

The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



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“Fallstaff”*

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Meeting*

*Marcel Mino Barrel-
Piano Restorer
Extraordinaire*

Around the Salerooms

*Cogs, Wheels and
Wagglegsticks*

*Farewell to Fredy
Künzle*

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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Cover photo: The “Fallstaff” Symphonion model number 25FS. See the article on page 295. Thanks go to the James Freeman Gallery for allowing us to reproduce it.

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‘There is a gentleman of some advanced years living just outside the French city of Lyon who is justifiably known in France as ‘Roi du Piano’ (Piano King.)’

P298



Fredy Künzle was another of those larger than life personalities on the international mechanical music scene, and one who will have been familiar to many MBSGB members, and who did much to promote our shared interest.

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Those of us who have restored musical boxes, player pianos and other automatic musical instruments will have inevitably encountered the dreaded woodworm.

The cure ...

Terry
Pankhurst
P308



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Editorial

We have another bumper 44-page edition to take you up to the festive season. Mark Singleton has brought us some captivating pictures of the "Fallstaff" Symphonium on pages 295 *et seq*, which matches the splendour of the 'Gambrinus' king, which was recently unveiled in the museum at Les Gets, and which is also featured in this edition on page 307. Compare and contrast! A visit to meet Marcel Mino in France, who is the master of barrel-piano restoration, tells about us his great talents and knowledge in this field. Then an unusual organ box by B A Bremond, which has undergone an amazing restoration. After all this excellence we are brought down to earth with a bump by a feature on how to deal with the dreaded woodworm. And then how to make your own automata, using simple kits you can buy via the internet.

There are reports from a variety of meetings both at home and abroad. The 17th Mechanical Musical Festival in Les Gets is reported at length accompanied by some jolly pictures of the revelries. Then there is the Society's Autumn meeting in Hayling Island, and also the European Presidents' meeting, which continues to keep us connected with our fellow international enthusiasts. We have revived an old feature which will report regularly from around the sale rooms.

And finally we say farewell to Fredy Künzle on page 324.

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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Symphonion – Automat No 25FS “Fallstaff”

By Mark Singleton

Long ago, in those days when we still learned by reading printed material, information on items considered rare would be gleaned from the odd book and what hands-on experience the adventurous collector of a disc musical box could muster.

With the advent of the internet however, our perceptions were literally turned on their heads; indeed, some boxes considered rare turn up regularly.

Some pieces however are the stuff of legend! Did these machines really exist; has anyone in living memory actually seen one? Usually the odd original piece is known, with such rarity that claims of ‘But only two or three undamaged original pieces are known to exist.’

An example being Symphonion’s exceptionally beautiful ‘Gambrinus’ adorned with a masterpiece of terracotta, by way of a polychrome figure of the good King who reputedly invented beer. (See page 307.) Yes there are reproductions of several qualities around the planet, but an original, you could count on one hand, excluding your thumb.

Not so his stable mate, and probably considered by many to be extinct, The “Fallstaff” Symphonion, model number 25FS. To my knowledge, there was no previously known example out there. Featured only in a catalogue, printed in 1898 showcasing the wares of Ernst Holzweissig it is shown here in Fig 1.

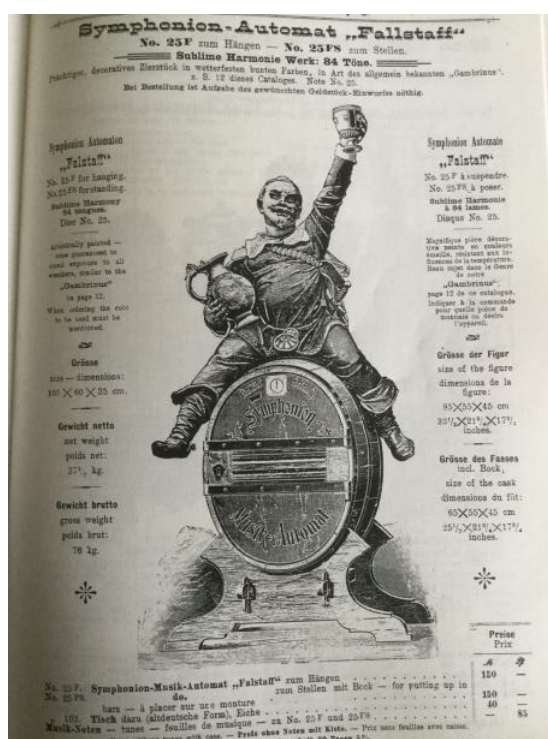


Fig 1

Then, out of the blue, early in 2015 an example made an appearance in a provincial English auction house.



Fig 2

Naturally I was alerted to its presence, but quite out of character I was rather blasé about checking its authenticity, as this model in particular has also been extensively reproduced, to the point of even turning up on eBay.

Word got back to me that I had missed an original ... Unfortunately, some things are just not meant to be. However, I also learned that erstwhile friend and dealer Vincent Freeman, a man of great experience and holding a respectful, yet hard-earned encyclopaedic hands-on knowledge, was the person brave enough to check its authenticity and put the money on the table.

The images of this fabulous piece were shared with me, and thanks go to the James Freeman Gallery for allowing us to reproduce them. Figs 2, 6 and 7.

Having spent many, many years with the periodic musing on who or where the Gambrinus figure came from, it hit me while looking at this 25 FS that it could be, in my opinion, from none other than the illustrious workshops of Friedrich Goldscheider. Fig 3.

With a seemingly quite unrelated piece in my own collection, yet bearing a striking similarity by way of style, composure and texture as Fallstaff and indeed Gambrinus, it should have been obvious earlier.

Geographically speaking, most people associate this company



Fig 3

with Vienna, but a little research soon showed they also had a branch in Leipzig, and so the probability leans in favour of certainty. 'Unless of course', in the words of Esther Rantzen's *That's Life*, 'you know better.'

The figure sits atop the original oak staved barrel with coopered iron rings (Fig 4), which contains within a coin-operated 29.5 cm sublime harmony mechanism. But one of the questions that may be asked regarding this intriguing character is: 'Who were you?'

So indeed, who was Falstaff? Primarily he is a fictional character who appears in three plays by William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, popping up again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where he is portrayed as the buffoonish suitor of two married women.

Though primarily a comic figure, Falstaff still embodies a kind of depth common to the bard's major characters. A fat, vain, boastful, and cowardly knight, he spends most of his time drinking at the Boars Head Inn with petty criminals, living on stolen or borrowed money. Falstaff leads his companion, in all three plays, the apparently wayward Prince Hal, into trouble, and is ultimately repudiated after Hal becomes king.

Characters borne from the minds of comic playwrights are usually loosely based on real people, garnered by historical study, or good old people-watching.

Shakespeare was no exception. While who Falstaff was based upon has been a bone of contention by many an academic over the years, he was probably conjured from the



Fig 4

colourful exploits of three or four people. For sake of argument I will focus here on but one, where the exploits of fact overlap fiction on many an occasion.

Sir John Fastolf, (1380 -1459) Knight of the realm, and early recipient of 'The Most Noble Order of the Garter ...

Whilst enjoying an unusually long life given both the period and his lifestyle, much of Shakespeare's writings regarding his character are by far too similar to be coincidental. His life makes for interesting reading; a claimed pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a boy, in the company of Henry Bolingbroke, later Henry IV. He had a distinguished and successful military career, with the minor hiccup of being stripped of his garter after being branded a coward, having being forced to

retreat from an encounter with Joan of Arc at the battle of Patay.

With his reputation tainted, it took Fastolf 13 years to clear his name and be reinstated at a military enquiry convened by the Order of the Garter. This incident is depicted somewhat unfavourably by Shakespeare in the first of his plays with Falstaff.

So when we look back at this jolly figure making merry with wine jug in hand sat atop the Symphonion's barrel, it's probably none other than Sir John, as he too, just

like Shakespeare's character, not only drank in the Boars Head Inn, Southwark, London, he owned it,

part of his huge property portfolio. There is much more to the life and times of this man. Interesting reading can be found at: <http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/fastolf.htm>

Sir John Fastolf was buried in his home town of Caister-on-Sea, near Great Yarmouth, in a specially built aisle on the south side of St Benet's Abbey, Fig 5, the listed remains of which can still be seen today, curiously now with a later 18th century addition of a windmill, now ruined, but also listed.



Fig 5 Image courtesy of John Armagh



Fig 6



Fig 7

A Visit to Marcel Mino

Barrel-Piano Restorer Extraordinaire

by the Archivist

There is a gentleman of some advanced years living just outside the French city of Lyon who is justifiably known in France as 'Roi du Piano' (Piano King.) Hardly an edition of the French sister society's magazine is published without an article about some latest acquisition or discovery of his, and as MBSGB Archivist who frequently passes his way, I could not resist the temptation to pay him a visit recently.

I was accompanied by my husband, and we were well rewarded by an afternoon crammed full of information and fascinating histories of items in his collection, not to mention tunes rendered in varying degrees of musicality.

Never short of words, all of them French, Marcel Mino is one of those delightful characters who seems to lose all sense of time immersed in his passion. He is the first to admit that barrel pianos are not always everyone's favourite instrument, but they are his exclusive link to the world of mechanical music – or so he would have you believe. We did spot one cylinder musical box tucked away in a back room. He attributes people's antipathy towards mechanical pianos to the fact that they require regular attention to keep them



M Mino's collection is housed in his basement ...

well adjusted and in tune. If you consider that a barrel piano may be capable of playing music equivalent to the output of four or five human hands, there is a lot to keeping them playing sweetly. Far too often people are put off by the cacophony of an example which is neither well maintained nor in tune. Even the pianos found in the Les Gets museum are guilty of this fault, he opined.

We started our tour just inside his basement, with a rare Spanish barrel piano bearing a label 'José Ferrer', made in Gerona (Girona), between 1880 and 1890, the mechanism to which he has just restored, although the case still needs to be done.

Found at a junk dealer in South West France, the attraction of this particular example is not just its rarity, but the mandolin effect it obtains. It has two sets of 24 strings, set either side of a middle section which forms the accompaniment. Marcel was keen to point out the wire bridges on the barrel and another part, which together were responsible for creating the mandolin effect. Unfortunately at the time I was



Rare Spanish barrel piano

¹ *Arbre* = shaft. For a description of how this works, see Arthur W J G Ord-Hume's *Automatic Pianos*, Schiffer 2004, pp 88-90.

not familiar with the technical term he was using, so a glossary would have been useful, and the part in question was mostly obscured from view.¹ Relatively small, the huge tension on the multiple strings had caused the case to bow, and Marcel had been obliged to fit some metal plates to strengthen it. The tunes have a distinctly Spanish character.

Next we heard a coin-operated Eolienne made in Nice, bearing the name 'A Parmentier', which had featured on the cover of the French magazine in 2013. M Mino explained that all the French-made barrel pianos came from Nice, Modane, Chambéry, or elsewhere close to the border with Italy, as they were made by Italians. Its neighbour was an example of a 'Little Jazz Band' made by a Jules Piano of Nice, between 1925 and 1935, although Marcel was quick to point out there was little 'jazz' about it. As an aside, M Mino said that Jules Piano had been born Jules Piana, and changed his name to suit his profession.

Another Spanish-style tune – a *paso doble* – was performed by another French piano from Nice, a Brunophone. This



Rescued from the Auberge du Moulin de la Chapelle

had been rescued from the Auberge du Moulin de la Chapelle, where it had languished for several years unloved and unplayed in a corridor, although M Mino had managed to find a postcard of the auberge which showed it in situ before its relegation. One of Marcel's traits is to find out as much as he can about his charges, and to retain copies of documentation relating to them inside the case wherever he can. He assured us that searches on the internet would invariably sooner or later turn up a photograph or postcard of a particular piano and/or its former home.



Detail of postcard showing piano (circled red) at the auberge

One with a fascinating story, brought back literally from the brink, was a piano he bought in the Isère region two



The 'Little Jazz Band'

years ago. It had been stored for several years inside a shed, next to a stream. The inevitable happened: the stream flooded and the piano was submerged up to half its height. The water had caused the barrel to split open, and it had been doubted that the instrument could be rescued. Nevertheless, he handed over €100 for it and accepted the challenge. He worked on the barrel first because the success of a restoration relies ultimately on the barrel being perfectly round so that it plays properly. If he could not restore that, then there was no point in doing any more work on the piano. He described how over a period of several weeks he wetted the barrel, placed a wet cloth over it, and kept it damp, and little by little, every so often, he would tighten the bands he had placed around the barrel like a tourniquet, until gradually



Rescued from the flood

it returned to shape. Fortunately his labours paid off, and the barrel was brought back to its original shape. The rest of the instrument was then restored, although the entire bottom had to be replaced. He also replaced all the strings.

I asked Marcel if he had a favourite instrument amongst his pianos. This seemed a difficult question to answer, although one candidate was a piano



Marcel's record of the flood victim's 'before' and 'after'

that had once resided in a dance hall in Grenoble. With an attractive carved wood top, it was not very big, but it was loud. Another Jules Piano creation, it had originally been built as simply a piano, but a drum, bells, cymbals and block had been added at a later date, necessitating the removal of some strings to accommodate these additions. The barrel of a piano accounted for one-fifth of the cost of making the instrument, so there was always an incentive to reuse an existing barrel. In this case the original barrel had been repinned, and you could see the marks where the original pins had been. In response to another



Marcel explaining the barrel's construction

² See:

<https://youtu.be/dHcmIcP7ouo>

for a short video of Antonio Tomasso demonstrating how he marked up a barrel.

question we learned that barrels were traditionally made of poplar wood, as it was easy to insert pins into it. The barrels were covered in a very fine layer of paper, which was marked up with the position for the pins, though we didn't learn how this was achieved.²

By contrast we learned that the piano hammers were traditionally made of beech, a hard wood which produced a loud, clear sound when striking the piano strings. Some pianos had as many as four or five strings per note in the melody to increase the volume, whereas a softer effect was obtained in lower accompanying by covering the hammers with felt. M Mino tried to explain delicately using different French euphemisms that barrel pianos were popular items in bordellos, before resorting to a word we recognised. Here they were required to play more softly, and one clue to a piano's having once enjoyed such a home was if all its hammers were covered in felt.

