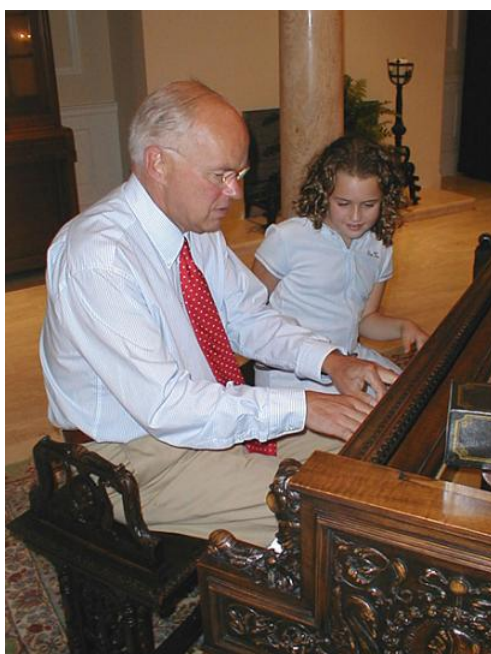
It is with deep regret that The MBSGB records the passing of one of the world's greatest experts in the field of Mechanical Music, Dr Jan Jaap Leonard Haspels.

Born 1940 in Utrecht, the son of a priest, he very quickly demonstrated an affinity with music. While at university he excelled at the Classics, which gave him a sound grounding in both language and literature. Throughout his life he had a love of language that encouraged him both to read and speak Chaucerian English as well as quoting extensively from the works of Shakespeare and the Classics. In music he was a talented performer on keyboards of all types, and a widely respected carillonneur in towers across Europe. When the Swiss Centre Carillon opened in 1985 he was invited to record the programme of music for it to play.

But it was his undoubted love of and devotion to mechanical music which set him apart from others, and when in 1970 he was able to take over a small museum of clockwork music housed in the cloisters of the University in Utrecht, he embarked on a career that would be outstanding.

Offered a notable building at Achter den Dom 12, Utrecht's former Post Office, it became the new home for the collection, which rapidly expanded from Dutch street organs through Belgian café organs and pianos to the finest musical boxes and clocks. A world-class restoration and conservation workshop was established nearby staffed with top experts in their fields.

Gaining both state and national recognition for what was now



effectively his institution, Haspels was fearless in his pursuit of people who could help the Museum expand, and a letter to the Dutch Royal Family served to initiate a life-long friendship with the Dutch Queen, who later opened many events for the Museum. As fundraiser or bursar he was uniquely adept at inspiring companies to donate to the collection and put their names to events.

As the Museum expanded, there came the chance to become tenant of one of Utrecht's great cathedral churches, the deconsecrated Buurkerk. This vast building was a major challenge: the equivalent of being listed, any interior work was to be entirely free-standing and not attached to the fabric of the building. Jan Jaap Haspels now embarked on a restoration of the city-centre building which uncovered 16th century wall paintings that had to be preserved. He also master-minded the creation of the new state-of-the-art museum which rose inside the shell of this historic building.

A 'double Doctor', in 1980 Drs J J Haspels joined an international

team of experts comprising Britain's Arthur W J G Ord-Hume and Italy's Dr Antonio Latanza to restore the hydraulic organ at the Quirinale Palace in Rome, creating the world's only playable water-organ. Two years later Haspels was also to the forefront when the same team undertook the restoration of Sazburg's Stier – the celebrated Bull of Salzburg – which played the music of Mozart's father as well as Eberlin and others. Again and another two years on, Haspels rebuilt one of the Haydn organ clocks.

Jan Jaap Haspels published works several of which are notable books including a major descriptive catalogue of the Museum's exhibits, but his major oeuvre was his *Automatic Playing Instruments, Their Mechanics and Their Music 1580-1820*, published in 1986. He retired from the Museum in 2006 whereupon the Dutch Queen appointed him a Royal Escort, a role in which he served for a year.

A man who was not always easy to work with, he set himself high standards and had little time for those who were less personally demanding. Nevertheless, he was without doubt one of the most educated, entertaining and professional people one might ever know. He will be widely missed by all who were honoured to call him a friend throughout Europe, the USA and, indeed, the whole world.

In retirement, Dr Haspels suffered from Alzheimer's disease and died peacefully on 5th February 2016. He was 75 years old. The MBSGB expresses its condolences to Josine Haspels and their two children Dirkjan and Charlotte.

A W J G Ord-Hume

Fourth Supplement to Musical Box Tune Sheets by H A V Bulleid

The publication by the MBSGB in December 2015 of the Fourth Supplement to the late H A V Bulleid's original work *Musical Box Tune Sheets* extends the library of cylinder musical box tune sheets to 514. Already a very useful reference work for those interested in cylinder musical boxes and the music pinned on their cylinders, the Fourth Supplement significantly enhances the value and usefulness of the library as a powerful and invaluable aid for identification and research purposes.

In the library there is an image of each tune sheet identified along with a caption in which the maker, where known, is identified along with the serial number and date of the box, a description of its type and other useful and interesting background notes. This is perhaps best illustrated by the accompanying extract taken from

the Fourth Supplement for Tune Sheet No 506.

The library as a whole is enhanced by two supporting features: a comprehensive index listing all the tune sheets by maker and/or agent who used them; and by the search engine devised and compiled by Luuk Goldhoorn, a very valuable aid to identifying an individual tune sheet by its design features.

As with many revered objects and ideas, the origin of Anthony Bulleid's *Musical Box Tune Sheets* has become somewhat shrouded in its own mythology. People's perceptions and memories become distorted. Anecdotal accounts mingle with committee minutes, the detailed precision of which depends on their recorder. We may never know for certain exactly how Anthony first came to embark on this momentous project, what

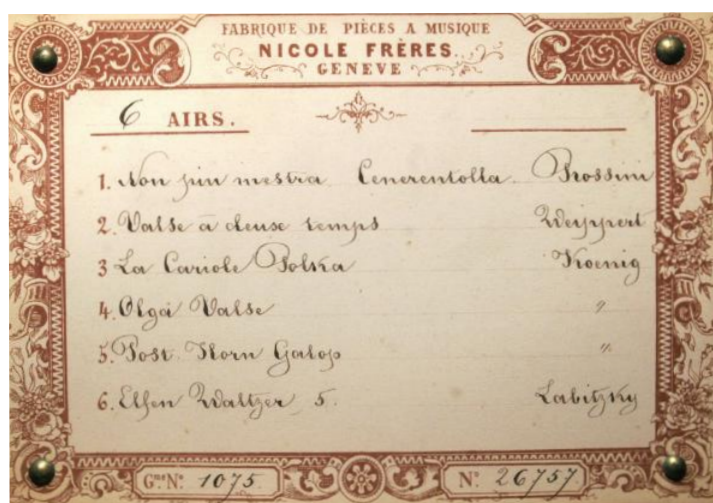
sparked him into collecting the data and images, and how the idea for a book was first mooted.

What is not in question is that Anthony was an avid gatherer and meticulous recorder of information. The world of mechanical music, especially those with an

interest in cylinder musical boxes, is greatly indebted to his passion, and the intelligence he applied to interpreting his findings and extrapolating a sensible narrative from them. Few, if any, of his theories have been challenged over the years, and he has been internationally recognised as an authority.

Cylinder musical box tune sheets were only one area of Anthony Bulleid's research, but is the one that concerns us here. A number of different claims have been made as to how the book originated: the truth most likely lies with an element of most, if not all, of them. From records in the Society's archive, it is clear that besides Anthony himself, Ted Brown, Arthur Cunliffe, the late Jim Colley, the late John Turner, and many other unattributed voices all played a part in its conception. One unrecorded question is how the tune sheets first came to be published serially in the MBSI's journal, *Mechanical Music*, almost simultaneously as the book was being prepared as an MBSGB publication. However, no one would deny that having this data collected all together is invaluable.

Once he had annotated 450 tune sheets, Anthony decided to devote his time to other areas of research, and he himself passed the mantle to Tim Reed in the USA to carry on the research and recording of tune sheets. Anthony chose wisely; Tim has been an able successor to continue with this work. It is due to Tim's dedication and hard work that this supplement can now boast an additional 114



506. Nicole 26757 with gamme number 1075: Tune No 2, the 'Valse à deux temps' or 'Two-step waltz' is by John Weippert. An 1837 issue of *Musical Science, Literature and Intelligence* (London) has this to say about Weippert - 'Mr Weippert is Quadrille manufacturer to Her Majesty and shines with the full blaze of court favour upon him. ... Mr Weippert's music is an excellent Court barometer, and we like to hear of the fashions of the Court. Weippert's band was a popular draw in the 1830s. This box was made about 1848 when Queen Victoria was on the throne.

sheets, well over half of which are those that Tim has researched and added to the canon. Thorough and thoughtful, Tim has not been shy to seek the opinions of others when the evidence has been puzzling. His efforts should not be underestimated; the brief enlightening description of each illustration belies hours of research spent producing it.

