



The **Music Box**

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue

Gammes and Gamme Numbers

A Carillon Conundrum

Notes on a Grand Roller Organ

Two Organina Organs

An Automaton Harmonium Player

An Important Find in Germany

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain



NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM MBSGB

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain announces the publication of two new books
Published in September 2018



Supplement to The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

ISBN 978-0-9557869-6-9

100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout with

Additional Illustrations of Models, 89 Additional Lid Pictures;
Additions to Lists of Models, Patents, Tune Lists & Serial Numbers;
Combined Index of Images in the original book and its Supplement.

Originally published in 2012 and still available, see below for details,

The Disc Musical Box is a compendium of information about Disc Musical Boxes, their Makers and their Music; profusely illustrated throughout with Illustrations of each Disk Musical Box Model, and with Catalogue Scans, Lists of Models, Patents & Tune Lists.

Cost: £25.00 to members; £30.00 to Non-members; plus P&P at cost

Supplement to The Organette Book

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

ISBN 978-0-9557869-5-2

100pp Hard Back ISO A4 format [8.27" × 11.70"]; Profusely illustrated in colour throughout;
Additional Illustrations of Models; Additions to Lists of Patents, Tune Lists & Tuning Scales;
A New Section on Trade Cards; Combined Index of Images in the original book and its Supplement.

The Organette Book is a compendium of information about Organettes, their Makers and their Music. Originally published in 2002 but now out of print although 2nd Hand copies are occasionally available in on-line auctions.

Cost: £20.00 to members; £25.00 to Non-members; plus P&P at cost.



Other MBSGB PUBLICATIONS

Limited stocks remain available of the following MBSGB publications:



The Disc Musical Box

Compiled and Edited by Kevin McElhone

A compendium of information about the Disc Musical Boxes, their Makers and their Music.
Profusely illustrated in colour throughout; complete with a supporting DVD of Catalogue Scans, Lists of Models Patents & Tune Lists & Additional Illustrations

Published in February 2012

Book - ISBN 978-0-9557869-4-5 DVD - ISBN 978-0-9557869-7-6

Cost: £40.00; plus P&P at cost

Musical Box TUNE SHEETS

and Supplements 1 to 4

by the late Anthony Bulleid and by his successor Tim Reed

including the accompanying

SEARCH ENGINE Version 3

Devised and compiled by the late Luuk Goldhoorn

Over 500 Cylinder Musical Box Tune Sheets Illustrated, Identified & Described
Invaluable aids to identifying the maker of a cylinder musical box.

Published in October 2000 ISBN 978-0-9505657-7-4

Cost: £10.00; plus P&P at cost

The Nicole Factor in Mechanical Music

by P Bellamy, A D Cunliffe and R Ison

A concise history of the Nicole family's involvement in and influence on the development of the Cylinder Musical Box industry during the 19th century.

Published in August 2006 ISBN 978-0-9505657-3-6

Cost: £40.00; plus P&P at cost



For all MBSGB Publications, please refer to the Musical Box Society of Great Britain website for further details including latest availability, discounted prices and information on how to order. - www.mbsgb.org.uk

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Front Cover: Detail of a Massachusetts Organ Company Organina organette, rebuilt by member Terry Pankhurst. See page 190.
Photo credit: Terry Pankhurst

'... a musical box gamme does not necessarily follow strictly the chromatic scale of the piano or organ ...' (see David Worrall's 'Gammes and Gamme Numbers, p 180)



'Something is starting to look a bit fishy ...' (see Roy Evett's 'A Carillon Conundrum', p 187)



'Inspired by an article in the Summer 2013 The Music Box ...' (see Steve Tanner's article on building an automaton harmonium player, p 193)



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EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

When submitting content for the *The Music Box*, please do so electronically, although hardcopy will be accepted along with printed photographs. (Keep a copy!) Please note that hardcopy submissions will require (re)typing and scanning; scanned photographic prints may not do justice to the originals. Electronic text should be in plain text, Microsoft Word or Open Doc format, if possible; PDFs are the least preferable as they can't be easily manipulated. Accompanying photographs should be sent as separate (NOT embedded in a document), high-resolution, JPG or PNG files with filenames reflecting figure numbers referenced in the text of the article, e.g., "Fig 01.jpg." If you think an image might be worthy of being selected for the front cover of the journal, please make sure it is in *portrait* vs. *landscape* format. Captions for photographs or other graphics should be sent as a separate document file, with text formatted like the following: "Fig. 17: Reed pan showing shrinkage cracks."

Articles, letters and other contributions relating to the study of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments for publication in the Journal are welcome. We will get back to you if we feel any changes other than minor spelling or grammar errors or readability issues need to be corrected. We will also take care of fitting your images and captions into the text. Articles, questions and comments should be submitted electronically to editor@mbsgb.org.uk, or by post to The Musical Box Society of Great Britain, c/o The Grange Musical Collection, Palgrave, DISS, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ (Please note that this latter method will result in delay; if you are rushing to meet a deadline either email the editor, or telephone 01962 861350.) Any questions about how to format or submit an article should be sent to the foregoing addresses. Be advised there may be a significant publishing delay, as there may be other articles in the queue when yours arrives. We are also happy to receive feedback on previously published content.

The (Acting) Editor reserves the right to amend or reject any content we deem inappropriate, including, but not limited to, duplicative articles, articles with little affinity to mechanical music related topics, plagiarism, unauthorized or improper use of copyrighted materials, etc. 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 does not necessarily imply 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 quarterly by the MBSGB.

Editor's Column

I thought it was time to revise the guidelines on submissions, and have borrowed substantially from those issued by our colleagues in the Reed Organ Society, (see www.reedsoc.org.) I hope the more explicit requirements do not put off potential contributors, whilst stream-lining the production of the journal and improving its quality. If you only have 'old' technology available, please still use it, but be aware that as a consequence your submission may not see the light of day as early as you expect.

There's an old adage about everyone having a book inside them – so, it shouldn't be too hard to come up with an article for this magazine, with so many topics to choose from: how your interest started; items in your collection; items you have seen in other collections and museums; unusual items; accounts of restorations undertaken and restoration techniques; the history and development of mechanical musical instruments; the history of collections; some noteworthy collectors ... the list is endless. Sometimes it just requires a little thinking 'outside the box ...'

In this edition, the first of the '20s, we have been fortunate to receive a number of interesting and informative articles, many of them with a 'practical' bent, highlighting the creativity and technical expertise demonstrated by their authors. We also follow up on topics that were touched upon in our previous edition. You may also detect a theme of organettes and automata – both quite unintentional – running through a number of items. Thus it is appropriate that we have a detailed account of a new build automaton submitted by Steve Tanner, which is echoed by Michael Start's recollections of David Secrett, who recently passed away. (Michael also gives us a vivid glimpse of the colourful 1970s life of Portobello Road.) Meanwhile Terry Pankhurst describes how he rebuilt two Organina organettes, first demonstrated at the Bradford meeting last Autumn, as mentioned in *The Music Box* Vol 29, No 4, while Roger Booty writes about the Grand Roller Organ. Not so much a 'who done it?' as a 'what is it?', Roy Evett shares with us his musings on Gary Burns's mysterious set of carillon bells, (also shown at the Bradford meeting – and several other meetings), and Arthur Ord-Hume informs us of an exciting historic discovery in Germany ...

**Please note that the deadline for next edition is
1st April, 2020.**

Copy deadlines are normally:

1st February; 1st April; 1st July & 1st October

Publication dates:

1st March; 1st May; 1st August; 1st November.

**We reserve the right to amend these dates as
circumstances dictate.**

Important Message from the Committee

The British press reported recently that the European ski industry appears to be in decline as younger generations are not going to the mountains in anything like the anticipated numbers. Without looking at any substantiated data on the subject, is it yet another example of what interests the over 60s, no longer finds favour with younger people, and/or how the upcoming generations today spend their spare money and leisure time?

With the advent of computers came the opportunity for virtually instant adrenaline rushes and gratification through playing on-line and video games. Scientific studies have shown that people's addiction to their screens are a genuine addiction with associated chemical reactions taking place in the brain. In this sort of environment, the challenges of interesting the uninitiated in the wonders of mechanical music are even greater.

It's not all bad news though: there is still a big public appetite to see and hear some of the larger instruments e.g. fair and street organs, as the attendance at the Great Dorset Steam Fair and the Diss Organ Festival show.

But our interest is facing a different challenge. To misquote Jane Austen, 'it is a truth universally acknowledged, that special interest groups are in need of people to run them.' For many years one of our members belonged to a local wine society, which met most months for talks and wine tastings. Whilst the interest in wine has not subsided, nor the membership significantly diminished, in January of this year the group held its last meeting after decades of existence, simply because too few people were willing to run it.

A glance at the list of MBSGB Officers on the contact details page should flag up that MBSGB is not as far away from a similar fate as comfort would dictate. Membership is not in sharp decline, and we have a very healthy bank balance. We have punched above our weight in the publication of books, and have amassed a wealth of knowledge, largely thanks to Arthur Cunliffe's foresight in compiling the Cylinder Musical Box Register, and H A V Bulleid's research into tune sheets (amongst other things), still an on-going MBSGB project. Despite our name, we are an international organisation, and with English recognised as the language of international communication, we are a focal point for enthusiasts from Europe and around the world.

Over recent months individual members have volunteered to lend a hand if asked. Whilst these offers are very welcome, they are only part of the solution, as the business decisions need to be more widely considered. If the Treasurer's job, for example, could be taken on it would significantly relieve the pressure ... or one of the other posts. **If you value your Society, please consider giving a little of your time to ensure its continued success.**

News and Society Topics



Diss Organ Festival, 2020

Back by popular demand, the largest event of its kind in the UK.

The Diss Organ Festival will return to this picturesque Norfolk market town, on SUNDAY 17th, MAY 2020 from 10.00 till 17.00.

From famous British fairground organs, magnificent mobile concert instruments to beautiful Dutch street organs, the highways and byways of Diss, along with its popular Park, will be alive with the joyful sound of over 50 mechanical music machines on Sunday, May 17th, 2020. Visitors will have a chance through the British Organ Grinders' Association of sampling life as "Organ Grinders" who, over a century ago, were a familiar sight roaming the streets bringing music to the public. Continental café organs and bijou busker organs too will be entertaining with their delightful melodies.

Steering this popular event is MBSGB member, Jonny Ling, from Palgrave, on behalf of the Mechanical Organ Owners Society whose members are bringing these amazing instruments from across Britain and The Netherlands.

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain are planning an engaging exhibition of

2020 Subscriptions FINAL REMINDER

If you had not paid your subscription by early February, you will see a FINAL REMINDER version of the renewal form in this issue of "The Music Box." (If you paid recently, please ignore the reminder). If your subscription remains unpaid, this will be the last issue of "The Music Box" you will receive. Please PAY NOW to make sure you continue to receive your journal. If you have any queries, contact the Subscriptions Secretary (see Officer page).

FURTHER REMINDER of the change to THE SOCIETY'S BANK ACCOUNT

Notwithstanding the publicity given in "The Music Box" and elsewhere during 2019, several members have transferred their 2020 Subscriptions and other money due to The Society into the Society's old Current Account! As advised earlier, this account was taken out of use last year pending formal closure. So, a further reminder and request follows.

If you use bank transfer as a mean of making payments to The Society and if you have not done so already, would you PLEASE change the bank details on your payment instruction[s] as follows:

BANK: The National Westminster Bank
SORT CODE: 60-17-21
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 99256940
ACCOUNT TITLE: The Musical Box Society of Great Britain
BIC or SWIFT: NWBKGB2L
IBAN: GB39NWBK60172199256940

The old Current Account will be formally closed wef 1st June 2020 resulting in inconvenience to all parties arising from payments and transfers thereto being rejected by the bank.

The Executive Committee - February 2020

New members

We are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members/ rejoiners of The Musical Box Society of Great Britain:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Hans Peter Kyburz | Switzerland |
| Robert Penn | Somerset |
| Steve Jaikens | W. Yorks |
| David Nelson | Cheshire |
| James Pearson | Hertfordshire |
| Michael Clark | Yorks |
| Andrew McKenzie | West Sussex |

Victorian musical boxes and rare mechanical musical instruments at the Corn Hall, where there will also be organ recitals by concert organists with the Theatre Organ Club staging a nostalgic 1920s silent movie to dramatic organ accompaniment, recreating the early cinema before soundtracks were incorporated in the film.

In addition, a display of vintage vehicles in the Park, together with veteran traction engines in steam, will be accompanied by the Diss Rotary Club barbecue. There will also be stalls and refreshments



available throughout the town. Many shops and businesses are opening especially for the day.

The last festival, held in 2018, was a huge success with over 6,000 people pouring into the town for the event and sampling “Diss At Its Best” so come along and be serenaded in a day of pure fun!

Diss, Norfolk, UK IP22 4JZ

For further information, see www.dissorganfestival.co.uk

*Photo credits: Keith Prichett;
‘Heritage Snapper’ & Alison Biden*



In Other ‘News’ ...

Jonny Ling, featured here promoting the forthcoming Diss Organ Festival, also delivered a ‘star’ performance on a recent ‘Antiques Road Trip’, showing (and playing) his fine collection of mechanical music to one of the presenters. Originally broadcast on Tuesday, 4th February on BBC 1 at 4.30 pm it is well worth watching if you can pick it up on ‘catch up’ or ‘iPlayer.’ He joins veterans John Phillips and Robert Hough, who in the past have been featured in similar (but not quite the same) productions.