Another quirk peculiar to barrel pianos was the number of catchy but unidentifiable tunes to be found on them. Marcel attributes this to the maker employing his own composer in order to avoid paying rights for more well-known pieces, although often one found a piano with one or two familiar tunes on the barrel, complemented by a number of unknown ones.

We were then introduced to one of a number of Buisson-Rond pianos that Marcel has in his collection. Buisson-Rond was a district in Chambéry, noted for its piano production. Marcel had changed the barrel on this

example. He showed us a photograph of the site of the factory where it had been made, although there is no factory there now.

Marcel calculates the epoch of the mechanical piano to have spanned about 50 years, and that between 1900 and



Detail showing felt-covered hammer heads on the left, and uncovered beech hammer heads on the right

1914 there wasn't a village in France that did not have one in either a café or bar, or other public place. People would come out on Saturdays and at Sunday lunchtime to dance to them. They were to be found all over France in huge numbers, and there are still many to be rediscovered today, although because of his reputation, they tend to find Marcel rather than vice versa. The story is always the same – the instrument lost favour, so wasn't maintained, to the point it



Case detail of 'Buisson-Rond' piano

³Another YouTube video showing a different system of marking a barrel is at https://youtu.be/_8GZpDGompA at approx 3 mins 38 secs in. It features a Turkish-Greek piano called a *laterna*. Unfortunately it is all in Turkish! However, the *laterna* is described in English at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-M6l_EUI_8 (Thanks to Mr Philip Jamison for these links.)

became unpleasant to listen to. The final straw in his opinion, was the end of the Second World War, with the liberation of France by the British and Americans. These brought with them new forms for producing music, especially those using electricity, which was more convenient, and the barrel piano tradition died out. In Belgium things worked differently: owners of mechanical pianos would hire them out for the day, complete with pony or mule-drawn cart, and they would be towed around the streets and played for donations.

With Marcel acquiring so many pianos, I wondered what he did with them all. Did he sell them on? His main motivation appears to be essentially a passion to preserve them – he virtually eats, sleeps, drinks and breathes their restoration. Nevertheless a tidy garden containing several interesting plant and tree specimens, not to mention fruit trees and vegetables, as well as fishing trophies, suggest he does have other interests. Sometimes if the mood takes him, or someone expresses a keen interest in a particular piano, he will sell it.

Once again, his hesitation about how sensitive we were or ‘politically correct’ coloured his account of one such sale. A Turkish gentleman had seen one of his mechanical pianos at the Mechanical Music collection in Oingt, Beaujolais, and wished to buy one as a birthday present for his wife. Marcel was keen to inform us that the gentleman in question dressed like we did in Western clothes.³

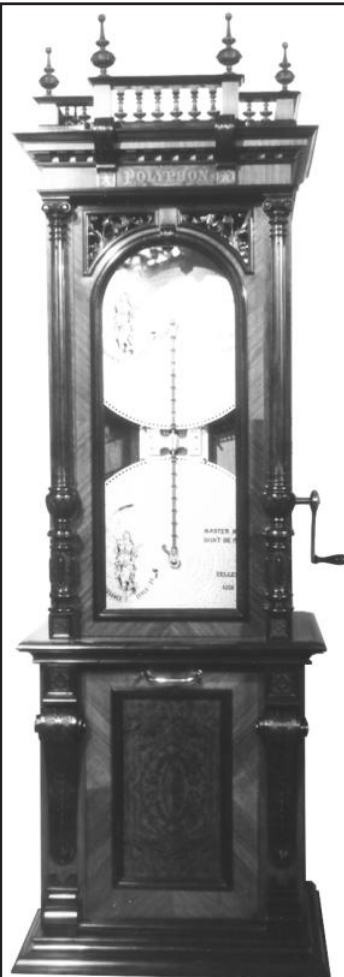
The collection in Oingt answered another question: where does he manage to house all his pianos? The *espace*, what can best be translated loosely as a ‘museum’, was set up by him and his friend, Gerard Décoret. Every Sunday Marcel makes the pilgrimage to this village to demonstrate the pianos. He says people come and see them and start reminiscing, although many others, even if they are quite elderly, are unfamiliar with these instruments. Oingt features on the front of one of the pianos we saw. Local artist and friend, Philippe Beau, has painted attractive scenes of the village on the front of a *Harmoniphone* made in Belgium in 1910. It had spent much of its working life in the *Café de Pavillon*, Valsonne, and as with many of the instruments we saw, tucked inside were old fuzzy photographs of the café, now gone, of course, as it was removed to widen the road, and a woman thought to have been its original owner.



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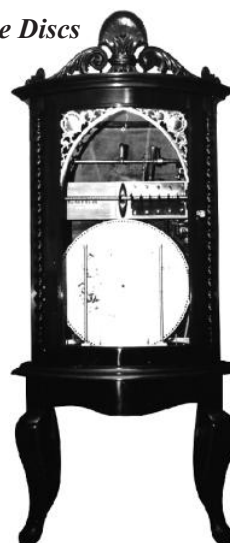
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Small piano from Le Puy, Auvergne

Our heads were beginning to feel rather stuffed and we were beginning to struggle to absorb new information. After a reviving drink we had just a few more items to see. We had a cursory look at some pianos in a couple of side rooms – a little piano from Le Puy in the Auvergne, for example – and what for me was the star of the collection: a rather plain-looking second Buisson-Rond from Chambéry. Containing nothing more than a basic piano and a set of bells, it produced the clearest, sweetest sound of



Marcel's latest acquisition, a large Belgian piano

the entire afternoon.

Our tour ended with a demonstration of Marcel's latest acquisition – a massive Belgian mechanical piano with 80 hammers. This is both the largest Marcel has ever had, and the largest ever built. It is in need of some work, as playing it demonstrated. All one can say is that it has gone to a good home, and that if anyone can restore it to its former glory, it will be the 'Piano King' – Marcel Mino.

The 17th Mechanical Music Festival, Les Gets, France, 15th to 17th July, 2016

The 17th Organ Festival at Les Gets held from 15th to 17th July this year, was a truly international affair, with Canada being represented along with many European countries. The tragic events of the previous night in Nice did little to dampen the enjoyment and enthusiasm of the festival, and did much to galvanise further the spirit of unity and harmony this regular occasion engenders. Nevertheless due respect was shown to the victims of the atrocity at both the official opening and closing ceremonies, and at other appropriate opportunities.

Each of the biennial festivals is themed around a topic, this year's being simply 'Art'. This is reflected by its sponsor, Walter Spitzer, an Auschwitz and Buchenwald survivor, some of whose works depicting fairground scenes are on display in the Les Gets Museum of Mechanical Music. A link was made between the atrocities suffered under occupation in Europe during World War II and the Nice attack itself, inspiring a call to stand defiant against evil and not be cowed by fear.

This vibrant event has grown since the MBSGB last paid a visit in 2004, and it now has more participants, variety, performances, acts, exhibitions, demonstrations, and innovations than ever, and looks likely to expand further. The town of Les Gets, which has also grown in the interim and undergone significant upgrading of its civic spaces, extended its generous hospitality along with the local Museum of Mechanical Music, to 450 participants and organisers, and it is thought that 20,000 members of the public passed through at some time during the weekend.

Among the many colourful street acts, the *Barons Barrés*, comprising five young talented musicians, entertained not just with their lively



The partying gets a little animated at lunch time, after a glass of wine or two

music, but also their alternative approach to what constitutes entertainment, and justifiably received one the festival's awards. Another highly popular and award-winning act was *Marie Tournel and Manivel*, accompanied by their Italian choir, who delivered a stunning concert in the church.



Opening ceremony of the Les Gets festival



Scenes from the animated streets



Scenes from the animated streets



*L- R Jan Bondra and Patrik Parizek from the Czech Republic.
Tommy is on the top of the organ*



Scene from the animated streets



Another of the spectacles



There was also a contingent of Alpine horns



*Dynamogene's 'Grand Roue
Revolutionnaire'*



*Proceedings at the closing ceremony. Denis Bouchet
at the rostrum. The young trumpeter had come all the
way from Canada*



*Maestro Joseph Raffin
demonstrating his new organ*



One of the larger contraptions at the festival



Not only did the two Raffin organs play pieces simultaneously, they also took it in turns to accompany the exceptionally well-voiced choir. The performance was further enhanced at times by a musical saw, perfectly in tune and perfectly synchronised.

Other concerts of note included *Swing Mécanique* and *Duo d'Orgues et les Arts*. The first of these was performed in the main square by combo of Jonathan Mathis with his organ, accompanied by a double bass, clarinet, drums and

vibraphone, playing original (and at times somewhat experimental) compositions, who were later joined by the 50-strong *La Clusaz Band*, again comprising mostly young musicians. The second, more classical in nature, took place in the town church, and featured Jonathan's father, Patrick Mathis, who is currently enjoying international internet fame with his version of Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal*. The arts featured were film, drama and ballet, represented by excerpts from *Star Wars*, Fellini's *8½*, *Peer Gynt*, *Petrushka* and the *Nutcracker Suite*. Patrick played his own arrangements on his organ, sometimes as a solo, sometimes in duet with the church's Aeolian pipe organ, played by Viviane Loriaut. The overall effect belied the tremendous skill of both arrangement and execution, relying as it does on inspired timing and impeccable synchronisation. As was pointed out, an additional complication is the need to

factor in the sound delay caused by the church's acoustics.

Other highlights of the festival included the debut of Joseph Raffin's latest creation, a large reed organ looking and sounding like an accordion, demonstrated by Joseph

himself, and Dynamogène's *Grand Roue Révolutionnaire*. This huge contraption looking like a Heath Robinson creation consisted of a large wheel, powered by a man walking inside its frame, atop which sat a percussionist who manually augmented the mechanically produced percussive effects.

This festival is far from being merely a spectacle, and many of the small hand-cranked organ players invited their audiences to sing along to the music – a sort of karaoke, if you like. This is very much a French tradition, and although they rely to a large extent on the familiarity of the tunes to the predominantly



Scenes from the closing ceremony



French crowds, many of them also display the words. Most popular were songs associated with Edith Piaf, which not only lend themselves to this treatment but also made it easier for foreign visitors to join in. Side attractions included a display of home-made modern roll-punching equipment (the owner said he did it as a hobby and was not open to commissions) and information on hands-on courses for making your own organ – a bit more fundamental than buying an organ in kit form.

The closing ceremony took place in the main square as the sun was sinking behind Mont Chéry. MBSGB got a mention for having been represented at the meeting for the European mechanical music associations. Awards were made to the winners in the various categories, with Marie Tournel and Manivel scooping yet another, whilst Jean-Pierre Arnaud, President of the French society, AAIMM, delivered an inspiring speech on the topic of freedom and friendship. This made an ironic and poignant counterpoint to the topic of Brexit alluded to in numerous private conversations over the weekend.

Although the festival was officially over, the following morning there was tour of the Mechanical Museum's new acquisitions. Amongst the items demonstrated was the unusual Charmeuse organette, featured in Vol 26, No 7 of *The Music Box* (Autumn 2014). The tour culminated with the inauguration of the *Gambrinus* Symphonion, and sampling of Gambrinus-brand beer, courtesy of the Czech contingent.

One senses that once again with their innovations the French are

pushing the boundaries, showing that mechanical music has its place in 21st century entertainment, and is still evolving. The next festival is scheduled for July 2018, when the theme will be 'Time'. We are indebted to the town of Les Gets, AAIMM, and Denis Bouchet, President of the Association of Mechanical Music of Les Gets, and his vast organisation team for their warm and extremely generous hospitality.



Voila!
The Symphonion 'Gambrinus'

*Detail of the Gambrinus figure.
Compare this with its equivalent
Fallstaff figure on page 297.*



*The unveiling and
inauguration of the
Symphonion 'Gambrinus'
in the Museum on the Monday
following the Les Gets
festival: ready for the great
unveiling in the Museum.*

Restoration Matters!

21 – The Lifecycle of the Woodworm

by Terry Pankhurst

The Problem

Those of us who have restored musical boxes, player pianos and other automatic musical instruments will have inevitably encountered the dreaded woodworm, or furniture beetle as it is correctly called. Finding woodworm in a new instrument, or one that you intend to buy, does not mean the immediate death sentence for that instrument. It is quite possible to stabilise and eventually eradicate the infestation, allowing you to enjoy your rare find for many years. So what is woodworm, what is its life-cycle and how do you eradicate it?

The female woodworm or furniture beetle starts the cycle by laying her minute, pinprick-sized eggs in natural crevices in the timber surface, in gaps between joints or in holes in end grain. It will take advantage of the slightest fault or blemish to do this. The eggs are never left on the surface and in almost all cases cannot be seen or removed by dusting or cleaning.

After a few weeks the eggs hatch and start to eat their way downwards further into the timber. You will never see an entry hole. This is the worm stage, and the most destructive phase, for the most part will never be seen from



*Wood beetle about to leave its hole.
Beetle diameter 1.5mm*

the outside of the timber. This will continue for two to five years with the worm living on the resin starches and sugars in the timber.