The MBSGB is indebted to Tim Reed and his cooperation in the production of this full-colour Fourth Supplement, and to MBSI for granting permission to use once again material previously published in its journal. The MBSGB further appreciates Anthony's foresight in granting to it in writing, while he was still alive, permission to use his material in the future to further the aims of the Society and in the general interest. It is also indebted to Luuk Goldhoorn for his continuing interest in and support for the project and for devising and compiling the latest version of his search engine incorporated in the *Fourth Supplement*. Full acknowledgements appear in the supplement itself, and it is not the intention here merely to repeat them; rather to emphasise the significance that the MBSGB attributes to this body of work and why it believes it is of exceptional interest to lovers of musical boxes. This would appear to be borne out by reactions of the few to have received it by the time of writing: 'an excellent publication', says one, another that it 'continues to make an incredible contribution to the history and preservation of our instruments.'

A perusal of this body of work cannot fail to pique the interest, whilst with applied concentration

the reader will reap even greater real reward. It is invaluable in helping extend one's understanding of the industry, and as a reference tool for more specific areas of enquiry. It can help identify the make of a box, the date of manufacture, and its repertoire. Anyone who has even only a mild interest in cylinder musical boxes will find this collection of work well worth owning. If you do not already have the book and its four supplements, you would be advised to secure a copy while you can.

Footnote: Although new sheets are now being found less frequently, they do still turn up. Please submit a copy of any you think might be of interest. Tim is willing to continue recording them, whilst the MBSGB reaffirms its commitment to support this area of research, and make it accessible to all.



**Fourth Supplement
to
Musical Box TUNE SHEETS
By H A V Bulleid**



**The Musical Box Society of Great Britain
is pleased to announce the publication of the
Fourth Supplement
to the late H A V Bulleid's original work
Musical Box TUNE SHEETS**

Published with the **kind permission of The Musical Box Society International [MBSI]** and in an all-colour A5 format, this Supplement brings together the images of a further 114 Tune Sheets, 110 of which have been published previously by MBSI in its Journal, *Mechanical Music*. *50 of the Tune Sheets had been collected by the late Antony Bulleid prior to his death; a further 64 have been collected since by Timothy Reed who continued the project at Antony Bulleid's request.*

In addition to the images of Tune Sheet Nos 401 to 514 in the series, the **Fourth Supplement** also incorporates **Version 3** of the **Musical Box Tune Sheets SEARCH ENGINE**
Devised and Compiled by Luuk Goldhoorn.

In line with the policy adopted for previous Supplements, this combined publication is available from The Musical Box Society of Great Britain

Free of Charge plus Postage & Packing at cost.

However, The Society welcomes donations towards the publication costs it has incurred.

For those requiring the complete MBSGB library of Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheet publications, a package comprising the original book, its four Supplements and Search Engine V3 is available at a combined price of **£10.00, plus post and packing at cost.**

Copies of individual booklets may also be purchased at reasonable rates.

Orders: Please refer to the Musical Box Society of Great Britain website for information on how to order and details of charges for individual booklets, Postage and Packing - www.mbsgb.org.uk

During his lifetime Anthony Bulleid gave permission for MBSGB to use his work and so The Society is keen to ensure that the Tune Sheet Project should be ongoing and that its integrity remains intact; images of unrecorded cylinder musical box tune sheets are welcomed and should be sent to either Timothy Reed at treed402@msn.com or to The Musical Box Society of Great Britain at www.mbsgb.org.uk; they can then be made available to the wider interest.



A Visit To Musée Baud

by John Harrold

A small party from the Teme Valley Winders went on a one-week tour of Switzerland, visiting various museums and private collections. As part of our tour we visited Musée Baud at L'Auberson. Here are photographs of a sample of the collection. I could not picture and explain it all, as there are about 60 items on display. I have tried to concentrate on the items not so often seen.



A general view of the main room. There are as well several other areas displaying more of the larger instruments. The main area is well lit, and pictures were somewhat easier to take. Some of the other areas were darker and so the pictures vary in quality. I have done my best to enhance them to an acceptable level.



Two cabinets showing various musical box and watchmaking tools, along with small musical movements in various stages of manufacture.



Poppers Jazz Band Orchestrion, made around 1925 in Leipzig. This is a pneumatic roll playing piano orchestrion, with percussion on the top, having one large and one small drum, a cymbal, a wood block and a triangle. The piano itself has a Mandolin rail.



At the far end of the main room are a considerable number of automata. The one pictured here is of two figures, one playing a drum and the other a bugle. Quite realistic!



More automata



Mme Arlette Baud demonstrating an automaton with three moving figures.



A Debain Planchette Piano. This was patented in 1846 by Alexandre Debain in Paris. These are beautifully constructed pianos with a keyframe on the top, which is connected by levers to the piano action. It is played by 'Planchettes', which look like short lengths of wooden board similar to floorboards. Fixed on the underside are pins of various lengths, which strike the hammers, creating loud/soft pressures. On the one side of the board is a longitudinal strip of steel, which has rack teeth cut in it.

The piano is played by turning a handle which drives a toothed wheel, which engages the rack on the planchette pulling it along and striking the levers on the keyframe. The planchettes come in sets which are numbered, so you have to feed them on, one after the other, without a gap in between. If you are musically minded you can vary the tune by re-arranging, adding or subtracting the planchettes. This is great fun, turning the handle feeding the planchettes, and trying to remember what you have done, and what you need to do to finish the tune successfully.

A Polyphon 22" autochange disc musical box. They were originally made as a six-disc changer around 1898. Operated by two motors, one for the musical mechanism and one for the disc changer, they were actually a 19 5/8 disc arrangement with 16 added saucer bells fitted as a pyramid arrangement, playing an accompaniment to the main tune. The bells were played on separate combs. The model shown is later but the earlier case style has given way to a more modern Art Nouveau look. It appears to have one dual purpose motor, and a ten-disc changer. Around 1905 the bells were abandoned in favour of cheaper Klangplatten i.e. tuned steel bars operated by a block of lever mechanisms, deemed to be simpler and more reliable.

A Black Forest cabinet organ. It was made about 1870 probably around the Vohrenbach area. It has 170 pipes, 8 interchangeable barrels, and runs on a 330 lb weight.



An organ with a monkey automaton on the top. There was no description with this item, but it looks like a Mirecourt product, in a Second Empire case of around 1840-1850.

As you turn the organ handle the monkey plays the violin.



A chordephon mechanical zither, invented around 1895 by three German gentlemen: M O Claus, P R Puttner and T B Puttnam. To get it into production they approached an industrialist, H E C Felix of Leipzig. Between them they formed Fabrik Mechanischer Zithern Chordephon Claus und Co, registered there. Between then and 1912 they obtained several patents, including at least four in England.

The maker of the Komet Disc Box, Weissbach und Co, was advertised as the actual maker. These instruments were made in several sizes including 30, 44 and 60 strings. They were operated by a clockwork motor driving a metal disc like a disc musical box and housed in various case styles. Hupfeld and Peters of Leipzig seem to have been the main sellers and distributors. They are uncommon today, probably discarded. Like all stringed instruments they easily went out of tune.





Seybold Jazz Accordeon made by Renée Seybold in the Alsace region of France. On the top is a Jazz Accordeon, and a large and small drum and cymbal which are played by the bass notes of the piano.



A Hupfeld Helios Piano Orchestrion model II /26, one of only two recorded. (This is almost guaranteed to uncover another). Made around 1920 in Leipzig, it has various pipe ranks, which could be ordered from choice, and various volumes, done by altering and re-voicing the pipes. As the roll is playing, behind the front there are moving pictures.



A Weber Maestro made around 1925 by Weber and Co of Waldkirch. There are ten different instruments in the cabinet, namely piano, mandolin, violin, trumpet, clarinet, flute pipes, xylophone, tambourine, cymbal and snare drum. This also has a gramophone fitted on the right-hand side, one of only eight known. It plays from specially arranged 88-note rolls.



A large Gavioli carousel/fairground organ made around 1900.

An English musical bracket clock in a burr walnut case. I was able to trace the dates and maker with Arlette to

Matthew Hill, Devonshire Street, London. He was in business from 1744 until around 1790. In 1777 he moved from Devonshire Street to Upper Charlotte Street. This supports my attribution of 1770. From the music hand on the dial you can select any of six typical English Georgian tunes played by hammers on a nest of tuned bells.



An upright musical box circa 1880, rather like a Station model. In front of the mechanism is a lady on a bike. When the box is playing the wheels turn round operating the rider's legs.

This is a sample of what is on offer. After a break we descended to the basement to view the restoration workshop, which is maintained and run by Michel Bourgoz. Here we were able to see their automatic cylinder pinning machine, a veritable tour-de-force of engineering, and too complicated to explain here. They also have a copying machine capable of producing most types of damper. There was lots more to see including partly completed musical boxes. The only way to explain it all is to see it for yourself.

I am extremely grateful to Arlette Baud for allowing me to use pictures taken during the visit; to John Farmer for some of the pictures. The remainder and the explanations are down to me. I expect there are one or two errors, but if anyone has better information then please send it to the Editor for inclusion in the Letters page.