The ingenious Martin Molin of Wintergatan, who a few years ago horrified some and thrilled others with his Marble Machine invention, has progressed from having a passing interest in mechanical instruments, to becoming quite immersed in them. You may be unaware that he produced a video series about the instruments in the Speelklok Museum in Utrecht. Now another is on its way featuring instruments in Siegfrieds Mechanisches Musikkabinett, Rudesheim,

Germany. If it is anything like as accessible to the younger generations as his previous series, then there is hope yet. **DO** take a look – you will enjoy this immensely:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8HBiUiYTjo>

We have received information about the opening of a new museum in Northern Italy, primarily for those interested in harmoniums and reed organs, but containing some roll players:

<http://www.santolino.it/en/>

On a sombre note: we were very sorry to learn of the passing away in early January of Doris Pratt, who for many years supported the Society alongside Alan, her husband, including assisting him when he was editor of this very magazine. Our thoughts and condolences go on behalf of the Society to Alan and the family. Also, of Jasper Sanfilippo, less well-known in UK but a significant and philanthropic collector in USA.

Important Find in Germany

by Arthur W J G Ord-Hume

It is a constant curiosity that mechanical music, which once fulfilled a major part of our everyday lives, was not really appreciated or understood for the first five or six decades of the 20th century. Only in the past sixty or so years have we learned to appreciate just what it can offer both sociologically and musicologically.

Before the First World War, the availability of music in the home was of restricted variability. While the era of the comb-playing musical box was rapidly drawing to an end, climaxing with the spectacular perfection of the disc-playing musical box, its zenith in terms of entertainment – the player-piano – was also approaching its peak of popularity. The invention of the expression piano which led to the final epoch in both Germany and the United States in the form of the reproducing piano, was virtually swept aside by two developments which could not have been foreseen by the entrepreneurial musical doyens of Leipzig and New Jersey – the gramophone and the radio.

Both these inventions could do the one thing that no form of mechanical music could do and that was to reproduce that most cherished sound of all – the human voice. While one let us hear the King speak to his people in real time, the other would preserve for future generations the voices of statesmen, singers and artists as it preserved the human voice even beyond the grave.

The First World War was a form of dividing line between mechanical interpretation and this wondrous new technology. And, as ever, when in comes the new, that which is now surpassed is eagerly thrown out as unwanted and 'old hat'. As the mechanical musical instruments were no longer needed, so the skills that maintained them were quickly lost and in a generation all that was once commonplace was suppressed and ultimately forgotten.

In the 1930s, three forms of mechanical music were still to be found. Already they had entered the portals of smiling

condescension, though, as ownership of player-pianos was seen not as a domestic bonus but more as an admission of their owner's performance inability. At the same time, the street piano had never really shaken off its hubris of being the accoutrement of the vagrant, invariably Italian, rather than the practical tool of the Canon Wintle-inspired shattered war veteran doing his level best to earn his keep.

And the third form of mechanical music was the time-honoured fairground organ which blared its melange of classical and popular music at those revellers to whom this was as much a part of the fairground as the gallopers and the helter-skelter.

All this explains why in the 1930s people were not inclined to service and restore mechanical musical instruments. They had been superseded. True, the fairground's 'Gaviman' would do his level best to keep his instrument in tune and in fair condition for his organ was in many ways the voice of the travelling showman's attributes. You could, after all, hear it in the next village and thus it was a good idea if it sounded its attainable best.

But the great survivors of the past era of mechanical music were both redundant and projected an aura of antiqueness at a time when we were striving to make the world a better place. The finesse of the musical clock, the historical importance of the clockwork musical automaton – these simply were of no consequence.

The Second World War did two things. First it destroyed so many priceless artefacts from the past. Second was the arousal in the breasts of the new generation of thinking observers that what of the past was left ought to be saved before it was too late.

This latter experience saw the creation of a new breed of restorer for mechanical musical instruments who, having not experienced the apprenticeship of continuum, were forced to learn the basics of a lost craft from scratch. Today,



The Palace of Charlottenburg today



The Golden Room of the New Wing where once stood the Belloneon which played trumpet and drum fanfares

and quite unlike the era of the 1930s, we relish the ability to be able to restore a mechanical musical instrument, bringing it as close as we can to the state that it was in when first it was crafted.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of the subject, we came to appreciate that we may learn from these instruments not just about performing styles, tempo and expression, but how the music was created for repeated performance once it had left the hands of its creator.

Which leads us back to the first of the two aspects we defined as the consequences of the 1939-45 War – the loss of priceless instruments. While there were some notable losses here in Britain, the most grievous losses were in Germany and significantly in Berlin. Those who visited that great city after the war – and, like the present writer, could just about remember it in 1938 – could not have been other than shocked at the level of destruction.

Germany had been home to many priceless instruments, among these Kaufmann's astonishing drum and trumpet automaton which sounded fanfares from a pinned wooden barrel. This fine instrument, dating from 1806 and named the Belloneon, was said to have been employed to wake the Emperor Napoleon from his slumbers.

A number of treasures were kept in Berlin's glorious Charlottenburg Palace which also housed treasures preserved from the Berlin school of organ-clock making with works by Christian Möllinger and from Neuwied the great compound organ and dulcimer clocks of Röntgen & Kintzing. In the course of the 1939-45 War, Charlottenburg was virtually destroyed. With the loss of the great palace was also destroyed the workshop of the artistic clock and watch restorer Steggemann who was once virtually unique in Germany for his ability to breathe life into old musical automatons.

The events of the mid-20th century thus deprived us of many unique pieces. While the fate of the works by Möllinger, Röntgen and Kintzing and others is at present unknown, one fears the worst. Most likely, these pieces

are gone for good, their unique sounds being lost to future generations. The Palace today has been beautifully restored and is open to the public, but its one-time furnishings have not been so fortunate.

And there it might have remained until, on November 28th, 2018, Bernhard Tönnies, a member of the German collectors' society, the Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente, happened to be scanning the internet web-site E-Bay when he found advertised a 16mm cine film dating from 1930 and titled *Alte Spieluhren (Old Musical Clocks)*. Unusually (for this size of film) this was complete with sound. He made sure he bought it.

With a playing time of almost 15 minutes this was an otherwise forgotten picture and sound document devoted to the rarities in Charlottenburg. It had been filmed by cameraman Waldemar Lemke who had been an employee of the team of Leni Riefenstahl. At that time a respected documentary film-maker, Leni Riefenstahl would go on to become the official film and documenter for the 1936 Berlin Olympiad with Lemke behind the lens.

Research revealed that this itself was a 1930s transcript of a 35mm original processed in the studios of ARRI. The business of ARRI, founded in Munich in 1917, became one of the World's leading players in the motion picture media industry – a sort of German Kodak – and is still going today. The top professional film cameras in use the world over are called ARRIflex.

Anxious to share his find with Members, Bernhard Tönnies has given permission for the GSM to make DVDs of this unique survivor. The latest issue of the German Society magazine, *Das Mechanische Musikinstrument*, includes as a gift to its readers, a copy of this amazing film. Tönnies had already given it a 'second premiere' using his own 16mm cine projector at Siegfried's Mechanical Music Cabinet at Rüdesheim.

The black and white film shows unique organ-playing mechanisms, organ secretaires, and musical clocks from manufacturers such as Röntgen & Kintzing and Möllinger

from the Charlottenburg Palace. Importantly, the film comes with original sound. Here we can actually listen to the famous drum and trumpet work, the 1806 Belloneon by Kauffmann, which is said to have woken up Napoleon. Although clearly out of adjustment by 1930, the original grandeur of this unusual piece shines through.

This is followed by recordings from the clock studio of the Charlottenburg ‘art watchmaker’ Steggemann. The latter apparently took various works from museums and collections to be repaired, or perhaps owned a significant collection himself.

While the performance of the Dresden-built Belloneon by Kaufmann is coarse and unrestored, this recording survives as a unique sound document. We are told that this unique instrument was acquired by King Friedrich Wilhelm III, who set it up in the White Hall in the New Wing of the Charlottenburg Palace.

Thanks to co-operation with GEMA, the German

equivalent of the British Performing Rights Association, Ralf Smolne of the GSM was able to make a digital copy of this film and arrange to present it as a DVD. Indeed there was considerable enthusiasm from the Prussian Castles and Gardens foundation in Berlin-Brandenburg. However, sadly they were unable to confirm or deny the existence of the instruments today. Nevertheless these pre-war recordings preserved in this film were previously completely unknown, only a few still pictures having survived.

The film has all the trappings of a 1930's production – characteristically uncoordinated sound and picture continuity, an annoying commentary spoken with an unfortunate penetrating voice by Else Hernarth, and film sequences which are too short. The transcription of the original production notes contains some spelling mistakes ('Lemcke' for Lemke, for example), but, aside from these minor points, this is a truly priceless find and all credit to our German friends for taking the initiative to give it a wider distribution.

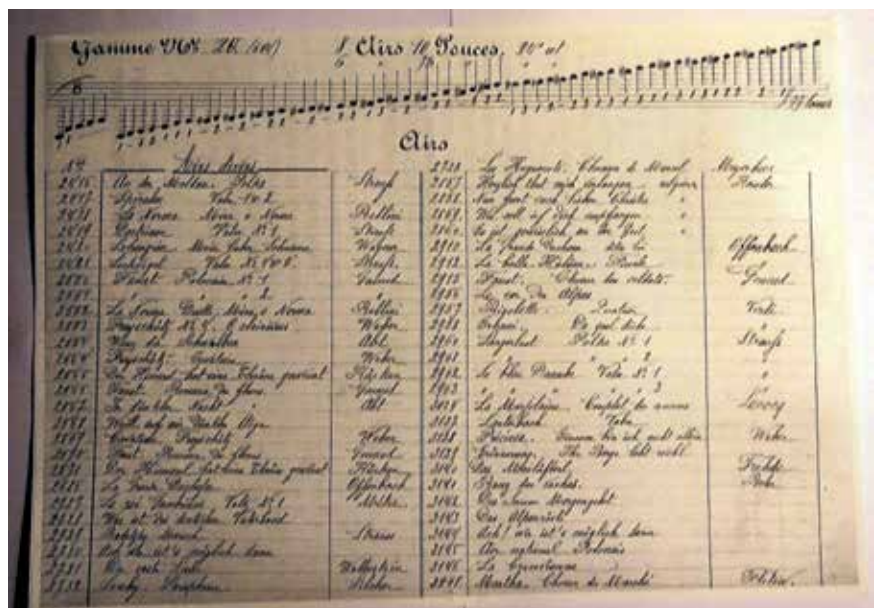
GAMMES and GAMME Numbers

by David Worrall

The following short article was prepared to meet a request from an American collector asking what was a “gamme” and where could one find it on a musical box. It is published here in case any reader of *The Music Box* either has been or is faced with the same or similar question.

A gamme number is a reference number found associated with cylinder musical boxes, particularly those made by Nicole Frères of Geneva. It used to be thought, and still is by some, that the gamme number referred to the musical programme, i.e. the particular collection of tunes, as in the early days of collecting there did indeed seem to be a unique and direct relationship between the two.

However, a little more thought and research leads to a different explanation; the word “gamme” is the French word for “scale”, i.e. a sequence of musical notes such as the chromatic scale found on a piano or organ. It is not surprising that a French word was used as early development of cylinder musical boxes occurred in Geneva which is in the French speaking part of Switzerland. In the context of cylinder musical boxes, however, a gamme becomes “a sequence of musical notes, of the same or differing pitches, necessary to play an item or items of music so arranged as to require these notes.” It follows, therefore, that a musical box gamme does not necessarily follow strictly the chromatic scale of the piano or organ; it may omit some



*Fig1: An example of a Gamme - taken from a "Livre d'Aires" attributed to Paillard of Ste. Croix. **Editor's Note:** We apologise for the poor quality of the image, due to the original. The significant part is right across the top where you can see the musical notes laid out.*

notes as not required for a particular set of arrangements, whilst others may be repeated on adjacent teeth for emphasis or for the mandolin effect found on musical boxes of the later period.

Until very recently we have had no written record or other evidence of the working relationships between the makers and the arranger(s) of the music a musical box was to play; we could only reasonably surmise thus, that whilst a maker may

set the physical limits of a musical box, such as the length of the steel comb and thereby the number of teeth it could have for the number of tunes required, it was the arranger of the music who determined the pitches to which these teeth had to be tuned in order to play the pieces of music he/she arranged. These latter may be any number, let us say 12 or more of which some had wide popularity and some to meet requests from customers; from these, the maker could select a musical programme of 4, 6, 8, 10 or indeed any number of Airs for a particular musical box or boxes that suited the then current demand or sales requirements. A Gamme Number then became a unique reference number for the instruction passed between an arranger and comb tuner, *"For a musical box to be pinned with and then to play all or any selection of these arrangements, you will need a comb tuned to the attached Gamme"*; the maker would then give this a unique reference number – the Gamme Number.

Recently, however, a "Livre d'Airs" [Book of Airs] attributed to Paillard of Ste Croix has come to light; its pages clearly illustrate the above relationship - each page being headed with the Gamme Number, the comb length and number of teeth, then the Gamme or scale of notes itself, in standard musical notation using a stave of 5 lines, and then below that a listing of the tunes or airs arranged to be played on combs tuned to that Gamme. An example is at Fig. 1 below; this is for Gamme 20 intended for 6 or 8 Air boxes with combs of 77 lames [teeth]; the chromatic scale is pre-printed in full, but underneath each note will be seen one or other of the following added in script:

- 1 = One tooth to be tuned to this pitch
- 2 = Two adjacent teeth to be tuned to this pitch

A hyphen means that No teeth are required for this pitch.

If the figures are totalled they come to 77, the number of lames [teeth] on the comb. Listed below the Gamme are all the Airs [Tunes] arranged to be played on combs tuned to Gamme 20.