Sometime in this cycle the worm will eat a larger hole or create a chamber just under the surface, probably because it has used up all the resin in the vicinity. It will use this larger hole to pupate from its larva stage into an adult beetle. The pupa stage can last up to six weeks until the beetle is ready to emerge.

The beetle will eat its way through the thin layer of timber to emerge to the surface. At this stage the dust or frass will appear through the hole and leave the tell-tale marks of a new emergence. The holes seen in timber are therefore more correctly called the flight holes and appear once the woodworm beetle has flown away.

That does not mean, however, that more worms are not still burrowing

their way through your valuable instrument. For reasons only known to nature, beetles will emerge within hours of each other.

The beetle itself will cause little or no damage once in the open. The female will live ten to 14 days, and in that time she must

mate with a male, who has a shorter life span of only three to four days. It's then that your troubles really start as the female flies off to lay her large number of eggs all over the house, shed or any timber she can get at. And then the life cycle starts all over again on a larger scale.

I had the rare experience of observing furniture beetles emerge. I was a student at the Hertfordshire College of Building, about 19 years old at the time, and we were learning to draw when someone in the class said 'there's something coming out of my drawing board'. The class gathered round to watch, and as we did so more appeared from various places on the surface. It was as though some signal had told all these beetles it was time to leave.

Some timbers are more subject to attack than others. Sapwood, softwood and European hardwoods, walnut and beech are

particularly prone. On the other hand some are almost immune. Mahogany is one, but best of all is cedar, which is why organ pipes were made from it, not for the sound it produced but its resistance to worm holes that would stop the pipes working.



*Wood beetle flight holes in Beech.
Hole diameter 1.0 – 1.5mm*

The Cure

So what is the best way of killing the existing woodworm and preventing re-infestation?

The simplest method is to use a proprietary woodworm fluid. This can be sprayed over the entire instrument, inside and out, and allowed to soak in as much as possible. It should also be injected into existing flight holes. The solvent will take a few days to dry and then it will be possible to use the usual varnish, shellac, oil or wax finishes, and the usual fillers to fill the flight holes. Most domestic woodworm fluids contain Permethrin as the active ingredient. An alternative is Boron Ultra 12, which is a powder to be mixed with water, and is said to be less harmful to other living things, including humans. It is available to purchase in larger quantities over the internet.

Personal experience shows that chemical treatment will not kill

all the resident larvae. They may continue to munch their way through your precious wood until they either eat some treated wood or pupate and emerge as beetles. At this stage they will definitely eat their way through the treated wood at the surface and fall down dead. This is evidenced by finding many dead beetles in the bottom of a piano where woodworm had been rampant and treated some years previously.

A heavily infested pneumatic instrument may therefore need more than a single process of restoration, initially to treat the woodworm and fill all the flight holes, and secondly some years later when the beetles have emerged and dropped down dead in the bottom, but unfortunately in the process left a load of holes in the vacuum chest. A rare and valuable instrument is worth the effort.

If one wants to be really sure that

no beetle escapes, the instrument should be soaked in woodworm fluid and then enclosed in a plastic bag. To be sure that no beetles remain to escape, and all developing beetles are killed you should leave the bag closed for its entire life cycle ie six years.

Alternative methods of

eradication are the deep freeze for small items, or the fumigation chamber for larger items. The domestic freezer will kill the larvae, but not the eggs, which need to be frozen to below -30°C to be killed, so you will still have the problem of the entire life cycle occurring over the next six years.

The fumigation chamber has the same problem of not affecting the eggs. Apparently, some agencies now use gamma rays to kill everything, but that may not be available to the average restorer.

Woodworm is not the death sentence to an object that some people think. Careful application of the appropriate treatment, sometimes repeatedly over a number of years, will render even the most heavily infested instrument suitable for your collection.

An Unusual Organ Box

If you're after an unusual piece for your collection, but are particular about only having things in good condition, you might have to compromise and purchase something less than perfect when the opportunity arises and then get it restored. Just such happened with one of our members, who seized the opportunity to acquire an organ box with a difference, at one of Bonhams' sales a year or two ago. The difference with this organ box, made by B A Bremond, is that it consists entirely of an organ, not a combination of organ and musical comb. The music is produced by reeds, with single reeds in the bass section, and the others as 'vox celeste'.

Time to enlist the services of Alan Godier, recognised as a top restorer. Once he had it in his possession and was able to take a good look at it, Alan discovered that it had already had work done on it in the past. Alan has described at length what was required to restore this box to good condition. The worm had been replaced in such a way that the governor would not work properly. Instead of fan blades on the governor, there were only ordinary ones. These were replaced with new fan blades, after which the movement maintained an even speed. The whole box needed cleaning and overhauling.

However, the two enormous springs



View of the box on its stand

inside were too thick to take out to clean, so he had to do the best he could with them in situ. Had he taken them out, he reasoned that he would not have been able to get them back in. Fortunately the bellows appeared to be working reasonably well, with little evidence of leaks.

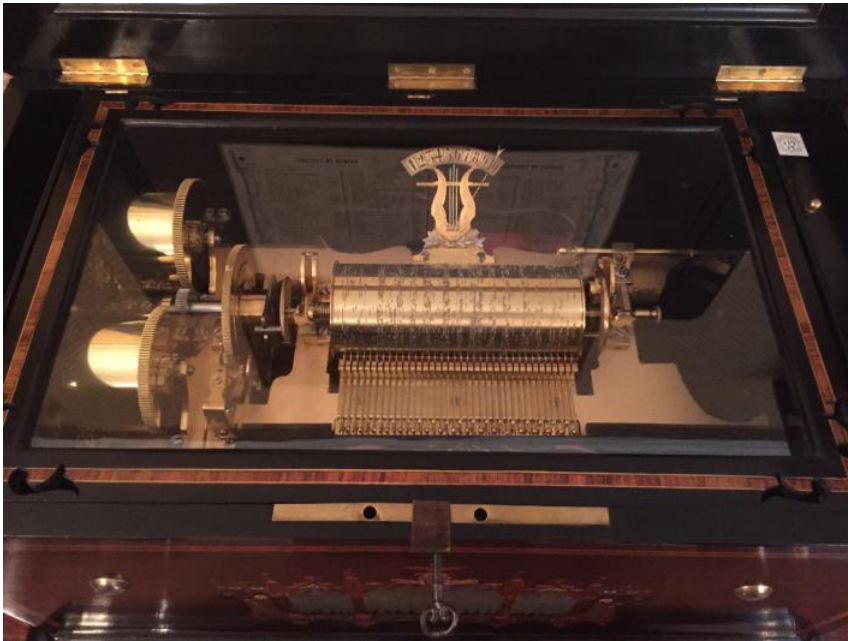
When he came to check over all the cylinders, he found they wouldn't change tune properly, and it would change two tunes at once. The box had a tune indicator which could be pumped by hand, but it didn't work. Alan made a new pointer for the tip of the tune indicator as the original one was missing. The tune sheet selector needed packing underneath it, and he had to experiment by trial and error to

ascertain the thickness required.

Alan got the idea for the solution from a box belonging to another member, and also something he had read by Anthony Bulleid, and photographs in one of Anthony's books, which showed a selector with packing underneath it. The tips of the keys work on bridges on the cylinder, and Alan had to replace the tips to all 36 keys. He also had to replace one or two of the bridges themselves.

One of the cylinders needed re-spinning to even out the cement inside. One of the cylinders wouldn't change at all, and to get it to work, he had to file out steps of the cam at a different angle.

It would appear the box was made for the British market, with the tune sheet in English, as opposed to the more usual French. With eight cylinders, each playing ten airs, this rare box has a repertoire of no fewer than 80 tunes. A close examination of the tune sheet reveals the programme to be fairly evenly split between sacred airs and opera, including some Christmas music. Amongst the sacred music compositions, there are a considerable number by Handel. There are also some pieces by Beethoven, a composer we do not see often.



View of the organ box showing the cylinder and levers for the organ notes



Tune sheet with complete repertoire for all the cylinders.'



Pristine cylinders in their storage drawers

Cogs, Wheels and Wagglesticks

by one of our regular contributors

Hands up those amongst our members who are interested in automata? Quite a few, I suspect. 'Mechanical objects endowed with life by ingenious means' might well be a description applied to a musical box, but in fact is one definition of an automaton.¹

Indeed, many of us who appreciate the complexities of musical box mechanisms are no less fascinated by the intricacies of the workings of automata, whether or not they are accompanied by automatic music. And perhaps there are those amongst the capable who repair musical boxes who could be described as being 'obsessive with bringing inanimate material to life' – another quote originally applied to automata-makers. We even have amongst our number a few who create their own automata: Alan Pratt's mono-cycling clown has been featured at a number of meetings, as has John Moorhouse's fabulous prize-winning egg. Years ago member David Secret was renowned for making them also.

Automaton aficionados and model engineers have long been thought potential musical box lovers. At time of writing, we await to see what the winning automaton will be in the competition MBSGB has

sponsored under the auspices of Engineering in Miniature. The prize we are offering includes one year's membership of the Society, and we very much hope that the winner will find our interest sufficiently 'sticky' that he or she will remain with us.

As if that wasn't justification enough to declare there is an intrinsic relationship between the two interests, while doing the research for this article I came across another competition to design an automaton, where one of the runners-up was a design for an organ grinder automaton. We are speaking the same language here. The competition was run by the company *Timberkits*, which every year invites people to submit a design for a new automaton.



Timberkits Vintage Car

Timberkits first came to my attention when I was watching one of my favourite television programmes, *Dragon's Den*, getting on for about two years ago. It attracted my attention because it manufactures and sells kits for making automata, and I speculated as to the possibility of adding a small musical movement. Something perhaps to look into one day ...

The proposition is simple: much along the lines of the Meccano and chemistry sets of my own childhood (not that I was given either

myself), the *Timberkits* wooden kits for making automata provide hours of fun, whilst stimulating an interest in simple mechanics, and teaching children (and ignorant adults such as myself) how these work.² In an age where information technology is superseding basic engineering in the school curriculum, the opportunity for learning which these kits afford is to be applauded.

The family firm has existed since 1993. It evolved from the interest of its founder, Eric Williamson, in making items from wood. First rocking horses (lovely to look at and use, but less practical to make and sell economically), followed by marionettes, and then figures without the strings which irritatingly got tangled, in other

words, automata. These still did not quite provide Eric with a viable business, because the completed products took so long to assemble that they were not economical. Then Eric hit upon the idea of selling the kits so that customers could assemble their own. He teamed up with local fellow model-maker, Peter Markey, whose designs were a lot simpler. Peter designed the kits initially, and Eric made them using self-taught engineering skills to build the necessary machinery. He was formerly trained as a fine art painter. Later the company produced designs in house and now also accepts submissions from many sources while engineering skills are augmented by a variety of specialists. It designs, makes the prototypes and manufactures the kits, which are now sourced from China, with a customer base worldwide.

It is easy to see how they have become a success. The designs are interesting, and graded for four different levels of ability. They are both simple and ingenious, where their simplicity is related to the ability level, with scope for personalisation. The website is particularly impressive, and is a good advertisement for their approach. Clear, easy to navigate, it is both engaging and offers extensive support, and a number of instructive and educational videos.



Timberkits Drummer



Timberkits Magician

There is a range of themed subjects you can make: animals, music, people, vehicles and engineering. There is also a Timbertech cams kit, which comes with the health warning that it 'may spark a previously undiscovered interest in mechanics.' A kit for demonstrating linkages is to follow.

Over now to a consumer, MBSGB member Roy Evett, for his personal feedback. Roy bought the bi-plane

kit and the drummer as Christmas presents last year for his 8- and 10- year old grandsons respectively, and assisted them in making up the kits. This is one aspect which possibly the company itself has not thought of – the opportunity for different generations to get actively involved together and spend quality time sharing their experience of an interest. By and large Roy was pleased with the kits, in particular the impressive number of movements the drummer made. He felt adult supervision was advisable, as the instructions were diagrammatic, and if a child was not familiar with that sort of thing, through practice with IKEA kits, for example, then he or she might easily make a mistake. He had deliberately chosen a more complicated design for the older boy, and the bi-plane, which was a lot simpler and required a lower



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As seen on Dragon's Den



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ability level, was, in his opinion, less impressive when completed. Roy was keen to emphasise the good quality of the product and would recommend the kits to others.

The means of introducing youngsters to our world of old technology is something for which we are constantly searching. We are already familiar with the cheap miniature musical movements which work on the star-wheel principle, programmed by paper or plastic strips, such as used by our own 50th anniversary souvenir 'Racca' pianos. These often come as a set with punch and strips for making your own music. Wooden automaton kits may provide another fun introduction to our mechanical interest.



Timberkits Education Kit

Christmas is coming round again. The kits make ideal Christmas gifts, so why not take advantage of the special discount being offered to MBSGB members ordering on-line, and do as Roy did: introduce some youngsters you know to the topic, and see where it leads? Or release the child in you – one gentleman consumer of 69 wrote a testimonial saying he was delighted to have discovered a new hobby. (Vintage car kit, anyone?) I know what's going on my list!

¹ Member Michael Start's House of Automata website:

www.thehouseofautomata.com

² Timberkits website:

www.timberkits.com

³ 20% discount to readers quoting the code in the advertisement. Offer closes on 30th November, 2016.

Register News No 92

By Arthur Cunliffe

I am currently registering around four boxes a week and there is no doubt that finding new boxes to register has become more difficult. Few vendors give meaningful information about them. In spite of all this, the number of boxes now registered is over 11,100.