The President's Message No 11

More good news for MBSGB ...!

I hope you all had an enjoyable festive season and are looking forward to an exciting 2016, although by the time you read this we should be approaching Spring. Originally tempted to focus on the good news bonanza at the end of 2015, which made me feel as though all our Christmases had come at once, I have instead decided to focus on regeneration and new growth.

Whilst visiting Germany over the New Year I went to see a temporary exhibition at the Grassi Museum in Leipzig. Staged appropriately in the city synonymous with mechanical music instrument production, and with the assistance of our sister German Society, it was heartening to see the interest and awe generated, particularly by the larger machines. Bringing the principles of mechanical music up to date, there was an exhibit consisting of a new, roll-operated mechanism which interpreted the music of a woodland stream. Unfortunately I was unable to try it out due to the press of people. Doom sayers please note; mechanical music has an innate ability to attract. It is not dead—and it lends itself to updating.

This chimes with the philosophy of Flavio Pedrazzini, member of the Italian Society and new MBSGB member. You may remember photographs of his invention demonstrated at the Longiano Festival which featured in our last edition. Flavio's passion is to design and build machines incorporating the principles of mechanical music,



*President of the MBSGB
Alison Biden*

which will appeal particularly to youngsters. Following the Longiano report, MBSGB asked Flavio to write more fully about his latest creation, something he was only too pleased to do. Flavio and his colleagues regularly win awards for innovation in Italy, and this article is likely to be taken up by other publications.

I hope to see innovations in mechanical music become a regular theme in future. It isn't confined to fossilised antiques – by experiencing its contemporaneity, new enthusiasts can discover its past evolution.

This is the idea at the heart of Florence Kennard's short film, *Automatic Dreams*, made with help from the MBSGB. It explores the two-hundred-year-old attraction of musical boxes which endures in our electronic age. The film, and with it our Society, was featured on the BBC's website in December*; it looks more closely at

the divergence of the technology's application by the Reuge company, which now makes fabulously expensive musical items for the rich. Unfortunately the expression 'novelty' has connotations of cheapness, something these items definitely are not. But musical novelties as an introduction to more serious mechanical instruments is not a new idea—as the resurrection of an article from the 1960s about founding MBSGB member Samuel Sunley shows.

The MBSGB has also enjoyed promotion in the periodical, *Current Archaeology*, thanks to member Gordon Bartlet, who contributed to its regular column, *Odd Socs*. Well done Gordon! I hope this will encourage other members to think about how they might promote the MBSGB. One method being trialled for the first time is the sponsorship by the MBSGB of a competition following a demonstration given by Vice President John Phillips, and members Alan Pratt and John Moorhouse, at the *Engineering in Miniature* event late last year, which again you will find reported elsewhere.

Our Society should now be in a better financial position actively and energetically to promote and grow itself and foster our aims of promoting and preserving mechanical music through other, similar initiatives. Journal production costs have been significantly reduced, thanks to our regular printer, Floprint, and I am thrilled to announce that the

Society has received a generous donation from an American charitable foundation, thanks to the good offices of American VP Bob Yates.

In 2000 MBSGB published H A V Bulleid's *Tune Sheet Book*, under the auspices of the previous Publications Committee. Renewing or maintaining the tradition embarked upon then, MBSGB published a *Fourth Supplement* to this work in December 2015, with permission from sister Society, *Musical Box Society International*, to reprint material previously first published in its own journal. However, since publication, there has been a certain amount of incorrect information as to how this supplement can be obtained. I shall spell it out again here; the supplement is available free of charge to anyone who purchased

the original book, whether or not they are a member of MBSGB. The supplement can be collected at a Society meeting, or by arrangement from a member of Committee, or sent to you through the post. If the latter, we do ask that you send MBSGB the cost of postage and packing, and an address to which it should be delivered. Further details, including the Society's ongoing commitment to this research are printed elsewhere.

Finally, as if to prove the point about large machines and young enthusiasts, I am delighted to announce the joining of our youngest recorded member, whose interest was piqued by visits to Thursford and Speyer in Germany. I hope this will herald significant new growth in the Society, continuing the trend set in 2015 where we had as many new members (including a

number of re-joiners) as the record set in 2007. You have to go back as far as 2003 to find a higher number. Don't just leave all this to the Committee – tell everyone you know and meet about your interest and the rewards it brings you. Get them to join and discover for themselves the fascinating and enjoyable world of mechanical music. And if you haven't yet renewed please do it now. Don't miss out on another exciting year.

* Two MBSGB Presidents were featured by the BBC on the same day—the day the website item went live coincided with Christopher Proudfoot's appearance on the BBC's programme about the history of gardens. See: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35049589

Alison Biden

Letters to the Editor

From Daphne Ladell

Having read the latest Journal, I have thought long and hard about writing, but after listening to several other members very unhappy about this matter (completely unprompted by me), I have decided to write.

1 - I was extremely disappointed with the front cover of this Journal as it falls well below the normal MBSGB high standard, which until now has been maintained for more than a decade.

2 - On reading the Journal I find, not just 1 page, but 4 pages advertising Breakers (sic) Auction House; who also have a full page colour spread on the back page. Breakers like all big Auction Houses produce a catalogue and those interested will already have

a catalogue, or can find out about the Lots on line. I ask myself why are you giving free advertising to Breakers and not some of the other Auction Houses, which are holding auctions during the same period.

3 - I was then totally disgusted when I read the classified adverts, There in the centre of the adverts, is a MOTOR BIKE for sale. This is non musical and totally irrelevant for inclusion in our Journal.

4 - Are our members really interested, to the value of 4 pages, in 'News from other Societies' especially the Non-English Journals or are you just page filling? All I can assume from the above; is that you are now so desperate for material and are willing to take

anything irrelevant to our 'musical' interest just to fill the Journal. The Journal now has numerous pictures and even pictures of people are now included. I wonder when the change in policy occurred because I remember clearly the time when the writer reporting on the old Essex Group meetings was instructed to submit only pictures of instruments and ensure no pictures of members were included.

The Editor is always pleased to receive feedback on the journal. We acknowledge peoples' opinions, and we would like to hear what other readers think.

From Kevin McElhone

Since my last book, *The Disc Musical Box* was published by the MBSGB I have continued

researching and have found a few instruments and disc types not found within the book. Also some more of the lovely coloured lid pictures.

The book listed serial numbers and details of 1543 boxes but by 31st December 2015 I had found another 932 making 2475. If any reader can add more information do please contact me

as I plan to write a supplement very soon.

Thank you. You can reach me at kevin_mcelhone@btinternet or 01536 726759

New Members of the MBSGB the last journal was published

We welcome the following new members who have joined the MBSGB since the last journal was published:

3221	Richard & Cheryl Hack	USA
3222	A. Clare, Banksfield Museum	Yorkshire
3223	G.R.Dalby	Worcestershire
3224	Pamela Samways	Norfolk
3225	David Thorp	Derbyshire
3226	Ray F.Chirgwin	Hertfordshire
3227	Ron Palladino	USA
3228	David Smith	Devon
3229	Prof. Keith D.Howard	Oxfordshire
3230	Charles Irving	USA
3231	Michael Draper	USA
3232	Lucas Allen	Cambridge

re-join 344 Mark Bailey Hertfordshire

If you would like to get in touch with members near you, please contact the Correspondence Secretary, whose contact details are on the Officers page.

You will get much more from your membership if you come along to local or national MBSGB meetings, and there you will make new friends and hear wonderful instruments, and can ask for restoration and other advice. If you are not sure the first time, then just book in as a day visitor with the organiser of the meeting. There are four Local Area Groups so we hope more members will come along and join in.

On 12th and 13th September 2015, Musée Baud celebrated its 60th birthday in L'Auberson, Switzerland. L'Auberson is situated in the Jura mountains, a few kilometres from Sainte-Croix, the heart of the Swiss precision engineering industry. The museum is run by Arlette Baud and Michel Bourgoz. An article about its 60 year history will appear in the next edition of The Music Box.