Once created and "filed" with a reference number, a gamme can thus be used at a later date for the same or a different selection of the tunes originally arranged for it, or indeed a new tune if such was the need. As an example of this, during my researches into Sacred Airs on cylinder musical boxes, I found Nicole Frères, Serial No 19616 dating from circa 1840/1841 with a programme six hymns for which the comb had to be tuned to Gamme No 411. This gamme number was also noted as having been used later for the combs of four 4 Air boxes, Serial Nos 28524 (circa 1850-51), 34140 & 34171 (circa 1856/7) and 36715 (circa 1860), all of which have a musical programme of just four hymns selected from of the original six found on No 19616.

So, for those still holding to the view that a gamme refers to the musical programme, they must then answer the question "In a very busy workshop, with work in hand on dozens of musical boxes how else was the integrity of the two most important musical components of a particular box, i.e. the

cylinder & the comb(s), and thereby that of its musical programme to be maintained?"

As noted above, gamme numbers are particularly associated with Nicole Frères and MBSGB's Registrar, in the process of compiling the Register of Cylinder Musical Boxes that have survived the years, has also been able to construct a Nicole Gamme File, listing all the gamme numbers known to-date as having been used by Nicole, and the musical boxes found to-date with musical programmes using each gamme.

As to where a gamme number may be found; almost invariably it will be found on Nicole Frères tune sheets and also on those of other makers but not necessarily so in their cases; in addition, usually it can be found scratched on the left end cap of the cylinder thus "G xxxx" - thus indicating that the cylinder needs to be linked with a comb tuned to that gamme; and then similarly scratched on the base lead or the underside of the comb stock, again indicating that it requires cylinder(s) with a matching gamme. Finally, in *The Music Box*, Vol 12 No 5 (Spring 1986), a short item as part of H A V Bulleid's 'Musical Box Oddments' appeared that outlined the then recent realisation that Langdorff not only scribed the Gamme number in a similar manner but also added the last 2 digits of the year of use, thus "xyz-ab". (Editor: this item is reproduced on page 182 of this edition.)

I must end with plug for **The AD Cunliffe Register of Cylinder Musical Boxes** maintained by MBSGB and a plea for all owners of cylinder musical boxes to take the time to register them, if not already done so, [NB Owner details are NOT recorded]; currently, The Register has 12,500 entries and is an invaluable tool for research into cylinder musical box history; it is also useful on those occasions, thankfully rare, when a musical box is stolen as it can provide the police with useful evidence as to the description and nature of the stolen item.

I hope this short article helps those members interested in cylinder musical boxes understand the significance and importance of the Gamme number at the time their musical box was being made.



Fig 2: An example of a Nicole tune sheet clearly showing both the serial number (34988) and the gamme number (1473)

Langdorff discovery

Thanks to an excellent new discovery by member Patrick McCrossan, backed up by information from other members of the MBSGB, it is established beyond doubt that Langdorff cylinders made before about 1870 have the Gamme number and the last two digits of the year of manufacture scratched clearly on the bass end cap. During this period, from about 1840, their tune sheets had at top centre a square piano; and from about 1850 an upright piano.

All these early movements had the "Langdorff characteristics" namely . . .

1. a third dowel pin at the back centre of the main comb (only visible under the comb)
2. face of comb finished lengthwise
3. serial number stamped in comparatively large numerals, 4mm or 4½mm high
4. brass comb washers
5. Gamme number and last two figures of the year scratched on bass end cylinder cap.

Naturally it is possible that item (2) has been obliterated by a crazy polisher, and the thin brass washers may have been lost and wrongly replaced. The serial number is at the back, bass end, of the brass bedplate. Usually it appears alone, but sometimes LANGDORFF is added and sometimes another name – and sometimes with a GENEVE added.

With all these characteristics in mind it becomes possible to identify most of the "anonymous" boxes of the key-wind and early lever wind period.

These "Langdorff characteristics" also gradually led Patrick to a more far-reaching discovery, namely that some boxes attributed to other makers had all these characteristics and that their Gamme numbers and year dates and serial numbers fitted exactly into the Langdorff numbering sequence – as set out in the table herewith:-

| Serial no. | Attributed to | Marks on cylinder end cap | Cylinder length inches | No. of tunes | Type |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1409 | H. Metert | G 16-44 | 8 | 4 | F-Piano |
| 1849 | Moulinié Ainé | G448-44 | 11¼ | 4 | F-Piano overtures |
| 2328 | Moulinié Ainé | G419-45 | 9 | 4 | F-Piano |
| 2683 | H. Metert | G232-46 | 13 | | F-Piano |
| 3919 | Langdorff | G 136 48 | 11¼ | 4 | F-Piano overtures |
| 4171 | Moulinié | G248-48 | 13¼ | 6 | F-Piano |
| 6157 | Langdorff | G 550 51 | 15* | 6* | F-Piano |
| 6622 | Langdorff | G 431 52 | 13¼ | 6 | F-Piano |
| 6882 | Langdorff | G 602 52 | 13 | 6 | Hidden D & B |
| 7625 | Langdorff | G 113 54 | 9¼ | 4 | Hidden D & B |
| 7667 | Malignon | G 151 54 | 20 | 6 | Part overtures |
| 11258 | Langdorff | G 641 58 | 15¼ | 4 | F-Piano Mandolin |
| 13645 | Langdorff | G 36 63 | 13 | 4 | F-Piano overtures |

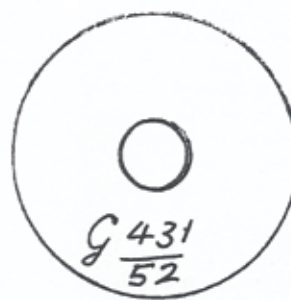
* interchangeable cylinders

Table showing a sequence of serial numbers and cylinder end cap Gamme and year markings on musical boxes which all have the "Langdorff characteristics."

Attribution to "makers" other than Langdorff is stamped on the bedplate and sometimes inscribed on the tune sheet. All boxes in the table are key-wind except No. 13645.



Early style



Later style

Two styles of marking on the base end cylinder caps of Langdorff musical boxes.

It has become increasingly well established during the years of existence of the Musical Box Society that several names associated with cylinder musical boxes were not makers but merely agents or associates. Well known examples are Thibouville-Lamy, A and S Woog, Dawkins, and Nicole for serial number above 50,000. One has to be very cautious about adding to the list, but I think there is now little doubt that Moulinié Ainé can be added. The clues that this renowned watch maker did not manufacture musical boxes are . . .

1. he never exhibited musical boxes
2. no distinctive Moulinié Ainé tune sheet is known
3. despite high serial numbers noted, the boxes are astonishingly rare

Conversely, the clues that Langdorff made these boxes are . . .

1. Moulinié Ainé boxes are known with Langdorff tune sheets endorsed Moulinié Ainé
2. They display all the "Langdorff characteristics"
3. They fit in with Langdorff numbering, see table.

I think the weight of this evidence is enough to make the case. Similar evidence but with fewer examples suggests that Langdorff also made for Malignon and for (or with) Henri Metert who was his partner from 1844 till 1852. They were all close together, in Geneva.

The implications for Langdorff are quite formidable. Think of the tremendous praise often heaped, justifiably, on the musical boxes of Malignon, Metert and Moulinié Ainé – all this praise almost certainly belongs to Langdorff! Now who says Nicole boxes were the best? Not that it matters, all the boxes made, certainly up to 1880, were so consistently good.

We are indebted to Patrick McCrossan for this discovery; all owners of boxes named in the table are earnestly asked to give him the particulars listed in the table so that it can be extended. The marking on the cylinder end cap has so far been seen in two styles, as illustrated herewith. Patrick's telephone number is Heathfield (04352) 3452. H.A.V.B. Nov. 1985

Photos H.A.V.B. ■

Some Notes on a Grand Roller Organ

By Roger Booty

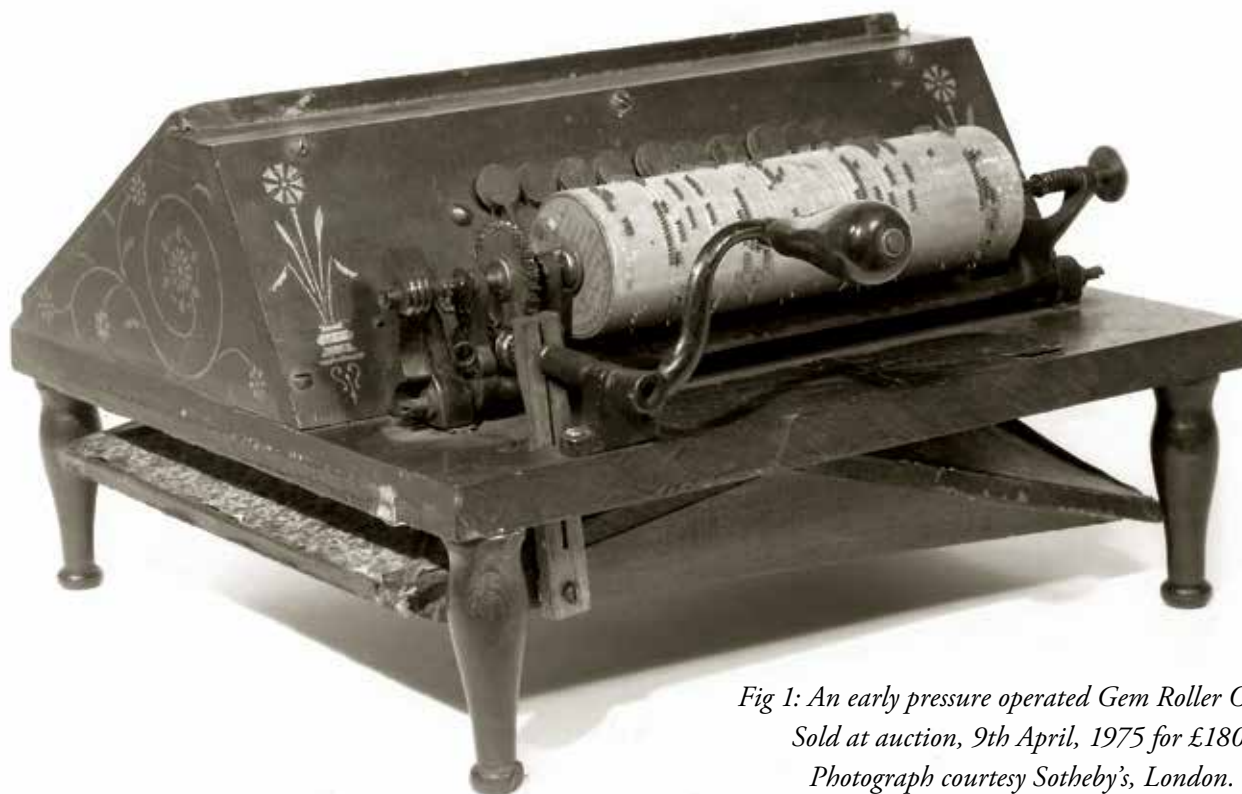


Fig 1: An early pressure operated Gem Roller Organ.

Sold at auction, 9th April, 1975 for £180.

Photograph courtesy Sotheby's, London.

The American-made 20 note Roller Organ is well known and generally liked, but there is a lesser-found larger model, the 32 note Grand Roller Organ. I easily acquired an example of the 20 note Cabinet Roller but enquiries about 32 note machines always drew a blank. It was something which had never been seen in the UK, it seemed. Nevertheless in 1989 a call from dealer Joe Pettitt gave me a tingle of anticipation; he had a 'Grand' for sale.

I eagerly went to see it but have to admit that the price tag of well over £1,000 stayed my hand. Even

though it had been restored, not by Joe, it did not play at all well, seeming too quiet for such a large instrument. At least I had the foresight to take a camera with me and the results are shown here. It was on offer with six rollers in their original, now tatty, card storage tubes. Joe never found a buyer so put it to auction at Christies Kensington, London, in November 1989 (see advertisement in *The Music Box*, Vol 14 on the inside cover of issue no. 4.) Unfortunately it never sold and was put in a further time, again at Christies, on 13th December, 1990 when a successful sale was achieved.

768 MUSICAL OPINION & MUSIC TRADE REVIEW.

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Fig 2: Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review July 1893

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All kinds of Musical Instruments Repaired on the Premises by Experienced Workmen

28, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W. | **Factory: EXCELSIOR WORKS, DRESDEN, SAXONY.**

Fig 3: Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review
November 1895



Fig 4: The 32 note Grand Roller Organ. There is no case decoration of any kind, only the stencilled decoration behind the frame's glass lid.

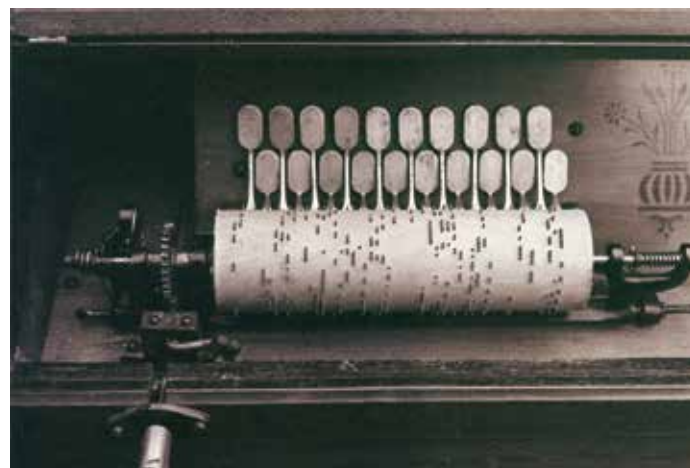


Fig 5: The 20 note Cabinet Roller Organ.
Roller measures $6 \frac{3}{8}$ " by $1 \frac{3}{4}$ "

Now jump forward thirty years, a period that has given no further sight of a 'Grand' for sale. An advertisement in this volume of *The Music Box*, page 45, for the auction of the Richard Bartram Collection led me to scan the lots, amongst which there was a 32 note 'Grand.' It did not take a very close comparison of my photographs of Joe's machine to realise it was the same one, and again on offer at an estimate of £1,000 - £1, 500, now with eight rollers. I stayed my hand again, but had to swallow hard when it went for only £750.