The coming of computers, on-line auction houses, the internet and eBay have all opened up new ways of disposing of practically anything. In days gone by once a box was entered into an auction it was seen only by those who subscribed to a catalogue, or who physically went to the saleroom. Now the same box will be seen all over the world and very quickly at that. So why is it that these boxes seem to attract relatively little interest nowadays? The answer may be that people today have changed their interests and do not appreciate or understand the wonders of a Victorian musical box.

Added to this, many auction houses appear to have an incomplete understanding of what they are selling. They don't know how to identify the various makers, except possibly in the case of Nicole Frères. Whether the box is a standard box or a forte piano mandolin box often passes completely over their heads even though it is stated on a tune sheet. In the case of individual advertisers they too do not know the names of makers and do not appreciate the importance of serial numbers or designs of tune sheets. So it is safe to say that musical boxes are out of fashion at the moment, but in time they will come back again. Now could be a good time to start or to add to a collection.

With the coming of digital photography there is a good chance there will be a range of photographs to accompany any musical box that is being advertised or featured in an article. All this has greatly changed the Register. Whereas in the past there were only paper records, now they can be stored on a computer and have a selection of pictures to accompany them. At the moment there are 8,000 to 10,000 prints of boxes, all of which can be easily linked to a Register entry for a particular box.

An example of how the Register helps accurately to identify a box is in the case of the serial number 26289. In 1973 an unknown maker's box with this serial number was given the Register entry number of R-3918. It was for a 16-air two-per-turn three-bell box. Forty three years later another box with a serial number of 26289 came along. This time it was a L'Épée box that turned up which was a 12-air Cithare Tremolo box (R-11071). There were four pictures to go alongside this box. Although the serial numbers are the same, the Register entry clearly shows they cannot be the same box. The unique Register number now ensures that the two boxes cannot ever be confused again.

This type of information is now stored safely within the Register and can be accessed quickly. For example, it is possible to have a member come forward with a box and I am able to say it was first noticed in 1978. Then it was sold a second time in 1997 at Bonham's and again in 2006 when it was advertised in our journal. All this adds provenance to the box.

Looking forward I hope that the Register will continue for very many years. For the avoidance of any doubt, I would like to state here and now that I regard the Register as the property of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain with the hope that they will continue the work of registering cylinder musical boxes for as long as possible. The society will no doubt appoint a new Registrar as and when necessary. No other institution, Society or individual has any claim to the Register and none should be entertained. The intention of the Register is that it should be for the benefit of all, but members of the MBSGB should always have priority over others. Thus, requests for help or information should always include your MBSGB membership number.

Unusual items turn up more frequently than one would expect, and to illustrate this I have chosen to show a couple of examples of manufacturing ideas that were tried for a very short time. L'Épée thought about changing the layout for mounting the stop/start and change/repeat levers. They dropped the wooden partition and normal mountings for levers and substituted brass mounting blocks placed directly onto the end of the bedplate. I believe that L'Épée must have stopped using this idea very quickly as so few have been seen. Figure 1 shows their design, which is no doubt effective, very pretty and well engineered but just too costly to produce.

Figure 2 shows another idea that came from L'Épée. The notion of having a finger hole at the end of a winding lever is sound. There is less



Fig 1 Unusual mounts for controls



Fig 2 Unusual winder

chance of a finger slipping off whilst winding up the box. The strain on any pawl when that happens must be considerable. Once again manufacturing costs must have

been a deciding factor in dropping the idea. I have seen only two or three of this type of L'Epée box as illustrated in either of these pictures and I would like to hear from you if

you have ever come across any.

Keep a lookout for all unusual items and send information and photographs so we can learn more.

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This, That and t'Other No 17

by Arthur Cunliffe

*From time to time there turns up a box that has a particularly interesting and unusual set of airs. Often I suspect they have been specially ordered by someone with a love of a particular piece of classical music. Such a box came to light recently in that it played the overture to *Acis and Galatea*, which is an opera by Handel.*

The box, made by Lecoultre and Brechet, has a programme of three overtures with the other two being *Somnambula* and *I Putitani*. *Acis and Galatea*, first published in 1718, was revised and republished as a Pastoral or 'little opera' in 1738 as a two-act work. There are no other boxes to date on the Register playing this music. Certainly by the time Lecoultre/Brechet pinned this overture they were looking back to music composed about a hundred years before. I cannot see why they did that unless it was specially requested.

Staying with opera theme, the *Opera Bouffe* is a name given to an operetta of a largely farcical character. Tunes from these operas did feature much more on musical boxes with many of them coming from the pen of Offenbach. He was a noted composer of light opera. The term *Opera Bouffe* did not appear on a tune sheet until the 1890s. The example shown here not only show Offenbach's name but also other composers who were regarded as composing for the popular market. I have no idea who made the box. (See illustration below.)

of these boxes about than one would suspect, and there must have been a substantial number made and sent over to China and the Far East in the first place. Manufacturers such as Bremond, L'Epée, Paillard, Ullmann, Langdorff, Lecoultre and Abrahams all made boxes for the Chinese with unknown makers being top of the list. They are difficult to record in the Register as I cannot read or understand Chinese, and my keyboard does not have oriental characters on it. However, in spite of everything I do have between 20 and 25 Chinese boxes listed.

Sometimes the tunes on musical boxes reflect the popular songs of the day. Most of these were performed in the music halls and sung by the music hall artists of the day such as Harry Champion, Albert Chavalier, Florie Ford, Harry Lauder and Marie Lloyd. Occasionally these artists were named on tune cards alongside the tunes they made popular. Popular tunes include:

Sister Mary Walked like that (1890)
Kiss me mother ere I die (1863)
Funny without being vulgar (1891)
The Babies on our Block (1879)
When you wink the other eye (1890)
The Same Old Home (1880)

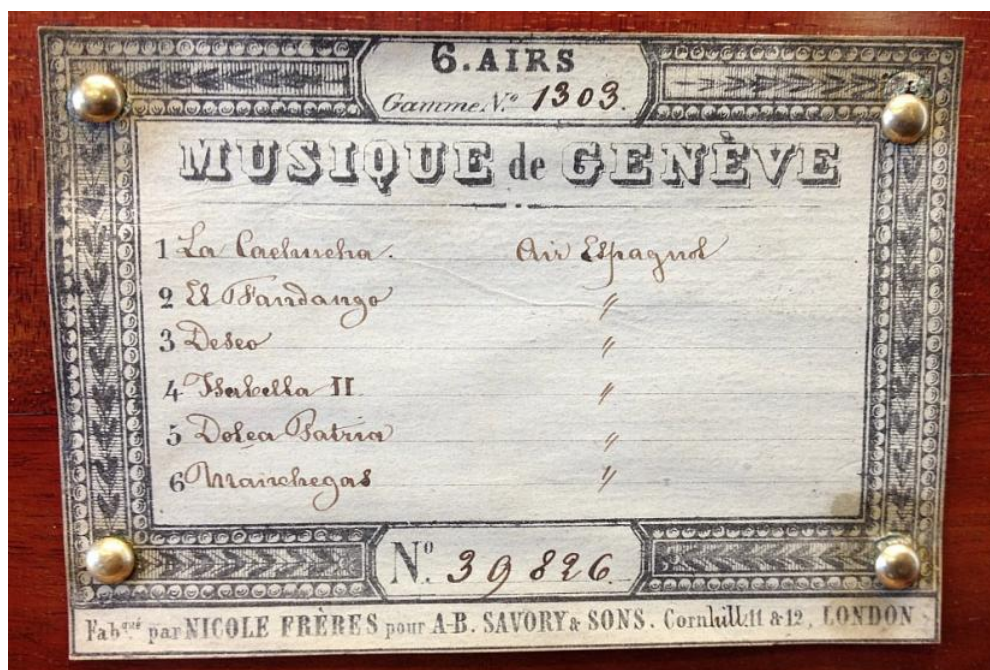
A number of boxes made for the American market also featured popular and negro songs of the Victorian period. Two popular melodies were:

Ring ring de Banjo (1851)
Battle cry of Freedom (1862)

Interchangeable boxes have been in the musical box world for a long time, and generally because of their complexity they have been expensive items. Junod endeavoured to solve this problem by introducing a low cost interchangeable box which they named the *Alexandra*. Unfortunately for them the sound quality from these boxes was not good. This was due to the fact that the cylinders



I have had a lot of interest lately in boxes that play Chinese music, with one enthusiast in Canada being most keen to find out more. There are more



Nicole 39826

were made as hollow sleeves to fit over a mandrel. This was done in much the same way as phonograph cylinders. Because of this there was little resonance.

I believe I have mentioned before that there seem to be very few boxes made for the Spanish market, but a respected restorer in Canada has recently sent me pictures of one such box. It is of course a Nicole box and the tune sheet is one of their standard types, but being for the Spanish market it is very rare indeed. I wonder if and when it made the journey from Spain to Canada?

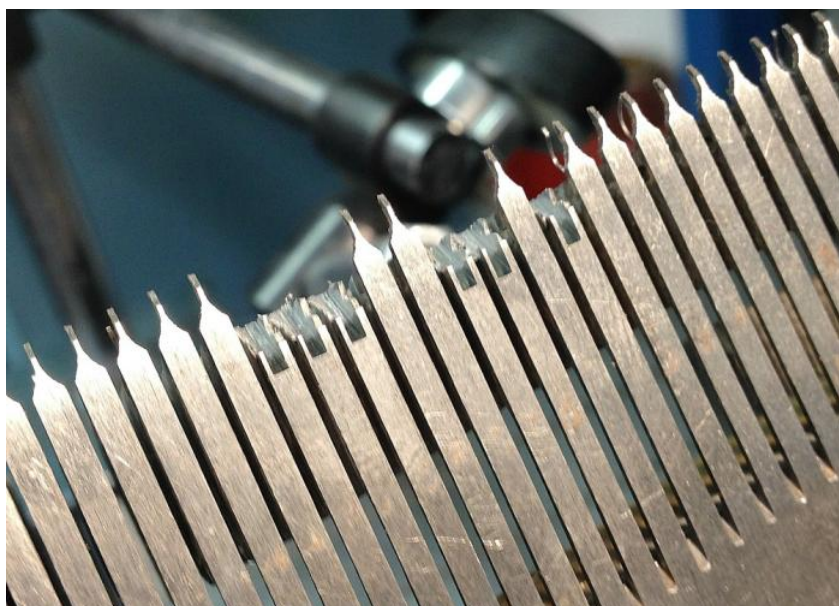


Fig 1 Comb cutting

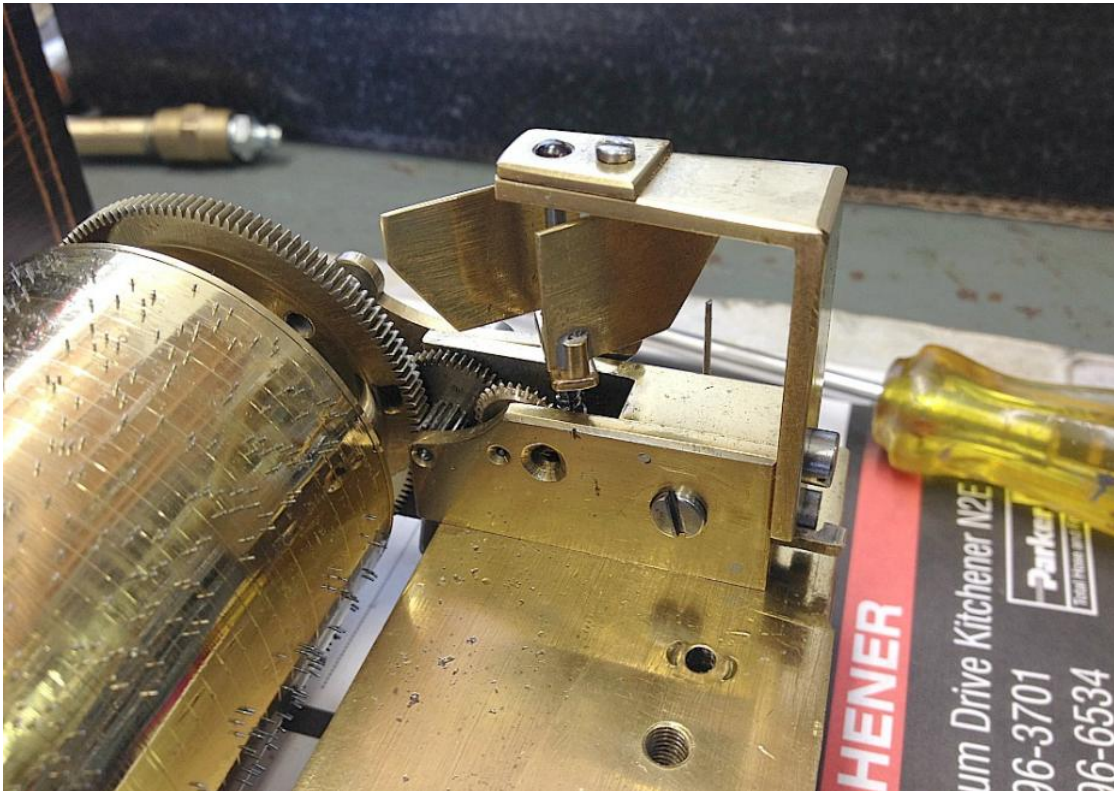
Figs 1 to 3 show work on inserting new teeth into a comb. This is not a process to be undertaken lightly as it is important not only to shape the teeth correctly but also to temper the steel correctly. Figure 4 shows a governor that has been extensively restored by our Canadian restorer. The bushing and new screw for the governor have not only been well made but not over polished. In other words, the governor looks like it did when first made.