*The homepage of the Musée Baud:
<http://www.museebaud.ch/>*

<i>DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2016</i>	
6 th March 2016	MBSGB Wessex Group Meeting. Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Contact Alison Biden. ali_biden@hotmail.com. 01962 861350. 11am start.
6 th March 2016	Amersham Fair Organ Museum. Open Day. Unit 1, 28 Plantation Road, Amersham, HP6 6HJ. www.fairorganmuseum.co.uk
12 th March 2016	Workshop. North West Player Piano Association, with MBSGB. How to rebuild valves and playing pneumatics. Hands-on workshop. Hosted by Nicholas Simons in Derby. 01332 760576 or njasmbs@btinternet.com for details.
19 th March 2016	MBSGB Home Counties Group. St Mark's Church Hall, Church Lane, Colney Heath, Hertfordshire, AL4 0NH. Coffee at 10.30am, meeting at 11.00am. Bring your own lunch. Contact Robert Ducat-Brown, 01438 712585.
2 nd April 2016	Jonny Ling Open Day. Wide ranging collection including pianos, organs and orchestrions. Diss, Norfolk. Please contact Jonny on 01379 783350 or jonnyabcuk@yahoo.co.uk The Fair Organ Preservation Society will have their AGM at this event at 2pm.
15 th to 17 th April 2016	MBSGB National Meeting. Somerset. Includes a visit to a major local collection and a tour of an historic cinema. Contact Alison Biden for late availability 01962 861350.
30 th April 2016	MBSGB Midlands Group. Kettering. Please contact host Kevin McElhone, kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com 01536 726759
2 nd May 2016	Second Winchester Organ Festival. Details to follow
14 th May 2016	Player Piano Group AGM. The Musical Museum, Brentford, London.
15 th May 2016	National Vintage Communications Fair. Warwickshire Exhibition Centre CV31 1XN. www.nvcf.org.uk
4 th June 2016	MBSGB AGM. Roade Village Hall.
25 th June 2016	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Summer meeting. Eastham. Tenbury Wells. Worcs. 11.00 start. Details from John Phillips. 01584 781118
3 th December 2016	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Christmas meeting. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11am start. Details from John Phillips. 01584 781118

Reminder to all Members

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday, 4th June, 2016. Nominations for Committee positions need to be received in writing by the Committee via the Correspondence Secretary no later than 23rd April, 2016. Each candidate needs to be nominated and seconded by a fully paid-up member, and give their own written consent to be nominated. Proposed amendments to the Society's Constitution for consideration at the AGM should be received in writing by the same date, and require a proposer supported by seven other members.

Stop Press! New website for the Society

The Society's website has been completely redesigned.

Take a look for yourself at the changes and what's new by going to the same address/domain name at:

www.mbsgb.org.uk

If you visited the old site frequently, you will probably need to refresh your browser to access the new version. Please note that currently there is no 'Members Only' section.

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting – December 2015

A very un-wintery 5th December saw 22 people welcomed by John Phillips to a day of entertainment starting with new member Geoff Dalby, who introduced himself and spoke of his interest in disc musical boxes. Geoff has always collected and repaired sick and broken machines, and now intends to carry out more thorough restorations, the results of which we hope to see at a future meeting. Nicolas Simons followed with a piano roll of a *Musical Switch* by Frederick Joseph Ricketts, a military man who mostly composed marches under the pen name Kenneth J Alford. The musical switch is a composition of extracts from a large number of usually well-known tunes cleverly woven together.

Doug Pell was next in line, with an appropriately seasonal item, his musical Christmas Tree stand. This one is unusual in that it has two 2 1/4" cylinder movements, driven by the same spring with a moving change-over gear.



Two cylinder Christmas Stand

Jenny Weaver spoke next, her unusual subject being Baoding musical balls. These are a Chinese tradition going back to the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644), and now making a come-back in the 1980's. The balls make musical

tones when moved around, and are claimed have health-giving properties according to the Jungluo medical system.

John Harrold then introduced a recent purchase from Rudesheim, a beautiful small singing bird in a cage. It is essentially a normal Griesbaum case with the cage on top, and it was probably made to special order. John Phillips then brought out a Griesbaum



Caged singing bird

enamelled singing bird box which played the same tune, but at a slower pace and at a lower pitch.

John P then followed up with a tune on the 48-note Racca piano which he had recently re-assembled after taking details of the key cover for another member. The tune was a lively foxtrot *A Broken Doll*. A second tune from Lohengrin was allowed to play only part way through due to popular demand, but Valverde's *Gran Via* waltz lasted longer. A brief discussion on the different models of reiterating piano by Racca and Spaethe then followed.

John Harrold took us back to seasonal music with some appropriate rolls on John Phillips' Pell 31 street organ. Kevin McElhone played *Coming Round*

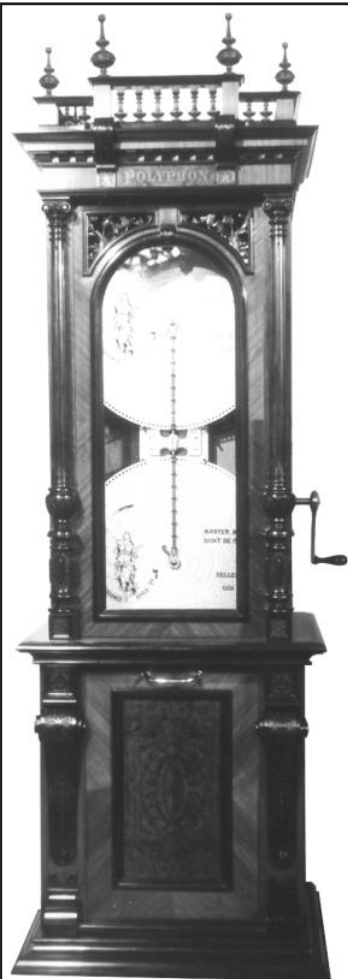
the Mountain on a cob organ and Nicholas Simons followed with *Yankee Grit* by Abe Holzman on a piano roll, which took us through to lunch time.

After lunch and Hilda's cakes and refreshments, Kevin demonstrated a modern Serinette, followed by a demonstration of the push-up piano player working against the Yamaha upright piano with a roll of Wagneritis by Mornington. Malcolm McDonald showed a clock he had built which worked well apart from occasionally stopping. He explained that he had considerable difficulty tracking down the cause, but it turned out to be a very small dividing error on one of the wheels which jammed periodically. A replacement wheel resolved the problem. Malcolm also played a few Christmas tunes on endless rolls on his Celestina.



Malcolm's clock

Jack Lowther explained that for many years he had been interested in large barrel organs, and whilst learning about them he wanted to discover how the stops worked



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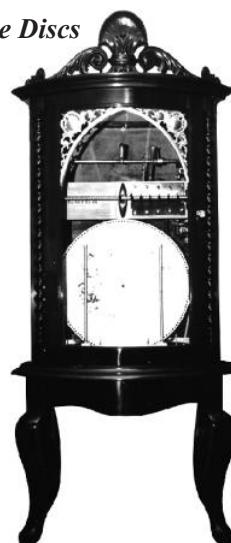
- correct quality steel & original style artwork
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to switch on and off the various ranks of pipes. His somewhat unusual solution was to buy at auction several large orphaned barrels and study the pinning arrangements. Although they were similar to the barrels on one of John Phillips' organs, they were not the same. A discussion followed on their likely origins, and the methods of stop changing.



Celestina endless roll

Bob Dyke had brought along a cylinder box with unknown tunes which he hoped to identify after some improvement work on the box. Unfortunately only one tune title was confirmed, but the

subject of safe transportation of cylinder boxes ensued. Nicholas Simons then took the stage and showed nine small novelty cylinder boxes by makers such as Reuge and Tallent, all of which had been donated to the Society for auction at the next AGM.

John Phillips played a number of other instruments with Christmas and other tunes, to bring the meeting to a conclusion.

The next Winders meeting will be at 11am on Saturday 25th June 2016 finishing around 4pm. Members should bring their own packed lunches. John and Hilda will serve tea and coffee during the day. Those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118. Bring along anything to wind, or just come along and talk to us.

John Farmer

Dear Members,

Its New Year, so it's out with the old and in with the new!

Please take a look through your collection, and if you have items you no longer care for. There are now many new members who might want them.

Its FREE and easy to advertise items for sale in our members free classifieds.

Alternatively, if there's a piece on your wish list, please ASK.

A WANTED ad is also free.

Contact: Mark Singleton
Mikado54mark@gmail.com



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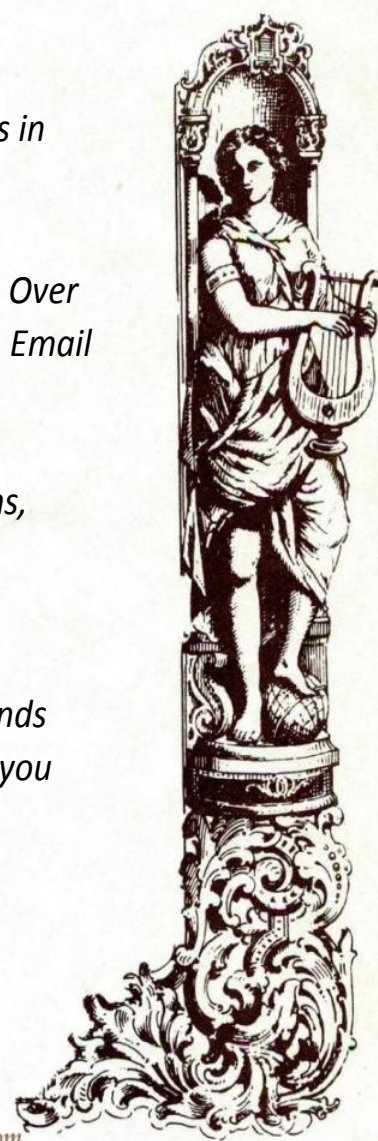
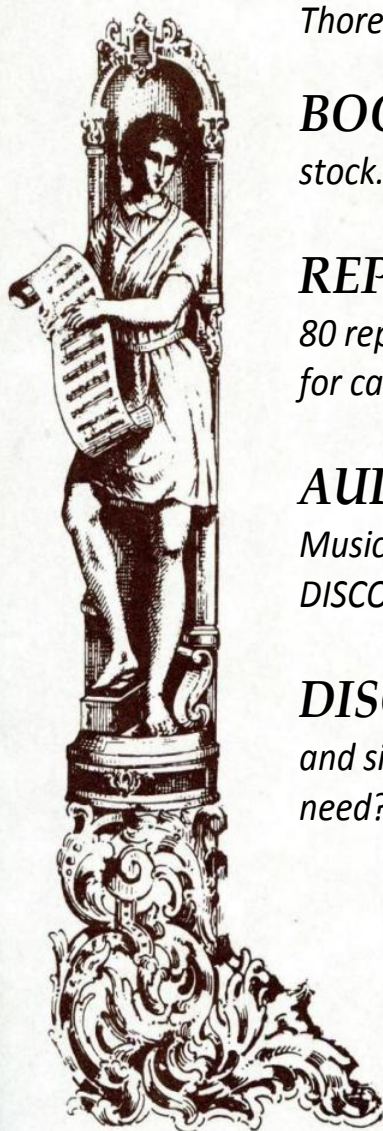
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Midlands Group Meeting - October 2015