Good friend Jonny Ling, owner of the Grange Musical Collection near Diss in Norfolk, was the lucky bidder, and he gave me the opportunity of hopefully improving its still poor playing condition. The bellows had been recovered, probably in America, which gives the thought that Joe must have imported it from there. The external flap valves were still as seen in the accompanying photographs. The restorer obviously had a lot of trouble getting them to seal well, having added cross straps and springs to obtain better operation. All was to no avail as the main cause of their failure was the material used, an artificial leather with a poor nap. The cloth on the exhausters and reservoir however was of good quality and well fitted. Because of this I suggested to Jonny that I replace just the external valves with the correct leather to see if any improvement could be obtained. The result was quite amazing. Instantly the volume became too much for an average semi-detached house, which made me think I was glad I never bought it. Needless to say, Jonny was delighted.

Roller Organs were manufactured by the Autophone Company of Ithaca, New York, USA. The first pressure operated Gems (Fig 1.) were available from

the mid 1880s. Campbell & Co of Glasgow in 1891 were offering 'The New "Gem" and "Cabinet" Roller Organs.' The Gem came packed in a wooden case, carriage paid with three rollers for £1 10 shillings (£1.50). The Cabinet came the same but with six rollers for £2 15 shillings (£2.75). The statement that they were 'new' meant little as Campbells were still presenting them as 'new' in their 1898 catalogue. The Grand was later, coming to the UK in the early 1890s.

The Musical Opinion magazine for July 1893 carried the following:

'We visited Moritz & Co. last week ... The firm have lately been appointed sole European agents for the new American automatic roller organs. The "Grand" is the largest model, it being nearly 2 ft long. The "Cabinet" is a medium sized one, and is 19" long; whilst the "Gem" is only 16 inches. The tunes are changed by having a number of interchangeable barrels in lieu of the perforated sheets or discs. The tone of these little instruments is quite up to the



Fig 6: The 32 note Grand Roller Organ.
Case measures overall, $24 \frac{3}{4}$ " x $15 \frac{3}{4}$ " X $13 \frac{1}{2}$ " high.
Roller measures $13 \frac{1}{8}$ " by $2 \frac{1}{2}$ "

mark, and the outside finish is really good. A few rollers only are supplied with each little organ, but almost any number of them can be had at an extra expense.' (Advertisements figs. 2 and 3.)

Kevin McElhone, author of *The Organette Book*, believes there to be only three 'Grands' in the UK. Jonny's example is an early model dated on the reed block, 26th April, 1893, and has two exhausters only which give a noticeable 'kick' when being cranked. Kevin's own machine has three exhausters and is far smoother for the 288 turns required for the playing of each roller.

The scale as noted in *The Organette Book* is:

A B C# D D# E F# G G# A A# B C C# D D# E F G G# A A# B C C# D D# E F# G G# A

The scale as marked on Jonny's machine is from F to f, with the same note intervals as Kevin's scale. When checked against a tuner though, it revealed that they are actually also tuned A to A. This scale is also that found in the 32 note Concert Autophone, which along with the 22 note Autophone were the first organette manufactured by the Autophone Company. They were totally superseded by the invention of the Roller Organ.

The 13 1/8" long cob of the Grand revolves eight times rather than the three of the 20 note. The gearing, cob pinning and lifting tails on the keys are all better produced. There are no instruction sheets glued under the rear swell flap as found in the 20 note, and it seems they originally came with a separate leaflet explaining how to play them. (Reprints of this leaflet are available in the United States.) Another difference between the two sizes is found when changing cobs.

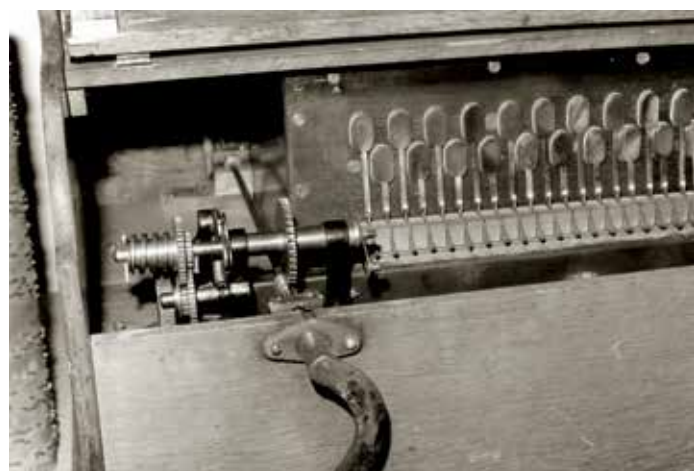


Fig 8: The extra gearing on the Grand which gives the eight revolutions of the cob for each tune. It is clear to see here that the key tails are better formed and fit in a wooden frame which allows closer aligning of the pins on the cob.



Fig 7: With the rear swell flap open on the Cabinet Roller, you can clearly see the 'Directions' sheet which is not found on the Grand.

For the 32 note, the cob carrying frame is brought forward. Away from the key tails, to help prevent cob pins from being damaged.

Despite their rarity, even in America, where they equally command a good price, a collection of cobs is not difficult to build as Honor Rolls are manufacturing newly arranged as well as copies of originals of both cob sizes.

Along with the present Society, I am also a member of the Musical Box Society International in America and have been in contact with two fellow members, Richard Dutton and Brian Walter. Richard is an aficionado of the Roller Organ. They are musically the study which consumes his interest, to the point he has amassed a near complete collection of both cob sizes. He also offers the ability to identify unlabelled cobs for you and this is the reason I contacted him on Jonny's behalf. A nameless waltz presented me



Fig 9: With the cob removed on the Cabinet, it is clear to see how basic the line of keys is when compared to the keyframe of the Grand.

the opportunity to call and play the piece to him. He freely admitted that there were many waltzes and that they could be difficult to trace, but his search came up with it being a waltz from "1492." A strange title until you find that "1492" was the name of a burlesque dating from 1892 celebrating the quadricentennial of Columbus finding the New World. If you would like to ask for Richard's help from his self-titled, 'Project Cob Identification', his email is: rollerorgancobs@aol.com

The complete tune list for 20 note cobs contains many European tunes, including Norwegian, Polish, Swedish, Finnish, Spanish and German. I wondered if the Roller Organ was ever sold on mainland Europe or if these European titles were being aimed at immigrants to the United States. Enquiries of Richard suggest that they were indeed for the new settlers from the old countries.

Similar enquiries of Kevin also reinforced my thought that the Roller Organ in all styles never found a market in mainland Europe, or if it did, sales were small. The Organette Book does contain an advertisement for the Gem in German, page 105, opposite an identical one in English. A quick study reveals both of them to be of American origin as the price for the Gem is \$6.00 in each.

Brian Walter was very helpful with dating details for the Grand. He agreed the model owned by Jonny, dated 26th April 1893, was early. The earliest machine he knows of is dated February 1893. The early ones all had two exhausters only and examples are rarely found. The later three exhauster machines were doubtless designed to both alleviate the 'kick' of the two exhauster and also to give a more even air supply. The sales period of the Grand was short with no machine currently known with a date later than 1907. The peak period of recorded dates is 1900 – 1902, whereas the 20 note models were produced into the 1920s. Brian agreed with me on the volume of the Grand; he only plays his at home with both lids closed.



Fig 10: On the Grand, the two exhausters showing the flaps valves before I replaced them and cured the lack of volume.

A final note now on the 20 note Cabinet and Concert models. When asked, Brian did not know of the Cabinet Roller Organ. Kevin had not realised, but it appears probable that the Cabinet was only available in the UK. The short Moritz piece noted above dating from July 1893 names the Cabinet, but their advertisement, fig 3 however, names the Cabinet as do Campbells catalogues.

I feel sure there are members who can answer these questions. Were Roller Organs sold on mainland Europe, were Cabinet 6 Roller Organs sold in America, and, conversely, were Concert Rollers sold in the UK?

My thanks for their assistance with this article go to Jonny, Kevin, Richard and Brian. Lastly, mention must be made of Kevin's Supplement to the Organette Book. It contains many pictures, new and old, colour and black and white, of different models and styles of Roller Organ.



A Carillon Conundrum

by Roy Evett

At the summer meeting of the Teme Valley Winders in June 2018 and again at the Autumn meeting of the MBSGB in September 2019, Gary Burns showed a very corroded mechanism which played just bells, carillon style. At least it did play bells before what appears to be spending a considerable period on the bottom of the North Sea!

Gary suggested that, probably, it originally came from a longcase clock. That seemed plausible as it had a winding barrel suitable for being weight driven. He also pointed out that it had a tune indicator with the name Nicole Frères. This caught my attention and intrigued me for a couple of reasons.

I have no experience of musical longcase clocks but any I have seen have had the musical mechanism built directly onto the clock movement. This mechanism was completely self-contained but came with a bag of bits that were clearly levers taken from a clock.

I have come across a couple of disc-operated movements playing bells only but have never seen a cylinder movement designed for just bells. That is not to say that such a thing does not exist.

Maybe this could be something unique and rather special and although Gary declined the offer of the princely sum of fifty quid he was persuaded to let me take it away with a view to possible restoration. Fig. 1.



Fig 1.

The comb is not a musical comb. It is hardened and tempered but not designed to make any sound. It merely supports the hammers and forms part of the striking mechanism. The movement should have 26 hammers playing 18 tuned bells. Five teeth are broken and the rest are corroded beyond recovery.

It has a conventional style governor modified to allow Play, Automatic or Stop to be selected by a key. Fig. 2.

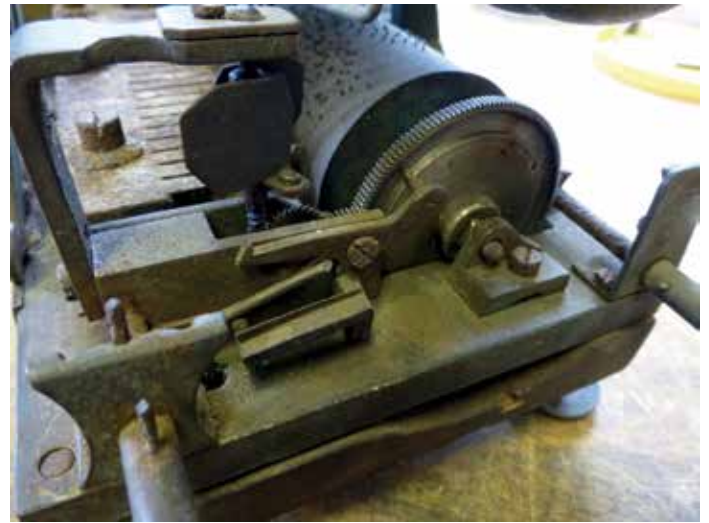


Fig 2.

Repeat or Change are selected by turning a knob and rotating a curious two position 'click wheel'. The tune change 'snail' is for 12 airs and indeed the cylinder is pinned for 12 airs. Sadly, the cylinder is split and the majority of its pins are still on the bottom of the North Sea. Fig. 3.

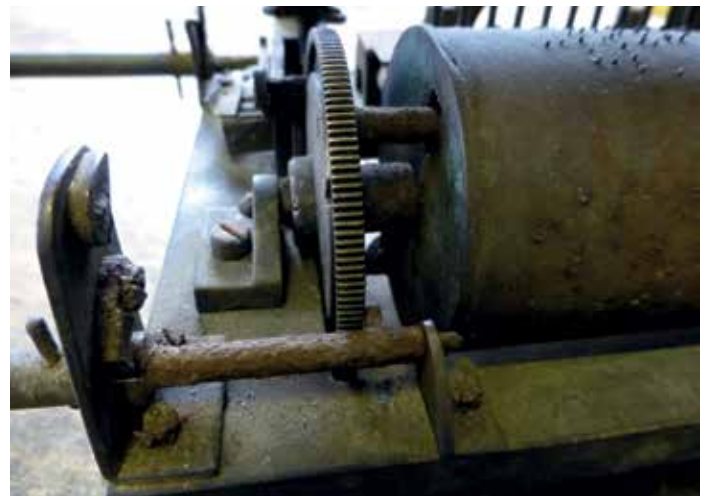


Fig 3.

The tune indicator also shows 12 airs and is inscribed 'LONDRES Nicole Frères GENEVE'. Fig. 4. If it is original to the movement it dates it to sometime after 1880. Fig. 4.

Oddly, the bedplate was found to be made from brass. The use of brass for bedplates had been discontinued in the first half of the 19th Century.

Something is starting to look a bit fishy. North Sea perhaps!

The mechanism was dismantled with great difficulty using heat, grinders, drills, WD40 and sheer brute force. It very soon became obvious that this device had



Fig 4.

been 'made up', expertly so, from various mechanisms, and specially made bits. The quality of the build suggests it was made by someone quite talented. Each part, no matter how unimportant, was accurately doweled into position.

The governor, great wheel, cylinder bearings, intermediate drive gear, its bearing and the back of the tune indicator all show traces of nickel plating. Although nickel electroplating was discovered in the early 1800s it was not until around 1870 that the procedure was improved enough to be used on a commercial scale, suggesting these parts were made after that time.

Judging by the shape of the cut-out at the left hand end of the bedplate, it was cast originally for a fusée drive. Fig. 5. This type of bedplate must be very early. It does not bear any names, numbers or any other kind of identification. It has been cut, modified and extended with specially made pieces to accommodate at least two drive systems. A motor with a fusée must be spring driven and maybe the modification was to fit a bigger spring for some reason. Perhaps greater power was required to operate the bell mechanism. We will never know why.