Figs 2 Inserting new teeth



Figs 3 Comb all but finished



Repaired governor

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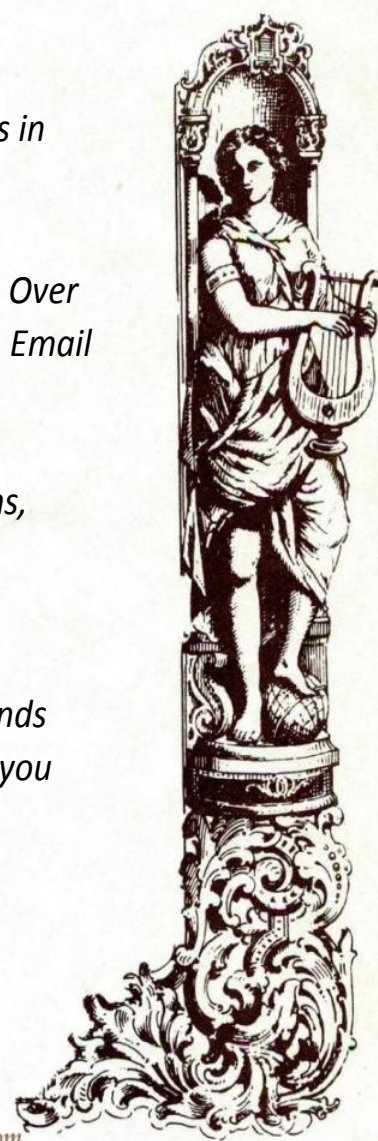
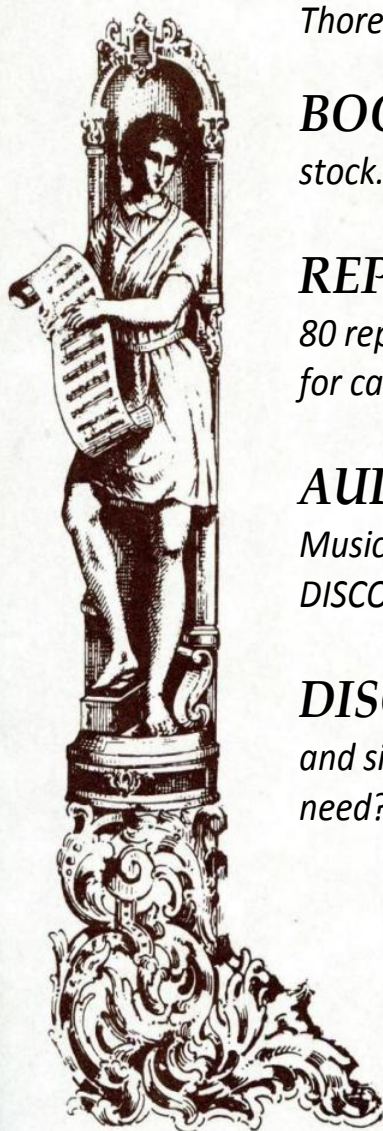
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The President's Message No 14

Over the past few months I have had a number of opportunities to meet representatives of other similar organisations and discuss with them both the delights of our shared interest, and the challenges we all have in common. How to promote our interest to a wider field and maintain membership of our respective organisations have long been perennial topics. It is good to see that minds can now be focussed on other issues, although perhaps a little more dispiriting is the fact that there are other issues needing our attention.

Both in Britain and in the USA I have heard criticism of museums, because there are several instances where known mechanical instruments are either locked away in showcases and never played, or worse, stashed away in some store and not even placed on view. In one particularly notorious instance large instruments have been dismantled for storage. Whilst reviewing the foreign journals for this edition of *The Music Box* I discovered that Ralf Smolne, President of the German Society, is also concerned about this tendency. As he so eloquently puts it: 'Thus these instruments can no longer perform to their sense and purpose, to bring people pleasure with music ...' and relating specifically to pianos: 'these instruments are shown far too little respect, although there were millions of them manufactured and they played and still play a decisive part in the propagation of automatic piano-playing.' This is an enormous problem and maybe I am being overly optimistic, but



Alison Biden with internationally acclaimed French arranger, Patrick Mathis

I can't help thinking that perhaps we as enthusiasts can do something about it. If nothing else, if we are so passionate about our interest that we form organisations in order to promote mechanical music as well as mix with others with the same interest, then it behoves us at least to try to fulfil our constituted aims of conserving, promoting and educating people about it. Never say never. It is not just our organisations that need preserving, but the instruments themselves we value.

Ralf also fixes on an aspect which is often overlooked: mechanical instruments were first and foremost made to bring pleasure through their music. They were not conceived as something which one day would constitute an antique, collectible or museum piece. I would urge as many of you who can to take every opportunity to share that pleasure with others, whether they are fellow collectors and

enthusiasts, or simply people who are disposed to reacting favourably to music.

Can we do more? Someone asked me recently whether I was a party political activist. After a few moments considering my response, I realised that I am not – but that I can get very passionate about specific issues. One issue I would like to campaign on is to get museums which have mechanical instruments in their collections to make them more accessible to the public – including playing them. Unfortunately, historically, the omens are not good. I have had conversations with dedicated enthusiasts who have become discouraged and now cynical through constant frustration with the reaction they get from museums. I myself have been lobbying one museum for access to a particular and exceptional instrument, so far without success – but that does not mean I am prepared to give up.

Returning to where I started this thread: meeting with representatives of similar organisations. However diverse our specific interests, and cultures, we all share some common values and aims, not the least the desire to preserve mechanical instruments and make them more accessible generally. Perhaps there is scope not only to learn from each other's endeavours, but to work together in closer cooperation to persuade museums and collections that the lobbyists are not just a handful of random dissatisfied members of the public, but a whole

international movement?
Is this an activity that the MBSGB should engage in? Do you know of any instruments squirrelled away which would be of interest to the enthusiast and member of the public alike? Do you have any

ideas of how we can make these more accessible? I would be very interested to hear from you.

Although it is only September as I write, this is the last edition of the magazine for this year, so I will

take this opportunity on behalf of the Committee to wish everyone a very happy festive season. We look forward to having your company again in 2017.

Alison Biden

Letters to the Editor

From John Humphrey

I recently contacted Arthur Cunliffe over a recent purchase of a Nicole with no tune card.

I gave him the serial and gamme numbers, and he contacted me within days giving me not only a list of the six airs it played, but advising me the box was an Oratorio box.

I must stress the importance of members sending the details of boxes they own so Arthur can continue to build the size of the Register so all members of the Society can make use of the details it holds, to find the airs played. It happened in my case together with some history of the box I had purchased.

I am most grateful to Arthur for his help in this matter, and would urge all members to register the boxes they own so Arthur can continue his good work.

The membership should applaud Arthur's dedication to the Register. It is an invaluable resource to be treasured and used often.
Editor

Change of Address

***NB: In future please address all general correspondence to the MBSGB's new address at:
The Grange Musical Collection,
Old Bury Road, Palgrave,
Diss, Norfolk IP22 1AZ***

Cylinder Repinned by George Worswick

A cylinder, originally given to the late George Worswick for repinning, has recently come to light. The size without arbor is just over 21 inches by 2-1/2 inches. The middle pinning shows a bell with or without drum. The bass endcap number and arbor number is 513**. If anyone can identify its owner, please contact Jim Weir at combwork@aol.com

We have received the following short video from MBSGB member Flavio Pedrazzini of the Italian Society, which demonstrates a new initiative of AMMI. We thought readers would find it both interesting and amusing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXTtunpkenA&feature=youtu.be>

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New Members of the MBSGB since the last journal was published

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

3247	Ian Barnes	Leicestershire
3248	Janice J. Shepherd	Perth, Scotland
3249	Gary Christoff	USA
3251	John Hoffman	Gloucestershire
3252	Alan Bookham	Surrey
3253	Paul Mellor	Kent

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 more value from your membership if you come along to one of our four local area groups where you can ask for advice, meet other members present and have a go at tune identification. Currently the local groups meet in London and Home Counties, the Midlands, Hampshire and in Worcestershire.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2016–2017

6 th November 2016	Amersham Organ Museum Open Day. 11am. Free entry. 28 Plantation Road, Amersham HP6 6HJ. 01494 433948 or 07763 774279.
26 th November 2016	St Albans Organ Theatre. Annual Dance Organ Day. 11am. 320 Camp Road, St Albans AL1 5PE info@stalbansorgantheatre.org.uk
3 rd December 2016	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Christmas meeting. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11am start. Details from John Phillips 01584 781118
4 th December 2016	Amersham Organ Museum Open Day (see above for details)
8 th January 2017	Amersham Organ Museum Open Day (see above for details)
5 th February 2017	Amersham Organ Museum Open Day (see above for details)
5 th March 2017	Amersham Organ Museum Open Day (see above for details)
25 th March 2017	MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. St Mark's Hall, Church Lane, Colney Heath, Herts AL4 0NH. Coffee at 10.30am, Meeting starts 11am. Contact Robert Ducat-Brown 01438 712585, robert.ducat-brown@talktalk.net
3 rd June 2017	MBSGB AGM. Roade Village Hall. Details to follow.
23 rd to 25 th June 2017	Waldkirch International Organ Festival. The world's best organ festival, every three years. Coach and train tours are arranged by Linda Paskins of Melody Tours, 01271 879621, linda@melody.tours
3 rd September 2017	MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. Meeting at the home of Richard Cole and Owen Cooper. Collection includes an Aeolian Residence Pipe organ and a Wurlitzer cinema organ. Contact Kevin McElhone 01536 726759, kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com

Farewell to Fredy Künzle

Fredy Künzle was another of those larger than life personalities on the international mechanical music scene, and one who will have been familiar to a number of MBSGB members, and who did much throughout his life to promote our shared interest. Following his tragic death earlier this year we are publishing here a redacted version of a longer tribute to him by Michael Funk, translated by Jacqueline and Peter Both, and we thank the Swiss Society, SFMM, for its assistance and permission to publish it. Editor

Fredy Künzle was a very special person with a very strong will, immense creativity and many outstanding talents. Fredy earned an impressive reputation around the world due to his expertise and mastery in the field of mechanical music.

Fredy grew up in Bütschwil but became associated with Lichtensteig, thanks to his museum there. He was an artist, musician, mechanic, instrument builder and much more. He knew people from the mechanical music scene all around the world. He loved his instruments and worked day and night to get the very best out of them.

Fredy was always full of ideas, plans and projects. However, he was less good at reconciling the sheer number of tasks with the amount of time available. He therefore leaves many works in progress and ideas that will be completed out of love and attachment to a wonderful time that was shared with him by his Swiss friends.

With Fredy's death, an immense trove of knowledge, countless stories and many memories are lost: the history of numerous collections and museums, the locations of instruments throughout the world and every collector's personal preferences.

Fredy's family was also hugely important to him. Everyone was united in music and song. Fredy



would sing along with his barrel organ; singing made him happy. He sang not only songs from his homeland but also knew many songs by heart from the 1920s and was a big fan of jazz music from this era.

He successfully collected and traded, turning these old things into a collection of musical instruments thanks to his natural entrepreneurial talent. He worked on his instruments in his workshop and soon began to take on jobs from other people. Fredy was a trained mechanic. He had a wonderful sense of hearing, which helped him with the tuning and intonation of instruments, and also meant he could hear when the mechanics and pneumatics were not performing exactly as they should.

His greatest work was the restoration of a colossal Helios instrument made by the Leipzig company, Hupfeld. Bought cheaply in Spain, it was in very poor condition, but Fredy turned it into something that could be

the centrepiece of any collection. Instruments such as this, which Fredy restored with brilliance and devotion, were some of the most highly sought-after items for a collector, and the Helios went to the USA for a very good price.

His collection grew quickly and soon he opened a small museum, first in space given to him by the landlady of the Hoffnung restaurant in Lichtensteig, who had a Weber Grandezza in her parlour in the old days. He also launched a barrel organ festival and founded a *Swiss Society for Friends of Mechanical Music*, bringing together everyone in Switzerland who enjoyed this hobby.

His lung disease affected him immensely, reducing his strength. His need for perfection, which had always characterised his work, was suddenly hampered. He would often speak of dying, but was not willing to make any changes, and continued smoking as he always had done. It made him more short-tempered, and he struggled to accept that he could no longer perform as he had done in his healthy years.

His desire for perfection and the limited time available (even before his illness) brought him some difficult times. Nevertheless, Fredy led a fulfilled and highly successful life that was characterized by his passion for music and mechanics. He will be sorely missed by very many people throughout the world.

Report from the European Presidents' Meeting

The organ festival in Les Gets, France, afforded a convenient opportunity for representatives of the various European mechanical music societies to get together and discuss the 'European Project.' The eleven representatives from France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Great Britain and, for the first time, the Czech Republic, were welcomed to France, Les Gets and the Festival, by AAIMM President, Jean-Pierre Arnaud.

Michel Trémouille from France led the meeting, during which we were brought up to date on the state of the multi-language glossary. This now has all the technical terms for the both barrel piano and cylinder musical box in Italian, English, French and German. Progress is now waiting for more suitable diagrams, and participation by the Dutch society. Attendees were urged to try and find more volunteers amongst their members to participate in this exercise.