Almost twenty people met at the home of Doug and Val Pell in Daventry for the seventh meeting of the Midlands Group. Doug has a wide-ranging and interesting collection, so we always enjoy returning to this venue.

After everyone had arrived and been met with a welcome cup of coffee we started with Doug showing us examples from his collection of early tin toys. His most recent acquisition is a rare Tut Tut by Lehmann of Germany. These were made from 1903 until 1935, and were based on early designs of car, where the driver was required to sound a horn to warn people of his approach. The car is clockwork powered and includes a small bellows intermittently blowing a reed to make the sound of the horn. After 'playtime' we settled in the sitting room where



Two Johns enjoying a train ride

only scenic views but other views of interest to the gentlemen present. In another room Doug showed us some larger cylinder musical boxes and a very nice 195/8" upright polyphon.

railway. This is a 7¼" gauge railway with both steam and electric locomotives. Doug's son Adrian had come along to run the steamer, and he gave rides around the garden. We were allowed to operate the electric locomotive, and the picture shows John Harrold and John Farmer fulfilling a boyhood ambition. The summer house was the venue for Doug's model steam engines and hot air engines and these were set to work operating a number of ancillary models.

Visiting members also brought along items to demonstrate so it was a very full day with a wide variety of interesting things to see. We thanked Doug and Val for opening their house and providing lunch, and we look forward to next time.

The next meeting of the Midlands Group will be on Saturday 30th April 2016, at the home of Kevin McElhone, near Kettering. Details are in the Dates For Your Diary section of this magazine.

Nicholas Simons



Doug Pell with his Tut Tut

Doug showed us quite a few instruments from his collection. These included musical boxes, singing birds and gramophones. Of particular interest was the stereo viewer which was loaded with not

Doug and Val generously supplied sandwiches and cake for their guests so we broke for lunch and a chat with friends. In the afternoon we moved into the garden where Doug showed us round his garden

Wessex Group Meeting

Sunday 11th October 2015

Unusually for a meeting, the entire content consisted of demonstrations of musical boxes. The one exception was a musical novelty, but even that was in the form of a cylinder box.

Only two of the demonstrations featured disc-playing machines, the rest all being cylinder boxes. The meeting started with Lester Jones giving a presentation on the topic of 'same tune, different machine'. To demonstrate the comparison, he had brought along a fine Ducommun Girod mandolin box with hidden bells, and an excellent sounding 15½" polyphon. These both played *The Last Rose of Summer* from Martha, the Prayer from Weber's *Der Freischütz*, and *Misere* from Verdi's opera, *Il Trovatore*. The very different tonal qualities of the two boxes were evident, and whilst the musical arrangements were similar, they were not the same. It was noted that in the case of *The Last Rose of Summer*, the melody was almost lost in the polyphon arrangement.



15½" polyphon demonstrated by Lester Jones

Terry Longhurst and David Worrall then did a double act demonstrating two almost identical



Martinet and Benoit snuff boxes with similar movements and identical repertoires. Top in a brass bound case of coromandel wood, bottom in a tin case.

snuff type of boxes, by Martinet et Benoit, although a little large to be traditional snuff boxes. They both had the same repertoire played over three turns on 88 teeth, the first air in two turns and the final in one turn. The last air is identified as an item from *Dame Blanche*. David's movement, which played a lot faster than Terry's, was in a brass-bound case made of coromandel, a figured ebony popular in the Victorian era and an exceptionally fine example of cabinet work. Terry's was in a tin case, raising the question as to why such fine items were put in cheap containers. Note: The Winter Edition 2011 of *The Music Box*, Vol 25 No 4, carried an article by Luuk Goldhoorn

about Martinet et Benoit of Geneva. In this he concludes that Martinet was the businessman and Benoit, whose works are very rare, was the maker.

Next in the programme was Alan Clarke demonstrating an Emperor Model 15 disc manivelle by Richter, in the form of a French café organ, with a small porcelain doll in the centre. When Alan first acquired it, it had two broken teeth, but he was able to work out the tuning scale. It plays Model D size discs, of 5 ½ inches, but only one came with it. Other discs of the same size failed to fit the machine, and only one other suitable one was found – in the USA, for a Christmas tree stand! So Alan set about making his own set. The resulting collection, fashioned from the steel of an old cooker, is a pleasing testament to his ingenuity and talent. This project was featured in a recent edition of *The Music Box*. Assisted by Bruce Allen and a computer, Alan was able to arrange tunes made up of several notes and chords. The discs have up to 200 projections, and Alan successfully transposed 24 bars of Handel onto one of them.

The last item before lunch was a cylinder box of Peter Kerr's, which Lester demonstrated. A Harpe Piccolo box with zither, it was unusual in that it had only one comb. An example of a restoration job by Lester, it very nicely played a selection of familiar – but not easily named – airs.

During lunch a lady walked into the meeting, explaining she had driven from Brockenhurst as she had a cylinder box she wanted to

learn more about. This caused some excitement and interest, and after several people had had a good look at it, it became an impromptu first item for the afternoon. The top of the lid carried an unusual inlay design of a graveyard at sunrise. The box had the serial

number 12293 marked on the left-hand cylinder bracket, and on the underneath of the case in large figures, suggesting the maker was Bremond. It had a drum and five bells in view, each bell with its own striker. The drum could be disengaged, but not the bells. It played eight airs, and the challenge was to try and identify them. The tunes were listed on the star wheel leaf, indicating which tune had just played. After hearing them all, it was agreed that the box had a distinctly Scottish/Irish/Celtic repertoire, and the following tunes were identified: *Kathleen Mavoreen*, *The Harp that once thru Tara's Hall*, *I dreamt I dwelt in Marble Halls*, and *The Campbells are Coming*. Another air had a refrain similar to *The Wearing of the Green*, and two others were thought to be Scottish dances.

Brian Chapman then demonstrated a modern musical box bought for his granddaughter, which was in a large case with an animated scene containing skaters. Although it had a comb and pinned cylinder, these did not operate, and the music was produced electronically, with an accompaniment by bells, which did strike.



The Lecoultrre box with the Donizetti arias presented by Tony Waddell

Tony Waddell demonstrated two different cylinder boxes with the same aria. The tune sheet on the earlier box listed it as *Per Sola a Traditrias Eleanor de Guienna* by Donizetti. After searching on the internet, Tony was able to identify the tune as *Aria di Leonora* from Donizetti's opera *La Favorita* in which the heroine's name is Leonora Guzman, not Eleanor. The box was made by David Lecoultrre, serial number 10818, in 1844, four years after the opera was written. The second box, serial number 19799, with a similar arrangement of the tune, was made by Langdorff in 1867, i.e. 23 years later, and was retailed by Humbert Brolhier of Geneva. It is beautifully engraved on the bedplate but has no tune card, or any sign of having had one. Tony's boxes can be seen on his YouTube channel, [tonynicoultrre100](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtynicoultrre100). There was then another interlude of 'name that tune' featuring a Bremond 8 air mandolin box. Other than the waltz from Faust, all tunes drew a blank, although some were recognised as being on other boxes.

It was then time for Terry to demonstrate two boxes brought along by Peter Hughes, and one

by himself. All three boxes play a piece in two parts and are set up in such a way that they cannot be turned off halfway through. He demonstrated how this was achieved by a simple cardboard visual aid he had constructed, which he described as 'Blue Peter' engineering. The first box was thought to be a François Lecoultrre, dated around 1835, and played the overture of

Auber's *Dieu et la Bayadère* in one whole turn. The second box was a Nicole 16-air box which played the overture from William Tell on the first revolution. The third box was a Lecoultrre-Granger of 1840-44, with the very special feature of being forte-piano on a single comb, achieved by the use of long and short pins. The first air took two revolutions of the cylinder, as did Jupiter. The repertoire also included *The Algerian Girl* and Rossini's *Italian Girl*.