The cut-out to accommodate the resonators of a normal music comb has been cut back for the length of the comb and is now rectangular. This was quite unnecessary because the comb fitted has sufficient clearance and was either a mistake or done for aesthetic reasons. The start of the cut-out designed for the original resonators can be seen on the left hand side. Fig. 5.

There are a number of unused screw holes but strangely there is only one set of cylinder bearing screw holes. Likewise only one set of comb screw and dowel holes. There is no evidence of holes being plugged or otherwise filled. At the Midlands meeting in Derby in October



Fig 5.

this was discussed at length but no satisfactory reason could be found. It was eventually concluded that, however mysterious, the bedplate had never had any other comb or cylinder attached.

There is evidence that the bedplate alterations and the specially made gear mountings were modified for a second time.

The second modification has been to accommodate a winding drum for a weight-driven system. It can be seen that the modification has involved filing out the bedplate extension to allow the gut to wind freely on and off the drum. Notice that filing has exposed a previous fixing screw hole at the bottom left of the bedplate. For the gut to enter the drum from this angle, the movement would need to be mounted vertically on edge. By doing this the tune indicator would not be visible. Fig.5. This begs the question: How and where was this fixed in a long case clock, if indeed it ever was?

The aperture has also been widened, presumably to take the winding drum which is wider, leaving two fixing screws from the previous modification with no function Fig.6.



Fig 6.

Figures 7 and 8 show the modified gear bearings and their second modification.



Fig 7: Right hand bearing, second modification.



Fig 8: Left hand gear bearing, second modification.

The winding drum appears to be from an English longcase clock. Fig. 9. An intermediate gear and pinion have been fitted in place of the fusée and together with an oversized cylinder pinion give a gear ratio of 1:8. The winding drum can take sixteen turns of gut on a full wind. Each turn takes approximately six inches of gut. This would allow the mechanism to play once each hour for five days on a single wind (assuming standard longcase clock pulley and weight configuration). A five day maximum for the chimes of an eight day clock seems rather odd but that may have been the best the man could achieve with the gears available to him. Of course he may have realised the chimes would, most likely be turned off at night.

So what do we have?

A brass bedplate designed for a fusée drive could be around 1825, a winding barrel from an English longcase clock of indeterminate age, a cylinder, comb and bells from Switzerland around 1880, all put together by who, when and where remains a mystery that will never be solved.

It was shown around to various experts in Holland, Germany and Switzerland. Most concluded that it had been 'made up,' but Hanspeter Kyburz of Switzerland recalled a similar movement, not with a brass bedplate,

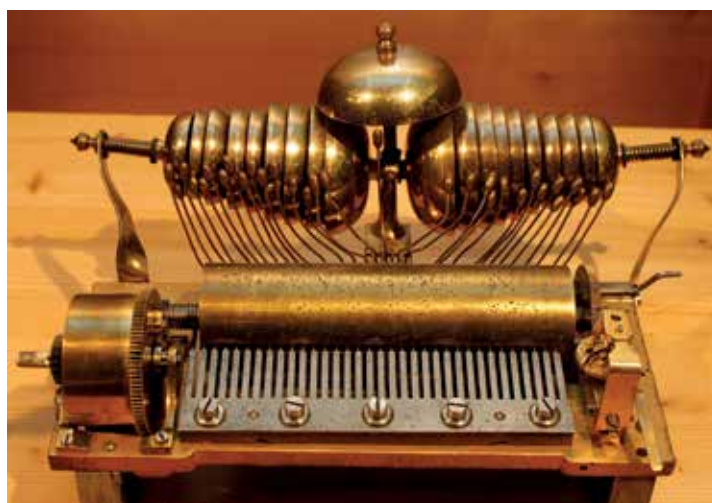


Fig 9.

being in the centre of a dining room cupboard that he sold to the Seewen museum about 25 years ago.

It all turned out to be a bit of a canine evening meal and was very interesting. It has been recycled twice before but if it were to be recycled/restored again, to what state should it be restored? I'm afraid at this stage Gary gets it back.

Since my return from Germany our editor, Alison [Biden], continued the lead via her friend Raphael Lüthi at the Seewen museum. He recalls a dining room cupboard fitted with a carillon style bell movement just as Hanspeter had said but it also had a normal music movement. It seems the three items were a 'marriage' and this is supported by the fact that the carillon movement has been removed from the cupboard, restored and is still on permanent display at the museum. Our thanks must go to Raphael for taking the time to send us this picture.



Picture Copyright: Museum of Music Automats Seewen, Switzerland (www.musikautomaten.ch)

Rebuilding Two Organina Reed Organs

by Terry Pankhurst



'Early model'



'Post 1881 model.'

***Editor's note:** At the MBSGB meeting held in Bradford last Autumn, Terry Pankhurst very ably described how he had rebuilt these two instruments, and demonstrated them. We are most grateful that he granted our request to write up his project, so members who were not able to attend could learn about it and his ingenuity in tackling the challenges they posed.*

The Organina Organette with its 16 note reeds, on the face of it seems a simple little organ. Its advertising blurb shows children using it so it may have been considered more a toy than a serious machine. It was built by the Massachusetts Organ Company which started life in 1878. The cost when new was \$11.

My greatest delight is to rebuild or restore anything broken and bring it back to life, in the case of the Organettes to make them sing again. I was offered two of these machines in two boxes of broken bits. I was told "I think all the pieces are there" - that proved not to be the case! I discovered I had two different versions of the same machine. The first had a low registration number 9443 and was built in the infant days of the company, before 1881 at least. Why do I say this? Because the second machine incorporated many of the new patents registered in 1881.

The working parts of the organ are all built on an inner

framework. When complete, a fancy polished, gold stenciled cover, with chromed side fittings holding a glass curved cover, is fitted over it and the two parts screwed together. When complete it looks very much like an old till. Kevin McElhone in his "Organette Book" says it has an unduly complex mechanism, and he is not wrong.

I started to review what needed doing. Starting with the key frame, the 16 brass keys were intact but the steel rods that push the keys down were rusted into the woodwork. These I had to drive out and replace them with new brass rods: no more rust problems. These were in turn pushed down by soft brass leaf springs. A series of wooden bars are toggled back and forth until a wooden bar slides open to allow air to be sucked in and pass through the reeds. There was so much friction in the whole system with wood sliding on wood that it was hard to loosen this. It is asking a lot of the system when only powered by a simple brass leaf spring.



The reeds were equally as problematic as they had probably never been removed in 140 years. To start with not one of them worked. They were covered in fluff, soot, and much indescribable rubbish. I hate working with reeds as they seem to break easily, but with care I did manage to clean and make them all work without breakage.

The biggest problem was making the drive rollers work; this was also geared to the crank that worked the four exhausters. The shaft was a 4mm steel bar with what could best be described as a length of rubber, gear wheel in shape, molded on it. It was fitted in two parts, one each side of the shaft leaving the middle section open to make it easier to slide the music sheet into the rollers. The rubber on the shaft was only 8mm total diameter. This means that one turn of the roller only moved the music through 25mm per revolution so subsequently it turns very fast. The reason for this, it has four very small exhausters that were being asked to work hard. I imagined I would never find the correct replacement roller, so had to consider how to make a new one. The drive roller holds the music sheet against a plain steel roller mounted on a small spring-loaded table. I lost count on how many attempts I made to create a new drive roller. It was either too large a diameter and the paper would not go under or it slipped on the shaft despite being glued. In the end I found a length of 4mm inside diameter fuel pipe that was difficult to slide on the shaft but then turned it down in a lathe to 8mm diameter, leaving the surface rough, and it worked.

Despite its age, the exhauster material was in relatively good condition but not so the valves inside as they would not hold any vacuum whatsoever. So these had to come apart just to renew the valve leather and there was some subsequent damage taking them apart.

The outside casing by comparison was easy to repair. Remove the large clumsy screws that were someone's previous attempt to hold the boxes together, repair the mahogany damage and re-glue all the joints, taking care to protect the gold stenciling. Polish off the years of grime from the chrome end plates and only small details then to finish off. Finally re-French polish the case.

The second organ with a registration number 20515 was more of a challenge as all but the key frame had been lost. I found a similar model on YouTube and watched the short clip over and over to study how it

worked and what I had to re-build. The way the reed valves opened was completely different, with all the delicate parts needing to be manufactured. Less friction this time with little lift-up flaps to open the airways to the reed. All the same problems with reeds and drive rollers were present on this machine. I had a set of holes in the inner case and one side of the outer case and could not understand what they did. When the penny dropped I realized it was one of the features of the 1881 improvement and was a key lifting bar to make it easier to insert the music roll; this also enabled the paper music roll to be pulled back out in the case of a paper jam, which was not possible on the earlier model. This I made but it can only be added finally after the two cases have been assembled together. For 3 shillings you could return your old machine and this new feature could be added. Another new patent was a thin metal bar across the valve leather on the exhausters to stop vibration, clearly stamped "Patented Jan 14, 1881"

At the end of the day I have two wonderful working instruments that have probable not played a note to an audience for in excess of 100 years.

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DEAN ORGAN BUILDERS

An Automaton Harmonium Player

By Steve Tanner

Inspired by an article in the Summer 2013 *The Music Box* by Gordon Bartlet, titled "A pair of mechanical music novelties" I decided that I wanted to design and build an automaton organette Harmonium player. Having a Seraphone organette with a number of music rolls by Schmidt I decided to use the same arrangement so that I could use the same rolls on the automaton. In order to leave the upper surface of the organette clear for the automaton, I settled on using player piano style pouch valves for the pneumatics. These have the advantage of being able to have the tracker bar and roll mechanism remote from the valve stack and also easily allow the roll mechanism to be mounted vertically at the back of the instrument.

In terms of the movements of the automaton, I decided that the player would obviously pedal the Harmonium (or in reality, the Harmonium pedals would move her feet/legs), her arms would move to pass her hands over the keyboard and she would tilt her head down to look at the music stand when playing starts. I also wanted the keys to move, but choosing a scale of 1:4 for the player meant that it was impractical to articulate the fingers so I settled upon the idea of placing tiny Neodymium magnets



Fig 1.

in the fingers and similar magnets in some of the keys with like poles facing together. In principle, this would cause the magnets to repel as the hand moved over the keyboard, depressing the keys. To improve the movement of the keys further, a two lobe cam rotating over the back of the key within the Harmonium case, would repeatedly raise the key by depressing the back arm whilst the hands were still, giving a repeating motion to the key. I also decided that I would like to add a dog lying on the floor behind the stool. The dog's eyes to open when playing starts and then wagging its tail during the performance.

Figure 1 shows the three mahogany sections that were machined to make up the valve stack, on the left is the pouch block, the middle shows the underside of the valve block and on the right is the underside of the reed block.

I chose to make the valves out of "Delrin" acetyl resin and also the valve seats, which were bonded into the top of the mahogany valve block. The assembly of the pouch and valve blocks is shown in Figure 2.

In addition to the 20 tubes which connect the underside of the pouches to the tracker bar, another tube provides a take off from

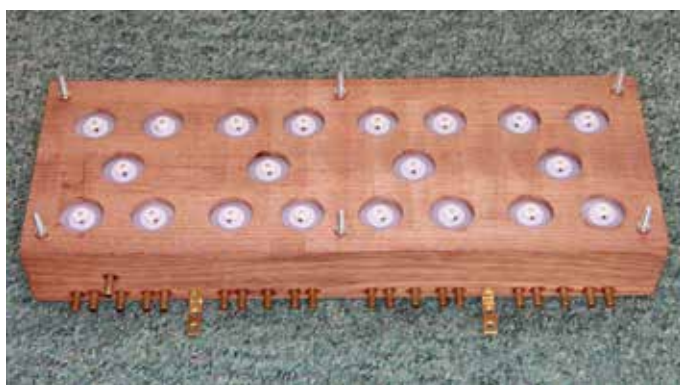


Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.

the vacuum reservoir to operate pneumatics in the Harmonium player's torso and the dog's body.

A salvaged set of high quality brass Harmonium reeds were obtained from a seller in the USA via a well-known Internet auction site and a cutter made to machine the 'T' slots in the mahogany reed block to take the slot in reeds. The finished reed block can be seen in Figure 3.

The design of the exhausters and vacuum reservoir were taken directly from my Seraphone Organette. The design comprises four exhausters feeding the reservoir and the only difference between the Seraphone and my automaton is the incorporation of precision ball races for the five main crankshaft bearings and also ball races in each end of the two connecting rods which attach to the exhausters as shown in Figure 4.

The drive for the control rods that

rotate the arms over the keyboard are taken from the main crankshaft via a pair of worms and wheels.

All the gear and chain wheels are "Meccano" but with the bore opened out to 3/16" diameter, as I happened to have a large quantity of 3/16" precision ball races in stock. The worm for the left hand is a standard "Meccano" item, however it is necessary to rotate the cam for the right hand in the opposite direction so that the cam follower is pulled over the cam profile, rather than pushed, so it was necessary to screw-cut a similar worm but with a left hand helix for the right hand. The gears that mesh with the two worms are of 60 and 57 teeth so that the arm movements do not simply repeat each revolution. The cam followers are terminated in miniature ball races to reduce friction between the follower and cam profile.

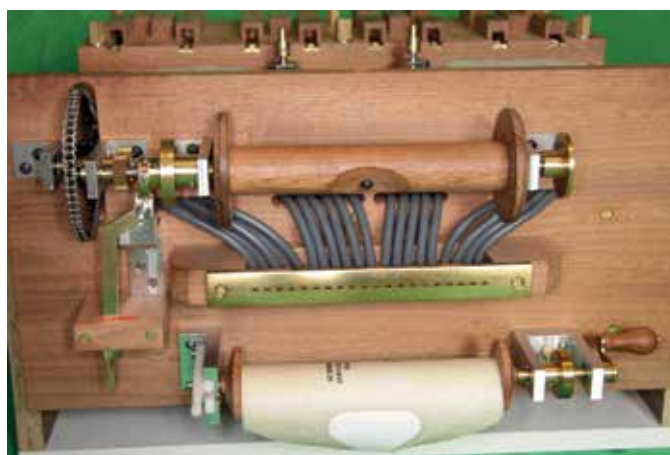


Fig 5.