There was discussion as to how we might stimulate more involvement by the Dutch KVD, and also by the Swiss society, who were not represented at this meeting. One suggestion made by MBSGB which was well received, was to create a pan-European list of collections and museums, much as Philippe Rouillé had maintained while he was alive. The purpose was to inform visitors to the internet site of what was available to see and where, in response to enquiries we sometimes receive from our members who are planning a trip abroad. Marijke

Verbeeck (Belgium) added that it would be helpful to include a calendar of events. Michel Trémouille is to collate all the suggestions as to what information is required, and it is envisaged that each organisation will keep the central site up to date with what is happening in their respective countries.



Left to right Jean-Marc Lebout (Belgium), the Mayor of Les Gets, Jean-Pierre Arnaud (France), Alison Biden (MBSGB), Patrik Parizek (Czech Republic), Franco Severi (Italy), with medals presented by the Mayor.

Another suggestion (also originating from MBSGB, and receiving support across the board) was to make a small collection of a sample of articles drawn from the best from each society's magazine, and translated into all the participating organisations' languages so readers could see the different versions side-by-side. This would go some way to addressing the lack of progress on the formal glossary.

The business content was concluded with the meeting encouraging Franco Severi of Italy to investigate what categories were available for funding from the EU with a view to identifying what we might

collaborate on in order to qualify for support.

During the meeting we were also treated to an introduction to the Czech society, represented by Patrik Parizek and Jan Bondra (and Jan's little dog, Tommy.) The Czech Society has been in existence for four years now, and is based on a long and strong mechanical music

tradition, which was all but destroyed by the Communist regime. It organises a number of international organ festivals which are very popular, and has produced a twenty-minute presentation in English on barrel organs.

(We hope to feature a more detailed introduction to the Czech organisation in the near future.)

The meeting was kept brief so we had time to join the official festival opening ceremony. This consisted of speeches made by several dignitaries, the playing of the national anthems of those countries represented at the festival, and the raising of the national flags, along with the European and Savoyard flags.

In the evening the Mayor of Les Gets hosted a reception for the mechanical music societies' representatives, and gave each of us one of the town's commemorative medals. We also enjoyed a grandstand view of the evening's closing firework display from the top floor of the Mairie.

An Assortment of Treats - the Society's Autumn Meeting 2016 at Hayling Island

Once again a good crowd, including a number of new faces and old friends whom we haven't seen for some time, enjoyed a weekend of entertainment, fun and not a little education. The group stayed at the well-appointed Langstone Hotel on Hayling Island, which made an ideal base, and a few members took advantage of its facilities and location to extend their stay.



Jean-Marc Lebout explaining how the automaton works

about West Dean itself, which is internationally recognised for excellence in conservation and creative arts education, offering short courses as well as diploma and foundation courses. Its auditorium is a converted barn. Adjacent outbuildings have also now been converted for use as workshops, and the talks were punctuated with the ringing of hammered iron from the forge.

Friday evening we spent a relaxed time socialising, making new friends and catching up with old ones, before the programme started in earnest with the more serious events of Saturday morning. Decamping to West Dean College for the day, we enjoyed a number of presentations in its auditorium.

We were joined on the day by two guests of Roy Evett's who had travelled over from the Isle of Wight for the occasion, and new

member, Paul Mellor. On arrival at the auditorium members were greeted by Hugh Morgan playing his new acquisition, a Pell organ.

The first presentation was a fascinating talk by Malcolm Archer about the restoration of a George Pyke organ clock with automata now in the Temple Newsham Museum. Malcolm is a clock repairer, and both tutor and teacher at the college. He began his presentation with a few words

As some readers no doubt know, museums are very particular that any work carried out on a piece should be reversible, which creates additional challenges. Malcolm's talk was filled full of intriguing details and information, and he took us briefly through the history of musical clocks in Britain, how the restoration team recorded the state of the clock before work started, and the work itself.

By the time the George Pyke organ clock was made in the 1760s, opera was very popular in England partly due to the wealth which also stimulated the production of ingenious machines. Virtually every clock had a programme of music by Handel. However, this particular clock did not retain the original music; the barrel had been re-made in 1817. Not having played it for 15 years, the museum was keen to have it restored to playing condition. The clock has a large dial with automata, bellows, wind chest and clockwork motor. The organ has 21 keys and the barrel is pinned with



Hugh Morgan with his Pell organ welcomes members to Saturday's venue



Malcolm Archer

eight tunes. It was photographed extensively and a recording was made of how it sounded before work began. Two of the pipes had to be repaired by professional organ builders as opposed to a clock-repairer. Another issue which had to be addressed was that several pins and bridges on the barrel were bent, damaged or broken, and care had to be taken not to re-interpret the music as to how the modern listener thought it should be. Malcolm described in detail what work was done. In the case of the bellows, for instance, the leather was dried and cracked so it was completely removed and used as a pattern for the replacement. The dial contained a painted village scene enhanced by automata. It is thought that the background might have been painted by a continental artist. A view of the inside from the rear afforded a bizarre spectacle of automaton cows on a chain driven by a fusée, gliding round a loop sometimes upside-down. In addition to cattle there were other animals, dancers, musicians and a good representation of other characters along with a moving depiction of a ship and various tradesmen at their business. The dial was mounted within a cast proscenium commonly found on Charles Clay clocks, and giving the whole a 3-D effect.

Since restoration the museum has found the automata particularly useful for attracting the attention of younger visitors, although the automata now have to be activated manually.

Despite the subject's potential for a rather dry presentation, Mr Archer's

masterful approach and delivery was such that it never failed to hold the audience, and it was gratifying to see the amount of interaction between the listeners and the speaker during the course of the talk.

The next presentation was more of a practical demonstration by John Farmer and Roy Evett on the care of musical box discs. Whilst this was aimed primarily at newer members, again many of the



John Farmer and Roy Evett on the care of musical box discs

regulars participated with questions of their own, as well as offering tips and observations on the subject. Due to this unanticipated participation, the second part of the demonstration, meant to feature the disc box mechanism, had to be curtailed for inclusion at a later date.

After a brief picnic lunch we were both entertained and educated by another

exceptional guest speaker, Jean-Marc Lebout from Brussels, who gave a very informative power point presentation on the subject of French cylinder musical box manufacturers. These were Pierre-Henri Paur, August L'Epée, David Cadet, Alexandre Soualle, and Clément Fils & Cie. This was punctuated by fascinating little snippets of information, for example in 1839 Pierre-Henri Paur was joined in partnership by Auguste L'Epée, but he died three

months later. L'Epée bought out Paur's widow's interest. Whereas Paur had had an artisanal approach using the highest standards of manufacture and expensive materials, L'Epée was much more of a businessman. It can be established that David Cadet either assembled musical movements and/or acted as agent for others, but there is no evidence that he ever manufactured the parts. Meanwhile

Alexandre Soualle's debt was a whopping 369,000 French Francs when he went into bankruptcy in 1861. His son followed suit in 1864 having unsuccessfully tried to



Jean-Marc Lebout and the cylinder musical boxes he used to illustrate his talk on French musical box makers

carry on the trade. Finally, although documentary evidence suggests Clément made musical boxes, no extant examples have been found; two produced by his son are known to exist. Jean-Marc had brought along several examples of French-manufactured boxes, which were a delight to hear. We were also treated to a demonstration of the Brémond box with automaton featured in *The Music Box Vol 27 No 7*. This even surpassed expectations engendered by the magazine article, with an impressive range of movement on the automaton. Appropriately it concluded Jean-Marc's presentation for us with a rendition of *God Save the King*.



Jean-Marc Lebout sets up the automaton's bell

Despite the final presentation being another repeat from a few years ago, Kath Turner's advice and tips on restoring cases generated a lot of interest and further questions by members of the audience.

Saturday evening afforded the opportunity for some show-and-tell items, which included another item courtesy of Jean-Marc Lebout: an usual box by David Lecoultre, with hidden drums and bells, and expression delivered by long and short pins. Terry Longhurst



Monkey automaton

showed an unusual Chapuis Zoller four-air box, with two combs of 52 teeth each, with the teeth in pairs, driven by a fusée motor between plates. Gordon Bartlet had a Paillard interchangeable box with four cylinders each playing five airs. The one he played for us consisted of patriotic tunes and national anthems. The winning bids in the silent auction conducted during the day were announced, with the items kindly donated by Arthur Cunliffe realising well over £100. Alison Biden also drew

members' attention to the 1000-piece jigsaw that had been commissioned of the cover photograph from *The Music Box Vol 27 No 5*. This makes an exceedingly difficult puzzle, so if you enjoy a challenge or know someone else who would appreciate it, please get in touch. Priced at £15 each further copies can be made subject to demand. All profits to Society funds.

Our meeting concluded on Sunday with a visit to the Hollycombe Working Steam Museum, which

opened half an hour early for our benefit. After a brief introductory talk by the museum's Brian Gooding about its history, we were let loose to explore the extensive grounds for ourselves and discover the gems on site. The steam train ride proved to be very popular, as were many of the fairground rides.

Despite their age, or maybe because of it they were surprisingly exhilarating. There were also the fairground organs to enjoy, although not all were of the same vintage, and a Pell and McCarthy featured alongside a Gavioli and Limonaire, while a Marengi was undergoing repairs in a workshop. Dating from the 1870s and thought to be the oldest mechanical ride in the world and the oldest known ride in the UK, Mr Field's Steam Circus resides at Hollycombe, accompanied by what is thought to be the oldest Gavioli in this country.



Mike Biden examining the Gavioli, thought to be the oldest in this country

Other attractions included a steam beam engine and water mill, an arboretum of sorts, a miniature railway and a selection of random steam engines.

Teme Valley Winders

Saturday 25th June 2016

Was it the collapse of Eastham Bridge and its associated diversion, the rather unpredictable weather, or post Brexit trauma which deterred a few? Who knows, but only eight braved the above which gave a total complement of ten including John and Hilda. Nevertheless, those that did take part had an excellent and varied programme.

First at the front was John Farmer demonstrating his recently acquired 'Super' mandolin cylinder box (previously shown at the April meeting). He explained that the 'Super' label was coined by Anthony Bulleid to describe mandolin boxes having groups of at least eight teeth tuned to the same note, enabling continuously sustained notes. A lower number of teeth restricts note durations. This particular box has one group of nine, seven groups of eight and groups of seven and fewer, and ably demonstrates the 'Super' mandolin effect. The box was found to be already included in the MBSGB Register, but the maker and names of its four tunes are unknown, although one tune is suggested as being *Olga Waltz* by Labitsky, but no information has yet been found about this tune.

John also updated the group on Doris and Alan Pratt's situation, having visited them at home the previous week. They were both in good spirits and glad



John Phillips shows his David LeCoultre piano forte

to be back home after their spell in a care home following Alan's illness and subsequent recovery. John Phillips then demonstrated his four-air David Lecoultre Piano Forte cylinder box which originally achieved the effect by using long and short pins. Unfortunately, a re-pin had failed to restore the long and short pins, thus losing the piano-forte effect. An interesting feature of the box is the circular governor flywheel having three vanes. John believes this may have been to introduce a flywheel effect to keep a constant speed when changing from short to long pins in its original state.



David LeCoultre flywheel governor

Gary Burns, who had travelled down from Bolton to join us, had brought several items to show, starting with a Reuge musical dancing dolls item, recently purchased at auction. This is probably from the 1950s and the two dancers, housed in a glass dome, twirl around back and forth as the music plays. This effect is achieved by a simple up-and-down movement of their support, which



Reuge dancers and tin manivelle

then causes them to twirl due to their hinged legs which are of slightly different lengths. The same effect was used on other instruments such as station boxes with dancers. Playing a similar tune was John Phillips' tin case manivelle bearing a rose decoration.

Gary's next item was a Jungens clock with a small Symphonion disc-playing movement. However,

this clock is a different design from the oft seen clocks with the disc under a lid in the top. Gary's clock has the disc mechanism mounted vertically in a case below the clock, and is model 4711N. The disc mechanism is key wound, but Gary noticed that the case has a vertical slot at the rear of one side, and the belief is that, at some time in its history, it had been converted from lever to key wind. This is also borne out by vague scratch marks around the winding arbor possibly cause by a lever winding mechanism. This clock is also mentioned with a photo in the article about the Winchester Organ Festival where it had also been demonstrated. Gary would be pleased to hear from anyone who has one of these clocks, which seem to be quite rare in the UK. If he can find one complete with its lever wind, he may be able to restore his own to its original state. Write to the Editor in the first instance, if you have one or know of one.

Another item from Gary was the mechanism from a large singing



Singing bird and bellows

bird in a cage, which is currently undergoing gradual restoration. The singing mechanism has been repaired, including the bellows, and produces a good strong bird whistle. The bird itself is in poor condition and Gary was able to remove the feathering almost in one piece, the feathers being glued to a cloth layer. Gary has a friend who is a taxidermist and he has offered to restore the bird's feathers to a more colourful representation.

Finally, Gary showed a 20th century four-air Thorens tabatière owned by a charity shop who have asked for his opinion on it. Although it appears to be in good condition, it does not play well, with some of the tunes sounding garbled, so the mechanism does need some attention.

Several piano Duo-Art piano rolls were played next, including *Land of Hope and Glory*, a very florid playing by Godowsky, Liszt's *Consolation No 3*, and *Joplin's Ragtime Dance*. John Phillips then played a few tunes on his Pell 31-note street organ. Returning to birds, he

then demonstrated his Nightingale box, a plain wooden box which contains a singing bird mechanism

with an unusually complex tune. No-one could confirm that it was actually the song of a nightingale.

This was followed by another patriotic tune – *Rule Britannia*, on a cylinder box. John carried on with a number tunes on various cylinder

and disc boxes to round off the afternoon. During all of the above Hilda provided drinks and cakes to supplement our packed lunches. Despite the low turnout, it was an enjoyable and relaxing day of mechanical music.