The afternoon finished with yet another session to try and identify some tunes on a 10-air Baker cylinder box in a large ebony case with time piece. It also had nine bells, which could be disengaged, with six strikers. All the tunes were familiar, although not all of them could be named.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday 6th March 2016, starting at 11am. The venue remains the Avington and Itchen Abbas Village Hall, although the larger hall will be used. Further details available from Alison Biden.

Midlands Model Engineering 2015 Exhibition

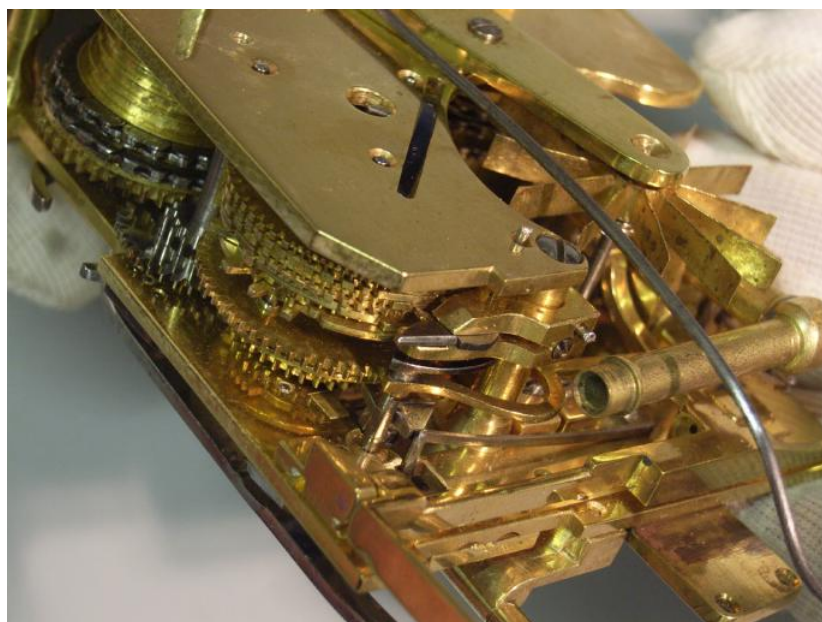
Talk – An Introduction to Automata and Singing Birds

Visitors to the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition 2015 on Thursday 15th October were treated to a talk and mini exhibition by three members of the MBSGB.

The history of fine mechanical automata, starting with the Swiss master, Jaquet Droz, was described by John Moorhouse.

It was in the Swiss workshop that what we now call the swanee whistle was invented at the end of the 18th century. This allowed singing bird mechanisms to be considerably reduced in size from a small-scale barrel organ to a compact movement. Shaped cams operated the whistle piston position and air valve opening. The illusion of a real performance was achieved by linking the beak and other movements with the air valve operation. These fine fusée driven movements were housed in high quality decorative boxes and incorporated a set of eight or more cams, with a cam changer to achieve a long and interesting song. The pinnacle of this type of movement was attained in the fabulous singing bird pistol for which a 3-D computer animation is available today.

In about 1885 Bontems in France developed a simpler movement to allow larger-scale manufacture, with a single song cam attached to a going barrel. This allowed their sale to a much wider public. At the



Bruguier fusée type movement (c1850)

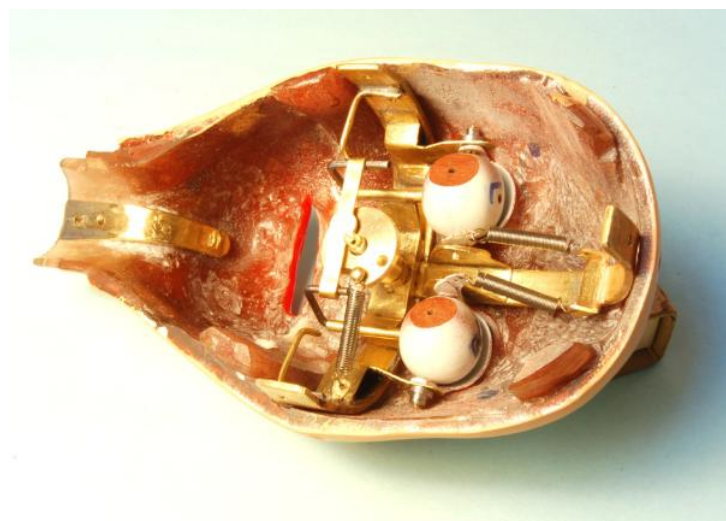
same time French manufacturers of singing birds in cages and under domes used a similar movement, but with a larger air bellows and a larger spring barrel to provide more power. The same movement was used for many mechanical automata, usually performing figures or animals, accompanied by simple but high quality pinned barrel and comb type musical box movements. The skill of the designer was in achieving realistic movements, and linking these to the music.

Considerable ingenuity was shown by makers in meeting these needs within the confines of the body of the figure. Examples were shown of different types of cams and followers used

to achieve the desired synchronised and complementary movements.

The challenges to model makers were briefly described by John. There are no dimensioned design drawings, and therefore information was gained both from handling old mechanisms and published sources which are invaluable. Spring driven gear trains

were conventional, and always incorporated a toothed wheel driving an endless screw supporting the fan type governor. These screws could be as small as 1.5mm in diameter, but machining was viable by thread milling using commercial cutters. Making small scale organs requires underlying knowledge, whereas swanee whistles were straightforward, but music box pinned barrels and combs were beyond all but the ablest maker. John explained that all these

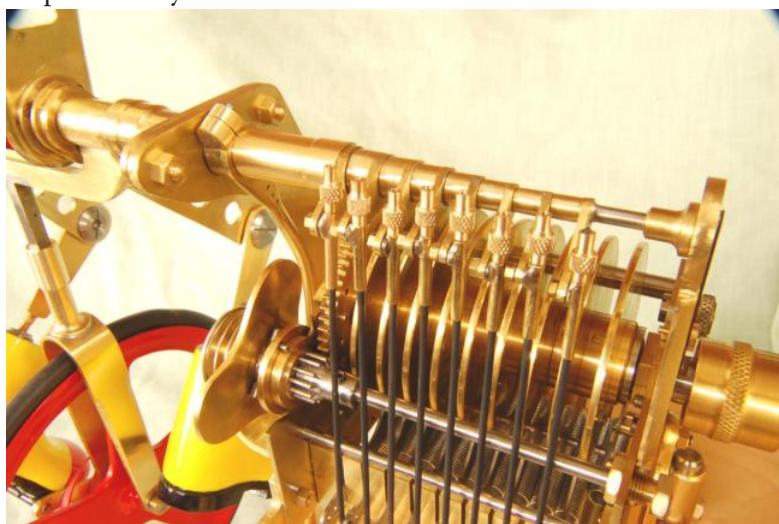


Internal head mechanisms

challenges were also present in his own model of a singing bird in a Fabergé style egg. He provided a list of various sources of published information.

Alan Pratt showed a number of images of the automaton he is constructing to his own design – a clown playing a flute sitting on a unicycle. The head and internal features are completed and seen to be to a high standard with very realistic movements.

The unicycle part is complete, incorporating a miniature sun and planet type gear box in the wheel hub to achieve adequate movement. The output from the drive system has eight concentric tubes to link the cam stack with all the clown's movements. Progress on the project is steady but limited by the necessity to develop components, sometimes through trial and error. Minimising friction at each stage and having adequate power was emphasised by Alan.



Concentric tubes

John Phillips brought along a table full of mechanical items which he proceeded to show and demonstrate to the nearly full house. These included singing bird boxes, movements from birds in cages and

animated pictures, a fine unrestored French automaton and music box type movements. After the talk the exhibits from all three presentations were available for those attending to examine more closely.



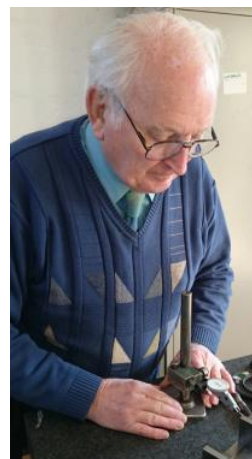
Unrestored French automaton - the conjurer

The topic of automata, originally made as entertainment for the wealthy, is a subject area largely neglected by current model makers. It offers considerable opportunities to create fine pieces for which they

already possess the necessary skills and workshop facilities. The event was both a delight and education for all those attending, and on conclusion received a very generous round of applause. The MBSGB intends to offer a special prize for automata at the 2016 exhibition, subject to agreement with the organisers.