The tracker bar was machined from brass and mounted on the back panel along with the roll drive mechanism, again using "Meccano" chain wheels, sprockets and gears. The roll holder has a light friction clutch (at the right hand side in the photo) to provide tension for the roll during playing. A custom made dog clutch provides the necessary "Play / Rewind" facility. Figure 5 shows the completed arrangement.

The top view in Figure 6 shows the arm cam arrangement. The two small sprockets in the middle of the crankshaft and the right hand end are for the drive chain take off for the Harmonium pedals and the drive for the dog's tail wag mechanism. The drive for the Harmonium pedals turns another crankshaft in the Harmonium which gives the pedals the correct angular movement and a further chain drive from this crankshaft

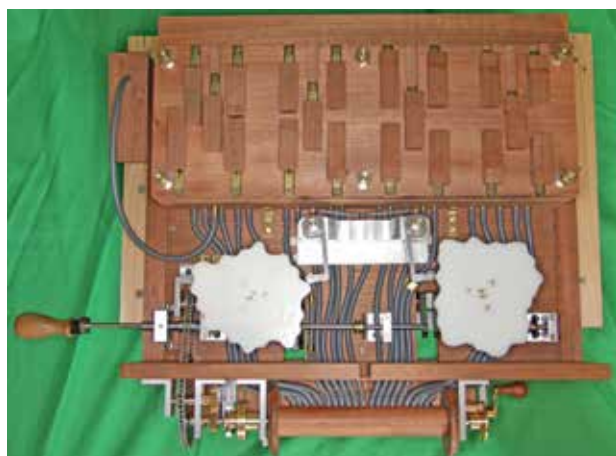


Fig 6.



Fig 7.



Fig 8.

turns the two lobe cam which operates the keyboard repeat mechanism.

In Figure 6 you will also notice the wood caps partially covering the reeds. Fully open reeds produce a large number of harmonics and some of the higher order harmonics are not particularly musical. The wood caps are closed at one end, providing a cavity for the sound. As more of the reed is covered the reed produces fewer high order harmonics, so by selectively adjusting the size of the wood cover, each reed can be voiced.

To avoid the dog's tail wag having a 'windscreen wiper' action, a cam with two short lobes provides a pause followed by two swift wags. Again, the cam follower is terminated with a ball race to reduce friction with the cam surface. Connection to the dog is via a follower and push rod, which connects to a paddle extended through the floor from the dog's body.

The tail wag cam assembly can be seen in Figure 7.

The dog's eyes were made from a turned sphere of "Delrin" resin with brown glass eyes recessed into the surface. The eyes are mounted on a small shaft with pivots in a ball race bearing. A lever protruding from the left eyeball causes the

eyes to normally rotate to the open position under gravity, however a rod connected to the pneumatic in the dog's body holds up the lever effectively closing the dog's eyes. A spring in the pneumatic holds the bellows open. A small copper tube passes through the floor and the dog's body into the pneumatic and this is connected to the vacuum reservoir so that the pneumatic closes as the vacuum is created when playing the instrument, thus opening the dog's eyes. The complete dog chassis assembly can be seen in Figures 8.

To complete the dog, the body was carved from Ash and then painted with acrylics. Figure 9.

The Harmonium was built up as an



Fig 9.

aluminium chassis with an overlaid walnut case. Figure 10 illustrates the chassis and shows the keyboard assembly. Those keys, which move, have extended tails, which are depressed by the rotating two-lobe cam above. The keys are made from black and white "Delrin".

The Harmonium player's torso was also constructed on an aluminium chassis. The upper arms consist of an aluminium bearing block housing two ball races and a shaft which has a cylindrical wood cover. The forearms were carved from Ash and bonded onto an aluminium elbow joint. A single grub screw secures the forearm to the upper arm shaft and also to the control rods, which pass up from the cam followers below the



Fig 10.

floor. The underside of the hands shows the ten Neodymium magnets in each hand, which operate the keys. Ball races are set into the hip

joints and there are short removable stub axles, which pass through the bearings and the connecting rods, which were then bonded, into the



Fig 11.



Fig 12.

wood thighs. The neck block is also pivoted on ball races and has a shaft protruding below which connects with a lever at the top of the pneumatic which tilts the head when playing begins. The copper pipe at the base connects via a short rubber tube to a pipe protruding at the base of the player, which fits snugly into a hole in the top of the Harmonium stool.

Figure 11 shows the component parts of the torso:-

Front and back body sections were then carved from Beech and attached to cover the torso chassis as in Figure 12.

The thighs were carved from Beech and have aluminium knee joints which house further ball races to join the lower legs. Removable screw pins allow the legs to be separated at the knee for assembly as the lower leg and shoes are permanently attached to the Harmonium pedals. The shoes/feet are attached to aluminium ankle joints with ball races to make the movable joint to the lower leg. The leg assembly is shown in Figure 13.

An open design of stool was chosen copying an Edwardian stool in my possession. A 3mm wide slot was machined into the centre upright of each side to take the 2.5mm diameter control rods. Bonding a veneer strip over the inside face closed the slot leaving a square hole from top to bottom. To operate the head tilt pneumatic a 3mm wide slot was machined on the inside of the right hand front leg following the serpentine curve. At the top, the



Fig 13.



Fig 14.

channel passes across the seat top to the centre hole. The channel was closed to form the airway with a strip of veneer.

Figure 14 shows the player complete (except for her head) assembled on the stool with the completed Harmonium case and dog.

The Harmonium player's head was carved from Ash. Glass eyes were then inserted from the front and eyelids built up in gesso before painting and attaching a wig. Eyelashes were cut down from material from a doll supplier and attached to complete the head.

A case was then machined from European Oak and to complete the project I enlisted the help of my wife Linda, (who just happens to be a very competent dressmaker), to make her dress.

The finished automaton is shown in the photographs above and below.



Junghans Musical Clock with Interchangeable Cylinders by Alan Clark

In the previous edition of The Music Box, Vol 29 No 4, Winter 2019, Kevin McElhone posed a question asking help to identify some unusual cylinders he had come across. In this article by Alan Clark, the author answers the question.

We also received additional information from member Jean-Marc Lebout, and a link to YouTube to see such a musical clock in action, see below.

Jean-Marc writes:

'I have a wooden Junghans type clock with an interchangeable music box which use this type of cylinder.

No name of maker, which I still not have identified.

Are they (Kevin's cylinder's understood) for sale? Best regards, Jean-Marc.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uta61Igmzi4>]

The photographs show a slightly uncommon musical clock made by Junghans. The clock has a movement of only 30 hours duration, but is unusual in that the musical movement can be set off either at each hour, or used as an alarm, (for those who do not sleep too soundly)! The musical movement is mounted in the base of the case and has a cast iron frame. The 38 comb teeth are actuated by a hollow steel musical cylinder which can be removed to change the tune. The wooden case has a small hinged door in the right-hand side to allow the cylinder to be removed.

To prevent damage to the comb teeth, the cylinder has a small tab which projects into a groove in its mounting shaft which allows the cylinder to turn, but prevents it being removed before the end of the tune. The cylinder is 60 mm in length, and 28 mm diameter, made of seamless steel with the projections punched out from the inside. Anyone looking at the picture showing the rear of the clock movement and the musical movement should be warned that when I bought this clock the entire stop-start mechanism had been very badly mauled, and it took a considerable time to work out what it had probably looked like before it had been damaged. What you see is how I managed to rebuild it so that it functioned correctly, the manual start was completely missing and the new one is my own design.

On page 162 in Vol. 29 of our magazine Kevin McElhone has shown a box of cylinders that look very similar. However the mounting arrangements for these cylinders look as if they must be slightly different, as my only cylinder has the drive end closed with an inset metal cup, and this is where the small tab is situated, this tab is clearly not present on the ones in the photo. Perhaps the greatest value of Kevin's photographs is that the carton is printed with "JOCKER O.." and I am assuming that Jocker is the model name of the clock. Junghans also made the rather more common brass cased musical alarm clocks which are called "JOKER" and have a small cylinder movement built in the base. Junghans' only method of marking the model name on many of their clocks was the use of small thin paper labels stuck to the wooden case, which in my experience are often

missing, as on this clock. Underneath the case are hand-written numbers which could be read as 20/4/07, which could be a date, or just a shop or repairer's numbers. If anyone has access to a Junghans catalogue, perhaps they could fill in some missing information as to when these clocks were produced.

Lastly, an advertisement: if anyone has a spare cylinder of either of these designs, and no clock to play it in, I would be very happy to give it a good home, with the promise to play it occasionally.



This That and T'Other No 29

If any member has a musical box that can be dated accurately between the years 1900 and 1906 please let me know together with details of the box. I would like to note in the Register all boxes made for certain after the year 1900. This information would help to date later boxes with a greater degree of accuracy. At the moment I believe there are quite a number of boxes thought to be dated in the 1895 to 1899 period which in actual fact were made later.

At the moment the Langdorff family of boxes can be dated with a great degree of accuracy but I now suspect that any box having a nickel plated cylinder or, most other parts plated, are later than one would suspect.

Looking at the survival rates for boxes there is little doubt in my mind that the invention of the phonograph was what finally finished the musical box once and for all.

One redeeming feature is that no matter how good modern devices are for reproducing sound, there is no substitute for being physically present at the source of that sound. To stand and listen to a musical box is just the same as being present at an actual performance by an orchestra. However, if you are not fortunate enough to own a really good musical box listening to a recording of one is still better than nothing!

The idea of these 'This That and T'Other' articles was not to write long and serious works on a specific topic but rather to jot down interesting facts or observations that may or may not be related.

I am always amused when reading an auction catalogue which lists an item as "distressed" or "in need of attention". Sometimes a picture provides a clue as to what requires attention, but I would strongly advise staying away from such

boxes unless your engineering skills are good and you have a workshop to match. Often there is a need to undo the work of a previous "restorer" before putting things to rights and restoring the box properly.

Hymn boxes have never been the most popular to collect and I cannot understand why. The tunes are nearly always recognisable and the verses of a hymn usually fit nicely into the time a box is pinned to play. The better observance of the Sabbath in Victorian times has resulted in many Hymn boxes surviving.

Do not confuse a Hymn box with an oratorio box. Both types are worth having in a collection with the oratorio box usually playing quite complicated music from a major work. I must confess on a personal level I would always like to have an example of both to hand but nowadays they are difficult to find.

One box on the Register advertised as "A self-Acting Harmonium" also has a tune card with the portraits of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey. This is the only example I have ever come across. There is neither a reed organ section nor anything else that could be linked to a harmonium in any way. I wonder if anyone can explain further? The box was made by Weill and Harburg.

Still thinking about hymn boxes or those playing religious music, can anyone date the following tunes which I believe were composed by Moody and Sankey?:-

She only touched the hem of his garment; Behold me standing at the door.

Arthur Cunliffe.

Mechanical Music and Literary Trivia by 'Bookworm'

A little diversion for our readers: While reading the Italian classic novel, 'The Leopard,' by Tomasi di Lampedusa recently, I came across two references to mechanical music, quoted below. The novel was written in 1956, but set approximately a hundred years earlier. The 1963 film is fairly faithful to the book, but fortunately - or otherwise, according to your point of view - omits these two musical details ...

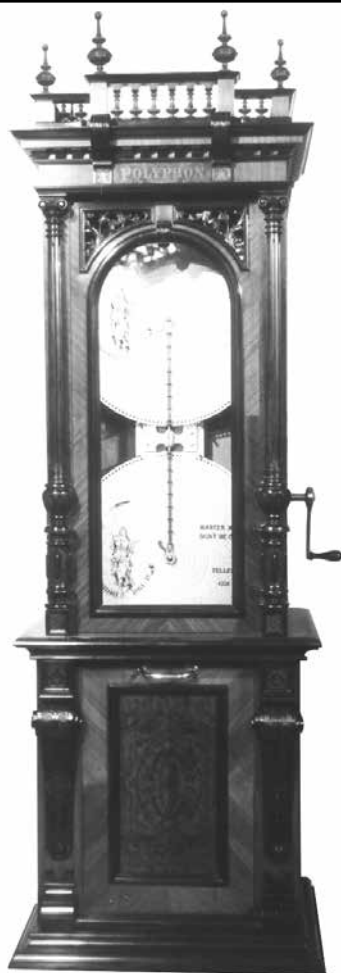
'... One afternoon inside a cupboard they found *carillons*, those music boxes which delighted the affected simplicity of the eighteenth century. Three of these buried in dust and cobwebs, remained mute; but the last, which was more recent and shut tighter into its dark wooden box, started up its cylinder



of bristling copper, and the little tongues of raised steel suddenly produced a delicate tune, all in clear silvery tones-the famous *Carnival of Venice* ...'(Vintage Books, London, 2007, page 120. Translation: Archibald Colquhoun)

'...Below in the street, between the hotel and the sea, a barrel organ had halted and was playing away in avid hope of touching the hearts of foreigners who, at that season, were not there. It was grinding out *You who opened Your Wings to God* from 'Lucia di

Lammermoor.' What remained of Don Fabrizio thought of all the rancour mingling with all the torture, at that moment, throughout Italy, from mechanical music of this kind ...' (ibid., page 191)



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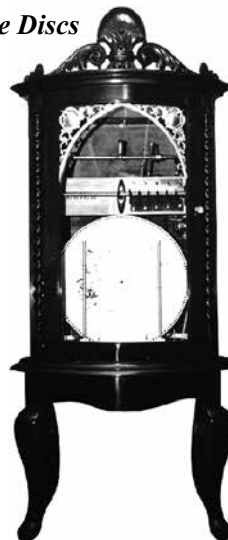
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Register News No 104

Music by Beethoven is rarely found on musical boxes. As of this date there are only 34 boxes out of 12,359 that have his name on the tune sheets. I have no idea why this is the case as in my opinion he was one of the greatest composers of all times.