The next Winders meeting will be on Saturday 3rd December 2016. The meeting will start at 11am and finish around 4pm. Members should bring packed lunches for their lunch break. John and Hilda will provide tea and coffee during the day. Those wishing to attend should please contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm. The bringing of Christmas-related items is encouraged, but not essential.

John Farmer



Singing bird with feathers removed

News from other Societies

AMICA Bulletin Vol 53 No 5 September/October 2016

See also www.amica.org

Editor Glenn

Thomas makes no bones about the focus of attention of this edition:



The Rudolph

Wurlitzer Company. Apparently when it comes to press articles, this is eclipsed by the J P Seeburg Company, and AMICA is now set to address the imbalance. Thus it is that Matthew Jaro opens the contents of the magazine featuring Wurlitzer in his regular 'Nickel Notes', with the subheading 'The Invisible Giant.' Matthew then supplies a chronology of mentions of Wurlitzer from the relevant contemporary media. It is up to editor Glenn Thomas to continue on this theme by focusing on the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company as a topic to be researched via 'Mechanical Music Press'. As he explains, MMP is 'perhaps the most comprehensive resource on the internet for mechanical music archives and information.'

I will leave it to readers to investigate for themselves: www.mechanicalmusicpress.com. Using MMP as his source, we have extracts about the Pianella, Fanny Wurlitzer, the Wurlitzer 65-note Automatic Player Piano and 88-note rollography project, and other shorter topics. It seems you can't avoid Seeburg for long, however, and 'Arranging for the Seeburg H', by Nathan Bello, follows. For those who don't know, in 1913 the 'H' was the largest and most expensive American-made orchestrion. It was capable of both ensemble and solo effects. However, as often happens, the literature about this instrument often concentrates

on the machine itself, and rarely discusses the music. This article makes amends. Still on the subject of this instrument Matthew Jaro writes about 'Experiencing the Seeburg 'H'.' In his article entitled 'Expression and Reproducing Rolls' Peter Phillips writes at great length about just how the rolls were produced, as there is a certain amount of speculation and controversy surrounding this subject. He examines production by Hupfeld, Welte, Ampico, Duo-Art and draws conclusions about their efficacy to capture expression. This is followed by a brief article about the Bayernhof Museum in Pennsylvania, and then a longer one by Hendrik Strengers about *The Musical Wonderhouse*. The closure and disposal of this collection, located in Wiscasset, Maine, has been the subject of much speculation and controversy in recent years. This edition closes with chapter reports from Boston Area, Chicago Area, Founding Chapter, Heart of America, and Northern Lights, and an 'In Memoriam' dedicated to John Hovancak.

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See also www.mbsi.org

I doubt that Editor Russell Kasselmann is familiar with the old BT slogan 'It's good to talk',

but in his column Russell advocates picking up the 'phone on occasions and speaking with someone, rather than sending an email, which can sometimes backfire. (Don't we know!) He also extols the virtue



of sharing your knowledge with others within your organisation rather than being precious (my word) about your collection, and illustrates this with examples of how members of MBSI have helped each other with projects. Moving on to the content proper we learn about the new MBSI website, what is on it and how to navigate it. Having assisted with the initial testing, I can confirm it is impressive. In his regular column, 'Nickel Notes' Matthew Jaro writes briefly about how he built up his own collection, as an introduction to acquiring 'Old Silver', a Seeburg H, from Jasper Sanfilippo. Like so many of us Matthew was smitten as a child. For him the attraction of the American machines is 'their snappy arrangements and the large variety of music available.' The rest of the article relates the history of the machine, which had once been located in the Cliff House, San Francisco. Another item, this time by MBSI Vice President Clay Witt, illustrates once again, the benefit of networking and sharing your interest with like-minded friends and enthusiasts. Clay collects phonographs, and gramophones, and was keen to obtain a 'continuation cabinet' for a 'Victor III' in his collection. (A continuation cabinet is an 'after-market cabinet, upon which you would place a table-top phonograph ...'). Four pages describe how through the intervention of a friend he acquired one, and then how Clay restored it. However, research showed that this was for a Victor II, so he then went on to acquire a machine to match the cabinet. As he concludes: 'It's good to have kind friends who look out for your interests and gracious fellow collectors to provide sound

advice.' I'm sure we can all identify with those sentiments. Clay also provides his tips for reviving shellac finishes. The next item is a feature about the Rolmonica, described as 'an automatic musical harmonica made in the second quarter of the 20th century'. Author Wayne Finger has quite a lot to say about the virtues of Rolmonicas, from their portability, affordability, and potential for fun, although he questions the advertising claim of 'thousands of tunes' as only a few hundred rolls were available. He also describes how they can be rebuilt. This is followed by Part II of 'Silent Symphony', the second in a series of articles about the Maillardet automaton which can be found in the Franklin Institute, by Andrew Baron. One whole page is justifiably dedicated to a single photograph of the exposed back view of the automaton, showing the stack of intricate cams of the mechanism. In a side bar to the article there is an interesting piece about the connection between the Swiss workshops of Jaquet-Droz and Leschot and that of Henri Maillardet of London, with reference to an automaton purportedly purchased by George III as a gift for the Emperor of China. Intriguingly this ends with calling for more research on the subject. Jan Jaap Haspels is the subject of 'In Memoriam' along with MBSI member William Shaffer. A host of chapter reports complete the contents of this edition: East Coast; Golden Gate; Northwest; National Capitol; Southern California; and Southeast.

The Key Frame (Issue KF2-16)

See also www.fops.org

Teddy Reed,
the founder of
the Amersham



Museum, has celebrated his 90th birthday and a party was held at the museum to celebrate this milestone. Teddy started collecting organs 50 years ago and has amassed one of the finest collections in Great Britain. Another collection profiled in this edition is that of the Kempf family at Varkaus in Finland, which has been open for 35 years. There are over 400 instruments housed in seven large rooms, and the collection includes the only Poppers Goliath orchestrion left in the world.

By the time you read this, Paul Kirrage's Oktoberfest will have taken place, and will have included, as its visiting organ, the famous De Lange Gavioli from the Dutch Museum in Utrecht.

Who can remember the TV cop show Van der Valk with its catchy theme tune Eye Level? Musical Roots profiles its composer Jack Trombey, who was really the Dutch composer Jan Stockaert. Stockaert was a prolific composer who wrote over 1300 pieces of music during the 1960s. His tune Amsterdam was chosen to front the new cop show, and had its name changed to Eye Level, so named because in Holland the horizon is always at eye level.

Vox Humana – June, 2016

See also www.moos.org.uk

Whenever I read
MOOS News I
am flabbergasted
at the amount
of information
compiler Mark

Jefford manages to cram in – there is always so much going on. It is no surprise to learn that at the MOOS AGM there were a number of vintage cars. Congratulations to Jonny Ling stepping up to be VP of MOOS. Alan Smith then



writes at length about his organ, the De Jonker, which he imported in 2015. Matt Gamble then relates the challenges of 'Moving Big Bertha,' a Hooghuys number LH595, one of only three Hooghuys 70-key dance organs known to have been built, of which the whereabouts of only two are now known. (Archivist aside: I saw the other in the USA in September of this year, and a fine specimen it is.) Reading this account I was slightly confused as to where it was being moved from and to, and this would appear to be quite simple if you know all the personalities involved, but suffice to say the end result means that in its new home it can now wear its glorious proscenium of which it has been devoid for over 45 years. This edition concludes with a retrospective by Andrew Leach of 'Forty Years of MOOS', and an update on notifications from the Department for Transport.

Organ Grinders' News No 96 Spring 2016

See also www.boga.co.uk

There are two items
by members on
building their own
organs. BOGA
was represented



at the Alexandra Palace on the St Albans and District Model Engineering Club's stand at the Model Engineering Exhibition. There are some useful notes about different organ insurance schemes, and PRS. Some schemes will give you cover for £2M public liability for playing in public but some local authorities require £5million cover. For this sort of cover you are probably best insuring yourself and organ through the FOPS scheme, which allows anyone to play the organ. BOGA have a scheme, but it only offers public liability for

the person taking out the policy, and no accidental damage cover. You need an annual licence from the Performing Rights Society if playing music under copyright in public. John & Joy Webb of Banbury write extensively about their trip to Antarctica. I think they saw some orcas, but not organs.

***Organ Grinders' News, No 97
Summer 2016***

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

This issue is bigger than the previous one, and sports a picture of our own Nicholas Simons on the cover. The contents consist largely of the Association's business reports, a report on a visit to Nicholas Simons' collection, a useful write-up by MBSGB member Bob Ducat-Brown on wooden cart wheels, and John Webb writes about the day he and Joy spent in Dalston in February

***North West Player Piano
Association Journal
Spring/Summer 2016***

See also www.nwppa.freesserveco.uk
This edition starts with a report of the third in an annual series of hands-on restoration workshops, this time showing how to recover small bellows. This workshop was also open to members of the MBSGB as part of the Restoration Matters! thread. This issue's Famous Musician is Dame Isobel Baillie, Britain's finest oratorio and concert singer during the peak years of the player piano industry. The Ampico reproducing piano went through a major redesign in 1929 and both models are described here by the Editor, in one of his many anagrammatical guises. Without our specialist suppliers of rolls, parts, materials and artisans our hobby could not survive, so it is good to see an up-to-date extensive

list of these in this issue. Elsewhere are the reports of the regular home meetings which are the mainstay of this small but thriving society.

***Friends of the Amersham Fair
Organ Museum – Newsletter Jan
2016***

The good news this time is that the Weber Unika orchestrion is back at the museum after having its feeders and other sundry items restored. This work is described with photos showing the very exacting work required on such an important instrument. Now that this instrument has been restored, the trustees decided that raffle proceeds should go towards buying new music for the 89VB organs and three books have been purchased from Chiappa Ltd, all marked by Louis Blache. There are five open days throughout the winter months with free entry. Light refreshments and lunches are

'Pianolacare'

I am pleased to offer a high quality, comprehensive casework repair service for Mechanical Music Boxes including veneering and polishing and will be aiming for quick turnaround times at reasonable rates.

I have over 35 years experience as an Antique Furniture Restorer and for the last 13 years have also diversified into all aspects of Pianola restoration.

Located in Silverstone, Northants I am well placed to travel all over the UK mainland to collect and deliver Music Boxes again at reasonable rates and have £10,000 goods in transit insurance. Insurance of a higher value can be arranged at short notice if necessary.

Have a look at my website here:

www.pianola.co.uk

where you will get a good idea of my skills and abilities.

If you wish to know more

Call Steve on

07801 859162 / 01327 857800

available. The dates are given in *The Music Box* in Dates For Your Diary on page 323.

***Player Piano Group – Bulletin
212, Summer 2016***

See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk

This issue starts with a report of the recent AGM. A new President, Piers Lane, has been elected after the death of Peter Katin. Also, Arthur W J G Ord-Hume has been elected an Honorary Associate for his sterling work in raising the awareness of mechanical music globally for over half a century. Paddy Handscombe submits a useful article about rebuilding the Duo-Art rotary pump and elsewhere home visits are reported.



Around the Sale Rooms

by Mark Singleton

As a little barometer for market values, we will be periodically having a look around the sale room to see what's hot and what's not. Tennant's of Leyburn in North Yorkshire offered a small selection of mechanical music in their Musical and Scientific Instrument sale on 30th September 2016. Prices below are hammer, and were subject to Buyer's premium of 21.5% plus VAT.

A rather fine B.A. Bremond cylinder box playing 6 airs on a 17 3/4 inch cylinder fetched a hammer price of £1400. In a book matched burr Walnut case, cross banded with tulip wood and with out any evidence of ever having a tune sheet. Somebody did well.



Straight away another Bremond was offered. Confidently playing 8 airs on it's 13 inch cylinder, all teeth and tips present, in a banded and inlaid case it fetched £400.



A Polyphon 19 5/8 inch table top, displaying a great colour, with a fine patina was a gift for someone at £800 considering it did not

suffer from the usual malady of sulphation.



A couple of lots later and the best of three respectable bell and drum boxes were offered and made £2000



Meanwhile a few days later at Wooley & Wallis in Wiltshire, an exceptional Geo111 Musical automaton longcase was offered, playing six tunes on a nest of eight bells with the figures in the arch. Estimated at a cautious £4000 - £6000 it obviously struck the right note as it fetched a healthy £11,500 plus premium.



Earlier in September Hartley's of Ilkley had a solitary music box amongst their offerings. This one is an early sectional comb cartel box in a plain mahogany case. As found and needing a little expert

help, it soon eclipsed its £150 lower estimate to take £1200 + premium.



Last but not least for this edition, a splendid untouched example of a Johan Beha musical cuckoo clock was offered by Jones & Jacob of Watlington in Oxfordshire. The architectural walnut case standing 31 inches high with a twin fuse mechanism, which is unusual for a Beha as these plates are solid brass. The base was fitted with what appeared to be a four-air Paillard mechanism. £3300 on the hammer + premium.



For your business and private advertising requirements contact Mark Singleton. Great rates and simplified online payment method. Complete.
tel: 01253 813128
mikado54mark@gmail.com



Target posting dates for the magazine next year are:
27th February, 27th April,
7th August, 7th November

Classified Advertisements

For Sale

For Sale – all prices reduced to clear stock:

Player Piano sloping-top stool with roll storage inside.

Large number of modern musical novelties.

Lever Wind early 4-air Cylinder Box; 8-air, 13 inch cylinder Nicole Frères No.28196;

8-air 13inch cylinder, probably Langdorff, No.13853;

Empty Cylinder Box Case;

Musical Photograph Album;

New Pediment 19 inch Upright [last one], Wooden and also Card Storage boxes for Organette and Musical Box Discs;

Storage bags for all types of discs.