John Moorhouse



John Phillips



Alan Pratt

News from other Societies

AMICA Bulletin Vol 52 No 6 Nov/Dec 2015

See also www.amica.org

The opening addresses in this issue deal largely with reflecting on the AMICA annual convention held in Colorado in the Summer, and the usual exhortations to try and recruit new members to the organisation. This is followed by the regular feature *Nickel Notes* penned by Matthew Jaro, the subject of which is the restoration of a Seeburg K. The list of tasks undertaken to restore it stretches to almost two pages! Joe Hilferty then showcases *The Rare, Early, Unusual and Unexpected at American Treasure Tour*. For those who don't already know, the *American Treasure Tour* is a collection of mechanical music, old cars, other transportation, and circus and fairground memorabilia, located in Valley Forge, (near Philadelphia), Pennsylvania. Steve Bentley then guides us through *Making an Orchestrion from an 88-Note Player*. He was inspired to do this having made a perforator in 1981 and gaining a lot of knowledge of orchestrions. The basic piano was a 1918 Winter & Co player. After working on the piano action, Steve added a xylophone, accordion and castanets. The next 19 pages are dedicated to the Denver convention, including the business from the Annual General Meeting, and a report of a very special concert showcasing the different technical and musical styles of eight different Meville Clark Apollo player pianos, including demonstrations of several different types of dance by a dance troupe. Significantly, the event



was open to the public. This is followed by a preview of the 2016 Convention in August in Princeton, New Jersey.

AMICA Bulletin Vol 53 No 1 Jan/Feb 2016

The first thing to catch the eye is the front cover, graced with a photograph of a truly stunning machine, the Welte Wotan Orchestrion at the Nethercutt Collection, California. The main feature in this edition is the first part of a two-part, detailed article by Art Reblitz, entitled *Chicago Coin-Operated Piano and Orchestrion Rolls*, about the Coin-Operated Division of the QRS Company. The first part deals with the history of the QRS Coin-Operated Roll Division. In a departure from his usual column, Matthew Jaro follows with a feature on the Nethercutt Collection in Sylmar, California. The collection was started by J B Nethercutt, a cosmetics tycoon, who was in the process of building a museum to house his collection of cars when his interest in mechanical music was piqued by a singing bird box he bought for his wife from Hathaway and Bowers (as in Q David Bowers) in Santa Fe Springs, California. Matthew dedicates pages to describing the various instruments, from orchestrions and pianos, through to organs and musical boxes. This collection is open to the public, and is free to visit, although only as a tour booked in advance. As someone who has been twice, I can endorse Matthew's recommendation that this collection is a must see for anyone visiting the Los Angeles area. Joe Hilferty who maintains the mechanical music items at the American Treasure Tour collection

then writes about a Wurlitzer Special Band Organ, serial number 3200 recently added to the collection, which does not conform to the standard specification of a 166 from which he surmises that it is actually a 175. A brief article entitled *The Coinola Midget* describes how the two spools on this coin operated piano work; they do not allow the piano to play one roll while the other is being re-wound, as would be expected. Contributor Roger Wiegand then shares his passion for mechanical music with us in one of an occasional series of personal stories. Roger's interest was rewarded when a neighbour unexpectedly offered him a large sum of money for an 88 note player he had rebuilt. Roger's collecting policy is to own only things he likes and which are working properly. Sensibly, he is only allowed to have one machine at a time which doesn't work! Several pages of chapter meeting reports complete this issue.

Mechanical Music Vol 61 No 6 Nov/Dec 2015

See also www.mbsi.org

Much of this edition is dedicated to the 66th Annual Convention which took place in Torrance, California, in September 2015, both the social and business aspects. This is complemented by the third instalment in the series by Dr Wayne Finger about 'Sharing MBSI in the 21st century', focusing on the use of websites. An item entitled *Reclaiming A Regina Orchestral* is short on text, but if there's any truth in the saying



that a picture is worth a thousand words, then it certainly makes up for any deficiency with the accompanying detailed illustrations. There is then a report on a *Music Box Day at History Camp* where children learning about Victorian life had the opportunity to learn about and make a musical box. This is appropriately followed by an article by Bill Wineburgh detailing how automatic musical toys from the late Victorian era to the present day were exhibited in a New Jersey public library. Reports from a number of chapters and two In Memoria (Ralph Schack and Dianne Polan) complete this edition.

The Key Frame, Issue KF 2-15

See also www.fops.org

This issue starts with an obituary of the well-known Dutch organ builder Jan van



Eijk. Quite a few of his organs can be heard around the UK. The 2015 AGM was held at the Scarborough Fair collection and this is reported in detail. MBSGB members will remember their visit to this splendid collection, and many excellent colour photos are included here. The regular *Musical Roots* article deals not with a single composer this time but the 200th anniversary of Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. We have the *Wellington March*, by William Zehle, who also wrote *Viscount Nelson, Trafalgar and Army and Navy*. From the other side of the Atlantic came *Napoleon's Last Charge*, by Edwin Ellis; however, the more famous E T Paull was credited as the arranger and got larger billing on the sheet music. What is missing is the well-known Abba tune, but maybe this has yet

to appear in cardboard form.

The Key Frame, Issue KF 3-15

This is a rather melancholy edition, with obituaries for three of the big names in our hobby. Firstly, there is Richard Preston, whose name can be seen nationwide on the sides of his lorries. His hobbies were numerous, but included steam and organs, and he had a large building on his land where people were most welcome to come to see, amongst others, his magnificent 112-key Gavioli. Johnny Verbeeck was the fourth generation of his family to build mechanical organs and is succeeded in the business by his son, Jeffrey. Louis Mostmans is a name you may not be familiar with, but his firm, Gebroeders Decap, is well known to dance organ enthusiasts. He continued building organs right up to his death at the age of 90. *Musical Roots* this time covers the French waltz composer, Emile Waldteufel. His tunes are known to organ and musical box lovers alike, with *Estudiantina*, *Skaters* and *Les Syrenes* being amongst the best. To finish on a happy note it is good to see a top quality German organ being imported into the UK with Brian Hunt's 52 keyless Alfred Bruder now appearing regularly on the circuit.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXIV No 3

See also www.reedsoc.org

This edition opens with an item about Arthur H Sanders, the first President of the ROS, and the last of its four founders to pass away. The Rev Terry Newnham then treats us to an account of reed organs he has known, all in the UK. A Horton Melo-Pean is the subject of the



next article – a detailed description of its working parts, along with several photographs, occupies over four pages. The tune scores featured in the regular centre page spread are *Katie's a Rogue* by Bobby Newcombe, *At the Palace Gate* by W Howard Doane and *The Old Inn Sign March*, which is unattributed. These were taken from the New Method for the Organ, published by D H Baldwin & Co in 1886. Four reviews complete this edition: a CD of *L'Harmonium au Salon* performed by Michael Hendron, a CD of *Harponium* performed by Catriona McKay, and two reviews of the book *Harmonium Handbook*, written by Joris Verdin.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXIV No 4

Joris Verdin's *Harmonium Handbook* (or Handbook for Harmonium as it is titled in this issue) gets a further review in this next edition of the ROS Quarterly. Before that though, there is an extensive report, occupying most of the magazine, on the *Trails West Gathering*, which took place in late September 2015. As someone somewhat unfamiliar with reed organs, I am astonished at the number and variety of these instruments presented in all their splendour in the accompanying photographs. Two final short articles feature two Mason and Hamlin reed organs in Philipsburg, Montana, and a Philharmonic Estey in New Zealand.

Player Piano Group Bulletin 210, Summer 2015

See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk
This issue starts with a report of the recent AGM which was held at Madingley Hall, outside Cambridge. This was the focus of a very enjoyable weekend where

demonstrations and a concert were mixed with social dining and a comfortable over-night stay, all within the same venue. We then have a report of the June meeting of the Teme Valley Winders, as John Phillips had thrown the meeting open to members of other like-minded societies. I wonder how many new members the MBSGB has gained as a result? Stanford University in the USA has embarked on an academic study of reproducing pianos and their rolls, and has acquired three important collections, the most important of these being that of the late Denis Condon, an Australian who had collected for six decades. His collection included ten pianos and 7,500 rolls. It is refreshing to see that an academic institution is taking our hobby seriously. Obituaries are printed for Peter Katin, the professional pianist who was the PPG's patron, Denys Gueroult, a BBC producer who brought the sound of the player piano to radio listeners in the mid 1960s, and David Wragg of Nottingham who was a masterful restorer of player pianos but unfortunately died too young.

North West Player Piano Association Journal – Christmas 2015

www.pianola.org.uk

This issue starts with a very full list of house meetings for the new year. Included is the third in a series of annual workshops which aim to help members to understand the workings of their instruments and learn how to restore them. The workshop is in March and is being hosted by Nicholas Simons. It is open to MBSGB members and is included in the Dates page of



this issue of The Music Box. Terry Broadbent offers an interesting article about the rise and fall of *Tin Pan Alley*. This was an area of New York where a collective group of music publishers set up business. With all the businesses being so close to one another, and with so many pianos being used to demonstrate and develop tunes, the resulting cacophony sounded like bedlam. A journalist coined the phrase *Tin Pan Alley* when he wrote an article about Harry von Tilzer. The noted Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha is the subject of *When They Were Young*, and elsewhere Sophie Menter is this issue's *Famous Musician*. One-hundred-year-old pianists, and those who almost made it, are featured in another article. This includes the famous ragtime composer Eubie Blake, who died five days after his 100th birthday. Later research showed that he had forgotten when he was born and he was only 96 when he died. He was active for his entire life and was rediscovered by the new ragtime enthusiasts in the 1970s and 80s. He continued to play in concerts and on television right up to the end of his long life.