Oddly there are 12 boxes that play music by the little known composer Zikoff. One cannot really compare the two composers and I doubt very much if any music by Zikoff has ever been played at a Promenade Concert or any other concert for many years.

For the record, Zikoff was born in Prussia in May 1822. He joined the army as a musician at the age of 18. He served as a bandmaster until his death in 1877 at the age of 55. He was best known for composing waltzes and gallops but strangely for a military man, very few marches.

The tunes on musical boxes that he is remembered for are: -

Ebb and Flow Mazurka; Le Petit Waltz; Cocquette Waltz; Boccace Valse;

La Fantaisie Waltz.

I am sorry I cannot give a date for any of these compositions but I would suggest they were all after 1842. I suspect the sheet music for any of these would now be non-existent. If you have a musical box playing any of these tunes you have a rarity.

Whilst looking for composers names on tune sheets, I came across that of Rosey. George Rosey was an American composer who was born in 1864 who wrote popular songs. Rosey was a pseudonym for George G Rosenberg. He was best known in his time for writing popular songs. Among his works were *The Honeymoon March* (1896) and *The Handicap March* (1895). *The Honeymoon March* had a dedication to "The Brides of the Season" on the title page.

His composition *The Scorcher* was about a lady riding a bicycle. The illustration for the music was of a period bicycle with dress guard being ridden very serenely by a prim and proper lady with a straw boater hat. What a contrast to the illustrations of the present day!

Recently and by pure chance, I have come across a song of the late music hall period called *The Fatal Wedding*. I discovered that it was composed and sung by Gussie Lord David (1863 – 1899.)

The very gloomy song tells the story of an outcast wife and her baby who went to a church where her estranged husband was. There the baby died and the remorseful husband promptly "died by his own hand before the break of day" which of course resulted in two funerals.

Even by Victorian standards this was gloom and doom in a big way and I can hardly believe it could have been a very popular song. It must have had a following otherwise the musical box manufactures would not have pinned it on their boxes. Having said that I have just discovered only three boxes with the tune out of a total of 12,359 but as is always the case there must have been many more.

A theatre production of the late Victorian era was *Floradora* by Lesley Stuart. It turns up very occasionally on later boxes but very few of these musicals could rival the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. Sullivan lived from 1842 to 1900 and Gilbert lived from 1836 to 1911. Gilbert sadly died as a result of saving a drowning person.

Gilbert never gets the attention he deserves as without his hard work there would have been no Savoy operas. It was in 1870 that Gilbert and Sullivan first met and seven years later *The Sorcerer* was written. The operettas so far found on musical boxes are: - *The Sorcerer* (1877) *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880) *Ruddigore* (1887) *The Mikado* (1885) *Yeoman of the Guard* (1888) and *The Gondoliers* (1889) I have no doubt there will be airs from all of their operettas on musical boxes somewhere in the world.

Of the 14 comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan *The Gondoliers* is widely regarded as the greatest of their works. It was performed for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle in 1898 and from all accounts it was very well received with the Queen on this occasion being much amused.

Lately I have been looking through the Register for boxes made between 1890 and 1906. The lists of tunes on the majority of these boxes are very different from those of forty years earlier. I have listed below a sample of some of the tunes commonly found.

The Man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo; The Cockney Tradition; I've got a feelin' for you; Funny without being vulgar; The future Mrs Awkins; Paddy Whack; Wot Cher Song; My Merry Oldsmobile; The old rustic bridge by the mill; I love the sea.

These boxes, often being lower quality, need to be saved and looked after just as much as any overture box. All of them are now over one hundred years old and must be kept for future generations to enjoy.

As always I am on the lookout for unusual tunes and rare types of boxes. Please email me if you have a particularly rare or unusual box so that we can all share the knowledge.

Arthur Cunliffe

adcunliffe@btinternet.com

A trip to Paris

by Colin and Lin Cave

In June 2019, we were part of a group of mechanical music enthusiasts who travelled to Paris. We enjoyed visits to some remarkable collections, and also had time to take in some of the sights of 'Gay Paree'.

Friday 26th June

We travelled from Dover to Calais by ferry, and then on towards Lille to the Café des Orgues in Herzeele, where we had lunch. This establishment was more of a large dance-hall, and boasted two fairground organs: a Mortier and a Decap. We were regaled with their boisterous tones as we tucked into cold gammon (still in its aspic) with fries and bread. The café was reputedly known for its speciality, Beef Bourgingnon, sadly not available on that day. After lunch we travelled on to Paris, and booked into the Holiday Inn Porte de Clichy.



1.



2.



3.

Saturday 27th June

The next morning, after breakfast, we were transported by our excellent coach driver to the Phono Museum. This small museum has a superb collection of gramophones, phonographs and early sound recording machines, ably demonstrated by the knowledgeable owner. (*Photographs 1,2,3.*)

One intriguing device produced simple sounds which were relayed to ten pairs of earphones. Interested parties would stand or sit around the instrument taking a pair of earphones each to enjoy very early recorded sound.

(*Photograph 4.*)

The first known invention for recording sound is attributed to the Frenchman Edourd-Leon Scott de Martinville and a model of his machine (patented in 1857) was demonstrated to us. It comprised of a horn, at the bottom of which was a diaphragm stretched over the narrow end. Attached to the diaphragm was a needle

which traced the shape of sound created when music or a voice was introduced into the large end of the "horn". Undulations were recorded in a line on smoke blackened paper or glass. Martinville named his invention the Phonautograph, and although it was successful, it didn't play sound back again. However, in the year 2008, researchers in the USA digitally converted a Phonautograph recording (made by Martinville in 1860), of "Au Clair de Lune." According to the United States researchers from First Sounds Collective, "it is the earliest recognisable record of the human voice, and the earliest recognisable record of music".



4.



5.



6.

Twenty years later, another Parisian invented the 'Paleophone' which recorded sound onto a cylinder by tracing oscillations using a screw. His name was Charles Cros, and before he had a chance to build a prototype, an inventor in the USA built a machine that recorded and played back sound. The machine was called the Phonograph, patented in 1877, and the inventor was Thomas Edison, who had solved the problem totally independently of the two Frenchmen. We highly recommend a visit to this excellent museum.

Saturday afternoon we had "free" time in the area surrounding the Eiffel Tower. Late afternoon we were picked up by our coach, and transported to the "Bateau Bistro", a floating restaurant. We cruised down the Seine, enjoying a delicious three course meal, sailing past the sad sight of the fire damaged cathedral of Notre Dame, it's twin towers still standing defiant. Back to our hotel, and more free time in the evening.



7.

Sunday 28th June

The morning was spent at the "Musée des Art Forains" in Paris. We were met by our guide "Libert", a colourful character, full of fun and entertainment. The museum is spread over 3 or 4 large buildings, and contains numerous examples of old fairground attractions including carousels, organs, gallopers, orchestrions, a Viennese ballroom with elaborately adorned mannequins, many gaming machines, a unique bicycle roundabout on which we all pedalled, and much more. We could have spent all day there. A wonderful experience. (Photographs 5 & 6.)

The afternoon we spent in the Latin Quarter, and climbed the

steep hill through Montmartre up to the imposing basilica of Sacre Coeur. Returning down through the dozens of artists in the Place du Tertre, we gathered at "La Pomponette" restaurant where we enjoyed a tasty meal.

(Photograph 7.)

Monday 29th June

On our way back to the ferry, we called into the "Ferme des Orgues", a family collection of instruments of quality and diversity. Player pianos, orchestrions, musical clocks, disc playing machines, a pipe organ, automata and many other musical artefacts were demonstrated for us. A grand conclusion to a most entertaining weekend.

(Photographs 8 & 9.)



8.



9.

Alan William Wyatt, MBE

Having known Alan for so long I tremble at the thought that I shall not do him justice, or that I shall omit some important fact about him, because there are so many. I owe so much to his 'taking me under his wing' that I am extremely grateful that I can say a few words in his memory.

I joined the MBSGB in late 1980, and went to my very first meeting that December, held in London. It was an intimidating experience as the several dozen participants were predominantly male, much senior in age to myself, and many took along a musical box tucked under their arm – it was to be another five years before I had one myself. I clearly remember meeting Alan and Daphne then, and the disarming way they engaged with me, helping me to overcome my nerves. Informally dressed by comparison, Alan stood out from most of the other gentlemen who were wearing as was more customary in those days, suits and/or jackets – and ties! As reported elsewhere by Tony King, Alan 'was always on the look-out for ladies to go and talk to.'

Just as my first meeting was no exception, when my husband and I finally started going to MBSGB weekends Alan went out of his way to help us feel included amongst the crowd of strangers.

Not only do I personally owe him a lot, but the Musical Box Society of Great Britain benefitted hugely from his participation. By the time I met him, I believe Alan was already serving on the Committee, and shortly afterwards he took over from Hilary Kay as Meetings Secretary, a position he was to fill more than once. Later he served as President/Chair, from 1990 to 1994, having already been granted Honorary Life Membership of the Society in 1991, which he so richly deserved. It was at his instigation that I became his successor as Meetings Secretary for five years from the mid 1980s. My first task was to find a suitable venue for the regular London meetings the Society held in those days, and I remember a Summer day spent touring round London with Alan, looking at potential sites as he gradually relinquished the reins.

In addition to meetings, Alan also organised coach trips abroad, affording members the opportunity to see many unusual, varied and wonderful collections and items, as well as meet extraordinary personalities from the mechanical music community in continental Europe. Closer to home he would also organise organ grinds in his nearby city of Cambridge, raising money for charity, and again giving MBSGB members a chance to enjoy both playing and listening to mechanical organs. Alan's love of the Society never

died and I sense that he was frustrated when his infirmity finally prevented him from attending meetings. He made a valiant effort to join us at our Chichester meeting in October 2016, and was disappointed when he and Daphne had to return home early.

Given that he devoted so much time to his interest in mechanical music, it is hard to believe that he had a 'day job' as a farmer. I don't know whether it is true that he was known as 'the Asparagus King of Cambridge' or merely a myth, but I can attest that

he once gave us some of the most delicious potatoes I have ever had, which he had produced on his farm. He also found time to go with Daphne exploring ancient tythe barns dotted around the region. Additionally, as 'salt of the earth' Alan was also a 'pillar' of his local community. For a time he served on South Cambridgeshire's District Council, at one time its Vice Chair, and in the Queen's Birthday Honours list of 1998, Alan was awarded Membership of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the community, especially Foster Care and Music Conservation in Cambridgeshire.

When we lived in the East Midlands, then years later in Cambridge, my husband and I would occasionally visit the Wyatts, who always made us feel extremely welcome, extending their warm hospitality towards us. On one occasion he taught my husband how to douse, and we spent a balmy summer evening pacing up and down the Wyatts' back garden perfecting the technique. Alan could also locate missing items



Alan Wyatt, 6th March, 1927 – 7th July, 2019.

by dangling a crystal over a map or floorplan of a building. Another of his many outstanding talents which has not been mentioned was his ability to play the saw. He was happy to oblige to entertain people, but always humble about receiving praise.

On another occasion he took us to see the pond (more of a mini lake!) he had created in one of his fields as a place for him and Daphne to visit for peace and quiet, where closer to home he created a small museum as an annexe to their house to exhibit their large collection of mechanical musical items.

Alan and Daphne had a caravan in Swanage where they would holiday from time to time, and for a while Daphne's sister lived just a few miles from us; both of which meant the Wyatts would drop in on us from time to time. Alan had another talent: one for nosing out mechanical instruments tucked away and forgotten;

on one occasion he found an Ariston organette which he thoughtfully earmarked especially for me so that I could at last take part in the regular Society organ grinds. In the ensuing years I also acquired a Weber Duo Art player piano from him, and I believe that at least one other of my instruments was originally from his collection.

The last time I saw him was just under two years ago, when I called in on my way home from the 2018 Diss organ festival. He was still interested to hear the latest MBSGB news and catch up on news of old friends. I have only good memories of him – and what a lot I have. Friendly, kind-hearted and considerate, I don't believe Alan was capable of an unkind word about anyone, he always saw the best in people, and took an interest in everyone.

Alison Biden

Alan Wyatt – a personal tribute by Tony King

It is an obvious cliché but nevertheless true, that I shall feel forever privileged to have had Alan's friendship for more than twenty years. His easy charm was completely natural and he did not have an unpleasant bone in his body.

I had not long joined the Society (1996, at the time that Alan was Membership Secretary) when, out of the blue, I received a communication from his wife, Daphne, inviting Ann and me to join her and Alan at 'The Willows' for one of their regular afternoon demonstrations of their mechanical-music collection. Naturally, we accepted with alacrity, and found a superb array of items that Alan obviously enjoyed showing and playing - his story of the origin of the phrase "when the penny drops" was especially amusing.

His background knowledge of all things (mechanical) musical was considerable and included acquaintance with many collectors on the continent. This was much in evidence on his legendary European Tours, which we looked forward to with great anticipation.

Aside from being deeply involved in the Society's activities, he and Daphne found time to run 'The Willows' as a B & B, and to be foster parents to many children, with whom they maintained regular contact years after they had moved on. Alan was always interested in people, and Daphne has said that "he was always on the lookout for a lady on her own who needed cheering up" – typical Alan!