Disc Musical boxes – Polyphon 15½” table-top model; Helvetia/Edelweiss 8 inch;

Rare make Perfection 10 inch; Kalliope 13 inch; Edelweiss 4½ inch.

About ten large upright disc boxes from 15 to 26 inches diameter with discs;

Organettes – Drapers Orchestral with 3 stops; Drapers English with one stop;

Early 1888 Pressure-operated Gem Roller Cob Organ; Libelle Disc player with 27 reeds (for restoration); Ariston 24-note with Tremulant stop; Mexon 24-note (double-reed) also plays Ariston discs.

Many Player Pianos and Player Organs.

Over 4,400 tunes for Disc Musical Box, Organette – new and original rolls, discs, barrels, cobs, plates etc.; Player Piano rolls 88-note, Duo-Art, Ampico, Welte etc. Player reed Organ Aeolian and Wilcox 46- and 58- note.

Large number of new and out-of-print books and recordings on CD, tape and LP.

Full lists and photos available for everything by email. Can play over Skype or telephone, but a personal visit is better of course. Free delivery to any MBSGB meeting.

kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com [note the underscore _ between my two names] or 01536 726759

A small selection of 4 Nicole Boxes. All in full working order with tune sheets, 3 x six air and 1 x eight air. Two very good and two exceptionally so.

Kalliope Gloriosa Xmas tree stand. Plays 9 inch discs. It is the larger model and will comfortably turn anything up to a six-foot tree. Excellent untouched condition.

Mahogany-cased Regina 15.5 Duplex. Untouched, unrestored, exceptionally clean original piece. You will not find better. With 50 discs £2500 firm.

A good undamaged pair of 27 Regina combs.

Tel: 07905 554830 email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

Aeolian Orchestrelle model ‘V’ needing work but including rolls.

Available FREE from Uckfield, Sussex, details from Richard Cole, Ask Kevin McElhone for contact information.

15½ inch Style 45 Polyphon (two combs). It comes with an unusual matching disc storage bin. Although at first glance this bin appears to be of the same vintage as the box, it has been ingeniously made more recently from parts salvaged from other Polyphon cases to form an attractive, as well as useful, item of furniture. Comes with a good selection of 40 discs all in good condition; the machine is in playing order but would benefit from attention. Further details from

Alison Biden, Tel: 01962 861350 or email ali_biden@hotmail.com who is selling it on behalf of the owner. OIRO of £2000 for the complete set.

A notice from the Advertising Secretary.

Dear Fellow Members,

As a direct result of the Spring 2016 issue, I'm pleased to announce that at least three members sold a total of five musical boxes by private treaty.

Considering the actual number of adverts this is exceptional and reiterates my belief that our journal should without doubt be the first port of call if you have an item for sale.

The prices asked and the prices paid were better than could be expected at auction, and it gives you the opportunity to catch up with other members who you may not have seen in some time. What's more, these adverts are free to place . . . It's a win/win.

With that in mind I urge members to use this free service whenever possible. The Classifieds are an important aspect of our journal. On closing, I would like to point out also the virtues of our free WANTED section. I placed an advert for a certain type of upright Symphonion I had hankered after for three decades. Not only did I get offered one, which I subsequently bought, but it was the actual piece that first kindled my desire. It does not get any better. Feel free to contact me 07905 554830 or email me at Mikado54mark@gmail.com Happy to help, or advise on value. Regards to all,

Mark

Classified Advertisements

Wanted

Celestina or Seraphone Organette (must be working well); Amorette; I have a list of several hundred tunes and instruments that are wanted by members and can send this list by email if you are prepared to search your collection to help fellow members out. I sell instruments on commission so if you want to thin out your collection a little do contact me. Probate and Insurance Valuations and 'Musical House-Clearance' also offered.

kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com
[note the underscore _ between my two names] or 01536 726759

I am looking for several empty cases, typically a large key wind and ratchet wound Nicole type to suit an overture box or two per turn, as well as others. All offers considered, please help if at all possible.

Contact, Alan 07842 114892
or email: alan.godier@gmail.com

Symphonion winding handle. Also looking for a large winding handle with an outside diameter around 15mm, anything considered as I can adapt.

Looking to buy large disc players. Especially a Kalliope, Lochmann's, or an autochanger, but anything, in any condition considered.

Hoping to add an overture box to my collection, preferably key wound, especially so with exposed controls. Anything early, all offers carefully considered.

Black Forest clocks, Cuckoo, Musical, Trumpeter and/or Woodcarvings, especially Cows, Bulls, Bears, St Bernards, or Hunter type figures. Even if you have no desire to sell, please feel free to call, or email images, purely for my own academic interest.

Architectural salvage. If you have any

gothic or arts and crafts type interior doors, stained glass, balustrades, panelling, staircase, flooring, I would be interested. Having spent the last three years building a house, I need to spend another three allowing the interior to evolve. Cast iron radiators, anything for an interior that I can potentially adapt or recycle and use again. Exteriors, stone window/door surrounds, cappings, flags, gothic relics, gargoyles. Anything that could be used in a folly.

If theres an item you have always fancied, remember it's FREE to post your requests here. It works ... I recently advertised for a certain rare model of a large Symphonion; I was offered and I bought.

Large upright disc players, and early cylinder boxes with exposed controls ... All offers considered regardless of condition

Contact Mark 07905 554830 or email: Mikado54mark@gmail.com

For Sale by Private Treaty

An important George III organ by George Pyke.

Contained in a fine glazed mahogany bureau and bookcase, almost certainly by Thomas Chippendale Junior (please contact for further information). The organ has 32 keys serving five stops. The diapason and flute ranks by 64 wooden pipes. The principal, twelfth and fifteenth serving 96 all metal pipes making a total of 160 ranging from 6.5-22.75 inches. This piece measures 95" high, 41" wide and 26" deep. One barrel is pinned with 12 single tunes and the second with six spirally pinned tunes. The musical programme includes subtle minuets, lively dances and hymns, including *Adeste Fideles*, all of which are exceptionally well arranged and are listed on the original maker's labels, which remains intact, as does the date of 1772 found inside the chest. Pyke was the appointed Royal organ builder and clockmaker to George III. A magnificent and unique piece for the discerning collector.



Enquiries to: randmi@icloud.com
Tel: 01522 540406

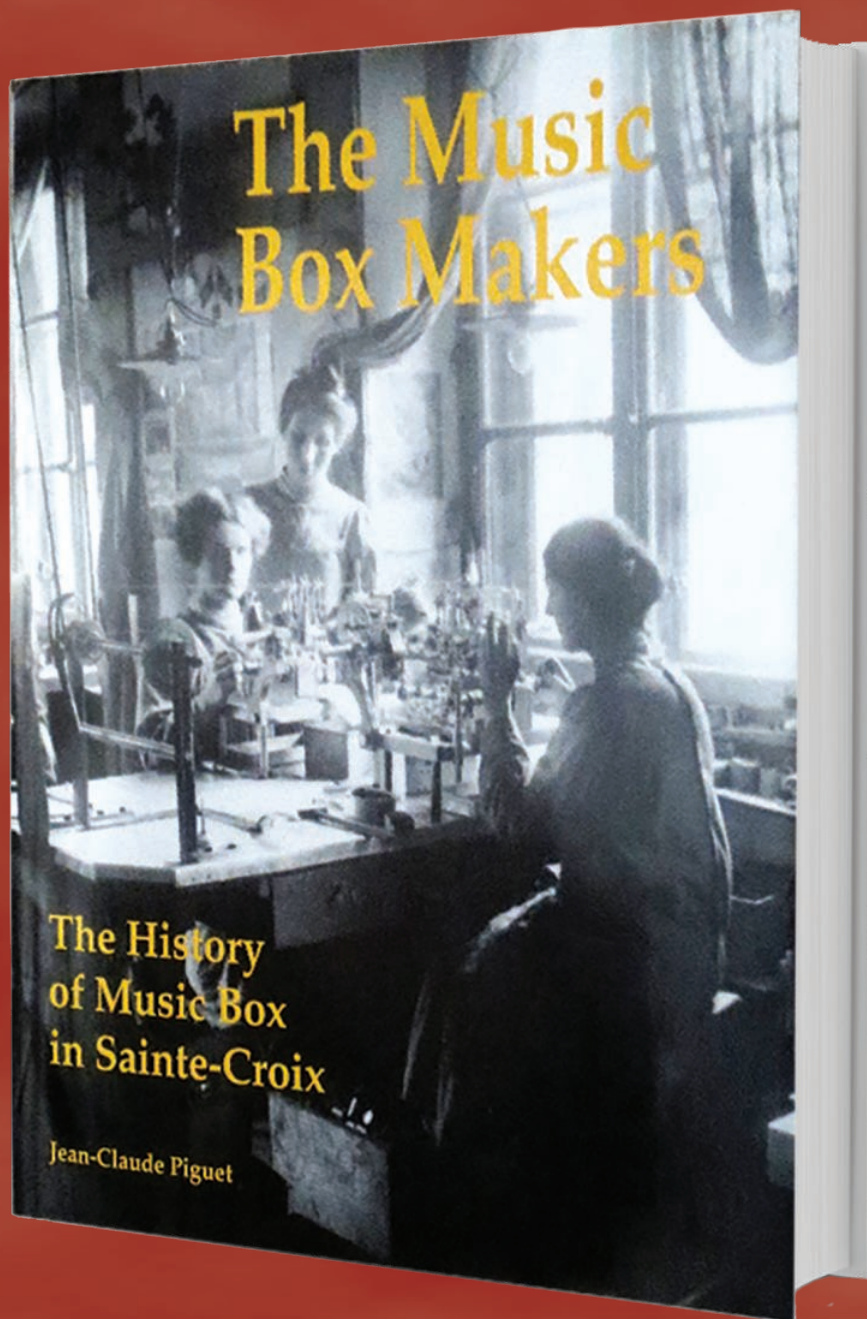
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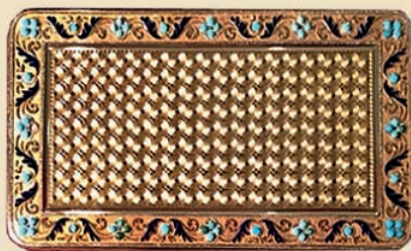
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Symphonion »Double-Disc Model 25D« c. 1905
Good restored condition, with full and expressive sound.
Estimate: € 12,000 – 18,000 /
US\$ 13,000 – 20,000



Fine Musical Gold Snuff Box with Inset Turquoises, c. 1820
Estimate: € 15,000 – 20,000 /
US\$ 16,500 – 22,000



Symphonion »Eroica No. 38B« Disc Musical Box, c. 1895
With 9 sets of discs. Excellent playing condition!
Estimate: € 35,000 – 45,000 /
US\$ 38,500 – 49,500

140th Specialty Auction

»Mechanical Music & Automata«

November 5, 2016



Palais Royal Musical Sewing Necessaire, c. 1840
With sectional-comb movement and a fine complement of original sewing tools. Estimate: € 1,200 – 1,800 /
US\$ 1,300 – 2,000



Rare Grand Format Forte-Piano Musical Box by J. H. Heller, c. 1860
Estimate: € 15,000 – 20,000 / US\$ 16,500 – 22,000



Musical Automaton Picture Clock of an Italian Village by Xavier Tharin, c. 1870
Estimate: € 12,000 – 18,000 /
US\$ 13,000 – 20,000



»Sonnette de l'Entracte« (»Intermission Bell«) Automaton by Gustave & Henry Vichy, c. 1895
Ht. 30 in. In original, unrestored condition.
Estimate: € 25,000 – 30,000 /
US\$ 27,500 – 33,000



Original Symphonion No. 25 GS »Gambrinus« Musical Box, c. 1900
With terracotta figure and provenance from the »Drei Mädelhaus« guest house (established in 1897) where it entertained customers for three generations.
Estimate: € 12,000 – 18,000 /
US\$ 13,000 – 20,000



Rare Early Singing Bird in Cage Automaton, c. 1860
Estimate: € 4,500 – 6,000 /
US\$ 5,000 – 6,600



»Eccentric Clown« Automaton by Gustave & Henry Vichy, c. 1895
Ht. 43 in. (110 cm). In original, unrestored condition – the only example of this model that we know of.
Estimate: € 25,000 – 30,000 /
US\$ 27,500 – 33,000



Unique »Musical Duo« Automaton by Henry Phalibois, c. 1900
With banjo player and his assistant. Provenance: Ex-collection of Virgilio Seco, Sotheby's, May 1998. – Estimate: € 15,000 – 20,000 / US\$ 16,500 – 22,000



»Regina Style 31« Automatic Disc-Changing Musical Box for 12 Discs, c. 1900
Excellent restored playing condition.
Estimate: € 15,000 – 20,000 /
US\$ 16,500 – 22,000



Symphonion »Eroica No. 38AT« Disc Musical Box, c. 1895
Estimate: € 12,000 – 16,000 /
US\$ 13,000 – 17,600

...and many more!



»Imhof & Mukle« Barrel Organ, c. 1870
Estimate: € 3,500 – 5,000 /
US\$ 4,000 – 5,500



Bébé Jumeau Lioretgraphe Doll, c. 1895
Estimate: € 3,200 – 4,000 / US\$ 3,500 – 4,400

For more information and large colour photographs of some more of the upcoming Highlights please visit our website at: www.Breker.com / **New Highlights** and youTube.com at Auction Team Breker at early October 2016

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