Non-English language journals

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument December 2015

See also www.musica-mechanica.de
As usual, the standard of article in this magazine never fails to impress. This edition opens with an amazingly detailed item spanning 24 pages, the second by Dr Albert Lötzer on hot-air musical instruments, and here focusing on

Racca pianos. This is followed by part 6 in the series of unknown Welte-Mignon pianists, this time featuring Annie Cory. In an article titled *The Fourth Machine from the Jaquet-Droz Family* Reiner H Schulte writes about the less well-known *Grotto*, an animated scene, with reference also to Jean-Frédéric Léchot's animated *Temple*. The next article comes from a Herr Konstantin Freybe of the Grassi Museum in Leipzig, who, the rubric informs, wrote a Master's Thesis in 2014 on the Cultural Dimensions of Mechanically Produced Music. Here he writes about the use of the electric motor in the music industry. Coming right up to date with new technology, there is then an article about the use of MIDI systems with pianos. Several pages are dedicated to the GSM's AGM, held in Leipzig in October. This coincided with the inauguration of a special exhibition in Leipzig's Grassi Museum, *music.mp0*. A number of short items complete this edition: amongst the topics are 88 keys – Conlon Nancarrow and the self-playing piano – an exhibition with concert; the water organ in the Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe, Kassel; a news special show at the Seewen Museum, and the annual Autumn gathering in Waldkirch.

Het Pierement January 2016

See also www.draaiorgel.org

One thing which immediately struck me on opening this magazine was the picture of three little girls playing an organ, printed on the contents page. A reminder that children will engage – and enjoy it – with the right mechanical instrument, given the opportunity. Appropriately the first article in this



number is entitled *Boys' Dreams Come True*, and is about the new young generation of organ owners – not all of them from existing organ families. For lovers of De-Cap organs, there is a brief note about the restoration of De Rupel II, whose façade is a wonderful confection. Alois Broeke then looks back over his memories of the organs and their music that he knew as he was growing up, particularly the *mazurka* and *java* dances. The De Ruiter family from Hellendoorn is the topic of the next article. This is followed by another very brief item featuring two postcards with organs from 1904. The Brazilian composer Zequinha de Abreu is the subject of the next item. His composition *Tico-Tico* is well known amongst the older generation of organ lovers. Maarten van der Vlugt provides the fifth instalment in the series on organ scales, while reports on various organ events complete this issue. These include in September Amsterdam, the Dijon Festival where the Netherlands was well represented, Lichtensteig in Switzerland and in October Winterthur.

Musiques Mécaniques Vivantes **4th Quarter 2015**

See also www.aaimm.org



For the first time since I started writing these reviews, I find the President of the French society in a sombre mood as he pays homage to Michel Bousquet, the society's treasurer, who sadly died. The first article in this edition, by Jean-Marc Lebout, and spanning 18 pages, is a perceptive look at Charles Paillard's concept of 'sublime harmonie', examining the patents

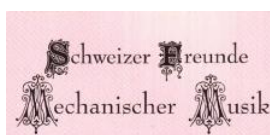
filed by him in this respect. The article is complemented by several photographs and a very long list of internet links to listen to examples. Jean-Marc also provides a report on the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Musée Baud in Switzerland. Another event which is reported is the AAIMM meeting in Paris in June, which consisted of a visit to the Collection Charles Cros and the Phono Museum. The topic of another item in this edition is the little plaques or metal badges granted to organ grinders and street musicians by the local authorities to control their proliferation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. After Jean-Marc's account of the 66th MBSI Convention, Marcel Mino and Philippe Beau provide the second instalments of their list of mechanical and automatic French piano retailers. Michael Tilson Thomas' recording of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is the subject of the CD review, while Ellen S Rixford's *Figures in the Fourth Dimension* is the subject of the book review. A report on the 35th Organ Festival in Oingt and the 11th Festival in Longiano complete this edition.

Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde **December 2015**

See also www.sfmm.ch

In October 2015 the Swiss Society

had an excursion to the Bodensee (Lake Constance). Not only is it reported in this edition of their magazine, but the accompanying photographs are rendered in 3D format. The special exhibition at the Leipzig Grassi Museum is reviewed in the magazine. This is followed by an article about the collection of Walter Behrendt. 2015 seems to



have been a year of anniversaries: one not commented on before is the Reuge company's 150 years of production, which is featured here. The next article by Raphael Luthi, is titled *What I always wanted to know about musical boxes; the 15 novice questions*. Raphael is also the author of another article, entitled *A Special Instrument*, in this case a travel musical box by B H A of Ste Croix. Other contents in this issue are reports on the Berlin Organ Festival and the October event in Waldkirch.

Nieuwsbrief from ***MechaMusica June 2015***

See also www.mechamusica.be

There is a write-up of the special exhibition of mechanical music in Leipzig, a book review about the dance hall *The 14 Billekens*, a report on the society's outing to Amsterdam in October to visit the Pianola Museum and Perlees, and items about the restorer/arrangers/builder/organ owner Adrie Vergeer, the cultural event in Gent, *Gent Kleurt Oranje*, one explaining the '#Ikschrijfgeschiedenis' (translates as 'I write history') campaign running during 2016 to get people to upload to social media their memories and photographs. Members of the Belgian Society are encouraged to participate as it will be extra publicity for them. The one big article in this issue is the fourth in the series about self-playing organs in art, this time featuring Anton Pieck, an illustrator who is well known to all of us.

Classified Advertisements

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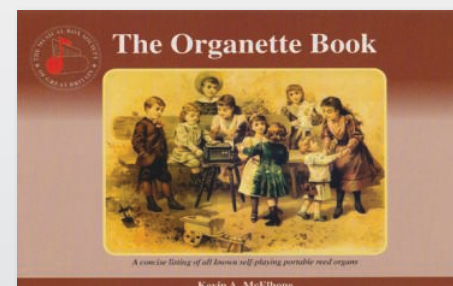
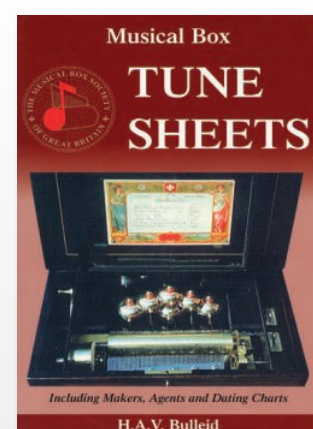
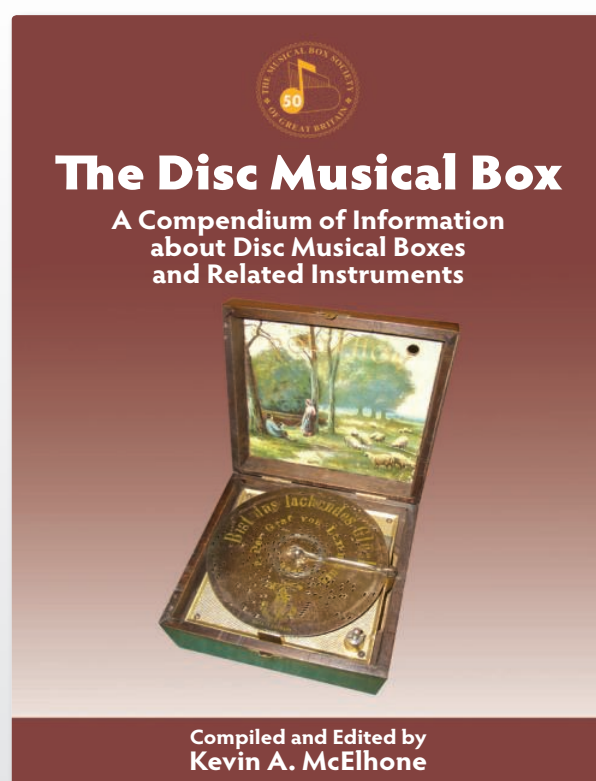
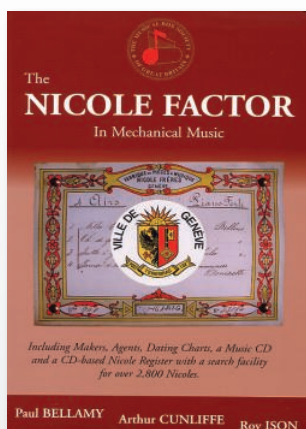
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The Postcard Book - £8.

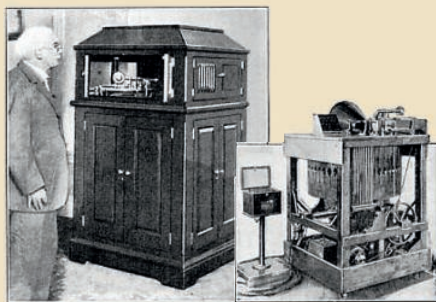
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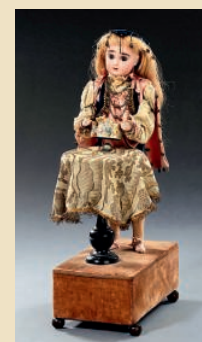
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