After Alan and Daphne had disposed of their collection and sold 'The Willows' (and hence no longer hosted their demonstrations) I think Alan wanted to continue some contact with MBSGB members, and so Ann and I became regular visitors to their bungalow. We were always invited to lunch, and after, we would often drive to a local point of interest.

As Alan became ever more infirm, we changed to lunching at The Bridge in Waterbeach, until Alan's increasing deafness eventually meant that sadly our visits ceased because he could not join in the conversations. Eventually, a year or two later, his failing body gave up on life, and we have had to come to terms with this loss. So, with much regret, a fond farewell to Alan Wyatt, the kindest man we have ever known.



Alan with wife Daphne.

David Secrett - Maker and Restorer of Automata

by Michael Start

David Secrett began his working life apprenticed to a church organ-builder. After a spell as an RAF instrument-fitter and Russian linguist, he returned to organ-building and later moved to the workshops of the Science Museum in London.

In 1975 he began restoring mechanical antiques. An encounter with the English collector and personality, Jack Donovan, introduced Secrett to the world of artificial life. Donovan had a shop at 93 Portobello Road in London selling music boxes and automata. Portobello at that time combined Bohemian crowds there to see and be seen with market traders, collectors and connoisseurs involved in the rituals of hunting down their own particular treasure.

On Saturdays, the road was lined with antique and trinket dealers and other colourful characters. A regular fixture was the organ grinder with a parrot on his shoulder whose widow kept to the same spot into the 1990s, with the organ now balanced on the end of an old pram full of tiny Chihuahua dogs dressed in woolly jumpers. The antiques shops had rickety wooden floors and steps – the first indication that one might find a bargain there. Bargains were a matter of chance but what was a certainty in the 1970s was that one group of the people gathered together on those smoggy mornings where those with the expertise and enthusiasm for mechanical music and automata.

Donovan and Secrett were part of a coterie of collectors and restorers such as the dollmaker and costumer, Margaret Glover, and disc musical box specialist, Bob Kane Trender, with whom David shared a workshop for a time. All were frequent visitors to Donovan's shop and together they made the commercial world of automata not just glamorous, but magical and fantastic. There was an edge to it, spiced with money and rare skill; a restorer like David Secrett was a man in demand. In an appreciative nod to the talents of Jack's restorers, the Donovan collection eventually became part of the York Museum of Automata.

The restoration of classic clockwork automata gave David Secrett an insight into 19th century production techniques and inspired him to create his own mechanical sculptures, using his skill with fine woodworking to create a unique style for the period.

The first automaton I ever bought was by David Secrett, though Donovan claimed it was German and from the 1930s. I saw it in the Portobello Road shop and I bought it because of its complexity. It possessed a



David in his workshop

multitude of cams and levers, a turntable, bellows and a carousel which animated two large wooden figures of a man and a lady. The man smoked a cigarette while the lady had other pleasures in mind as she watched the seated figure, averting her eyes only at the 'punchline' when a stream of smoke puffed out from an unlikely part of the man's anatomy. It was a fine, if unlikely, example of David's mechanical ingenuity and sense of humour.

It was only years later, when sitting and chatting with David off set at the BBC's Christmas Lecture on Robots (where he had demonstrated his Archer), that he admitted to making this complex scene to win a bet with Donovan during a raucous drinking session after a particularly good Saturday's trading.

David Secrett's automata are constructed from native English woods such as yew, are entirely hand-built and characteristically depict ancient folkloric figures. His most complex creation was a 'toxophilotic automaton' of an archer shooting real arrows at a target.

The archer would take four arrows in turn from a quiver, aim and fire them up to 30 feet away while doing a little foot tapping, eye winking and even sticking out his tongue between each arrow. The use of a free element (the arrow) is the mark of an advanced automaton. All numbered and signed, it is believed that Secrett made about twenty archer automata, including an especially complex version that aimed arrows at a moving target. The archer and its maker were the subject of a 1979 BBC documentary in the "Small World" series.

On Moving to Diss in Norfolk in the 1980s, David Secrett carried on with the construction and restoration

of automata, sometimes travelling to restore collections in the USA and Europe, as well as undertaking some significant commissions for one-off automata, all made with his trademark blend of fine woodwork and a traditional brass and steel mechanism.

I visited his Norfolk workshop on several occasions. On my final visit, the chaotically ordered workshop included the feathered carcass of a large goose on the workbench, a model for a beautifully sculptural and anatomically accurate version of Vaucanson's Duck. Characteristically for David, he wanted to get it right in every detail.

David passed away on 16 November 2019, aged 80, leaving an inspiring legacy of beautiful and ambitious automata for makers and collectors around the world.

Michael Start, The House of Automata,
www.houseofautomata.com

Michael adds: The BBC made this enchanting film about him and his work

<https://youtu.be/P2SJ398CIrc>

Nicholas Simons recalls: *I remember David very well from my early days in the MBSGB. I first met him in the back workshop at Keith Harding's North London shop in the late 70's or early 80's. He came to MBSGB meetings quite regularly in the 1980's and demonstrated his archer*

and musician automata. I was particularly impressed by the musician as it played a small barrel harpsichord in the base and was run from a fusee clockwork movement that he had made from scratch.

He then disappeared from sight and moved to Norfolk and we didn't see him again at meetings.

... While Jonny Ling notes that David worked for a while for Manders Organ Builders (readers may remember that Manders was the firm which restored the Salomon's Estate Welte Philharmonic organ, featured in *The Music Box* last year.)



David Secrett (right) with Jonny Ling, in Diss, May 2018

Teme Valley Winders Christmas meeting – December 2019 by John Farmer

Around 30 Winders decided it wasn't too cold to make the journey to Eastham and enjoy the festivities with John and Hilda Phillips who provided tea and coffee for everyone on arrival. Newcomers to the TVW meetings were MBSGB members Karen and Richard Gregory together with Ben Styles, a lady interested in engine turning, and Alistair Macintosh who is a clock enthusiast.

First to present was John Moorhouse who gave an update on his enamelled solid silver miniature violin containing two tiny singing birds. This now has a leather covered violin case and a solid silver music stand. John also gave a brief description of his recently acquired diamond milling machine, used for many things including fine engraving on precious items. He passed around the faceted diamond cutting tool that he has been experimenting with recently. His talk was supported by photos on the projector and the actual violin was placed in a glass cabinet for all to see.

He was followed by David Henthorn who showed his 11 7/8" (30cm) Symphonion disc musical box which has two combs. David enquired why most Symphonions had two combs although many Polyphons had a single comb. This prompted some



John Moorhouse's violin

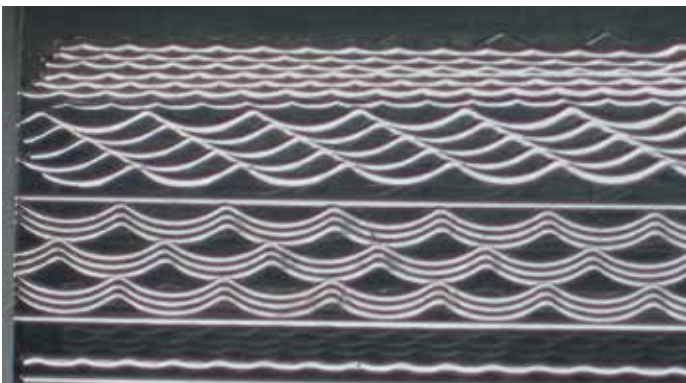


John Moorhouse's Violin with birds

discussion with the various combinations of multiple combs on disc boxes being discussed and explained. On David's instrument the two combs were tuned one octave apart. David played a couple of discs with Christmas music and John Phillips produced a few more for the same machine. This was followed by discs on John's Gambrinus and Falstaff Symphonions and his large upright Mikado Polyphon, just to get everyone in a Christmassy mood.

Doug Pell didn't disappoint with examples from his large collection of vintage toys, mostly made from tin and cardboard. They included a (modern) musical Mrs Christmas doll inclined to expose her assets, an acrobat who periodically swings himself over a trapeze, a white rabbit who plays with a diabolo, and a friction operated toy drop hammer, amongst others.

Bernard Weekes was next to tell the story of his disastrous house fire earlier in the year which, apart from damage to the fabric of the house, also affected several musical boxes, a player piano and a singing bird in a cage. Fortunately the damage was mostly limited to a coating of oily soot which the chosen restorers were able to remove from the musical boxes and piano with special solvents. Bernard decided to clean the singing bird himself but having successfully cleaned the bird,



Sample of diamond cutting engraving



Brothers Charlie and Josh give another virtuoso performance

unfortunately dropped the cage and bird virtually destroying the 3 birds therein. When his daughter found out she was able to arrange a repair through her employers who have the facility to carry out 3D scanning and printing which resulted in replacement plastic bird bodies which were successfully feathered by a bird box restorer. Bernard showed some examples of the 3D printed components.

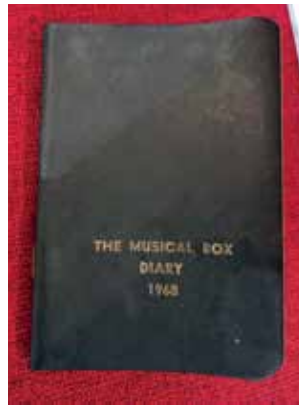
Roy Evett had brought along his two grandsons who have previously entertained the Winders at Christmas and did so again. Charlie first played a tune of his own composition on a 15 note "pling-plong" musical mechanism and then the boys played several duets on their violins to receive general applause. Later in the day Josh played a roll on the 'push up' attached to the Yamaha Disklavier piano.

Gary Burns has acquired a collection of Christmas musical biscuit and sweet tins and brought a few to demonstrate. He also showed a musical cigarette lighter, and a 1968 Musical Box Society diary, inside which is an advert for the late Keith Harding's business, in Hornsey Road, London at the time. Most of those present had not seen one of these before. Steve Greatrex then took centre stage to introduce his automatic accordion, a one-off instrument made using Decap electronic components.



Selection of Christmas musical novelties

The instrument plays MIDI files and Steve played several for the audience. He followed this up with some tunes on the Duo-Art grand piano with the roll replaced with MIDI signals but Steve pumping the pedals. He included a tune arranged by the jazz musician, John Farrell, together with a very florid version of 'Land of Hope & Glory.'



Old MBSGB diary



Fixing the Timberkits

John Phillips had recently been asked to hold a stall at the local village hall fund raising event so had taken his street organ but had also taken a quantity of automata models by Timberkits to sell to raise funds. John had sold two so still has several on his hands which he was selling at a discount. John and others demonstrated several of the models of various musicians, and one on display, a drummer, has an electric motor drive also available from Timberkits.

John Harrold showed an "unusually good" late 19th century lever wound cylinder box which did play very nicely. The tune sheet has fallen apart and John hopes to reassemble the many fragments. John also showed a 20th century reproduction bedplate for a 19 5/8 Polyhon. The bedplate had never been used but John had just finished fitting it out with star wheels and dampers. After testing, it needs some further adjustment. John then played a Christmas tune selection on John Phillips's 31 Pell organ.

Roy Evett gave a talk about his further research on the carillon mechanism shown by Gary Burns at the previous Winders meeting. He discovered a number of interesting facts including that the bedplate, being brass, must be early 19th century and appears to have been made for a fusée movement; however the governor is late 19th century. There are also several unused holes in the bedplate, and it has been extended to accommodate the current weight driven barrel. Some parts have the remains of nickel plating which was not in general use until the late 1800s. This all points to an early bedplate being considerably modified to create what we now see. Roy also found out that the Seewen museum

holds a carillon movement and a photograph of that shows a different construction arrangement. Roy is writing a more detailed article for *The Music Box*. (Editor's note – see pages 187 -189 of this edition.)

To finish the formal part of the meeting a quartet of accordion/concertina players entertained us and then Angie Harrold played a recording of her grandson singing "Walking in the air" as part of 'The Snowman' concert currently touring the UK. As members were chatting amongst themselves and getting ready to depart John Phillips went around the room playing a number of different instruments to round off the meeting.

Hilda and helpers provided refreshments and cakes on arrival and during the lunch break. It was a very good day as usual. The next meeting of the Winders will be the Summer meeting on 23rd May 2020 starting at 11:00 a.m. as usual – bring your own packed lunch. Please let John Phillips know on 01584 781118 nearer the day if you wish to attend. *All photos: John Farmer.*



Teme Valley's own minstrels!

News from Other Societies

Periodicals published in English:

AMICA Bulletin, Vol 57, No 1,
Jan/Feb, 2019

(see also www.amica.org)



After the customary 'business' columns, this edition opens with Matt Jaro's regular feature Nickel Notes, the subject of which this time is Ron and Mary Jo Bopp. Ron may just about be familiar to our (British/European) readers as he is well known in the international carousel organ community and has led a number of tours to Europe. 2020 will see the last of these. Ron Bopp and his wife have an impressive list of 'honours' received over the years. Matt then describes the numerous instruments in the Bopps' collection – so many the article stretches over 12 pages. Frank Himpf then writes about J Russel Robinson, 'The White Boy with the Colored Fingers ...' Russel Robinson was a virtuoso piano player and one of the QRS Company's 'stars.' He was also a composer and arranger, and a 'pioneering hero in promoting the music of African-American composers.' He was noted for using his left hand quite differently from his right, and it has been suggested that he had a weakness in his left hand, which manifested itself in the use of many slurred notes in the bass (notes played chromatically in upward or downward motions) and appeared to have a tendency to avoid 'tenths' although Himpf himself is open-minded about it. This is followed by an item about James Dundon and his Mechanical Music Radio, which MBSGB republished in ... Jazz Pianist, Band Leader, and Piano Roll Artist 'Ernest Cutting' is the subject of the next article. Mikey Mills, who I am guessing must be a grand old age now of early 20 something, then advises on how to find and preserve unique Wurlitzer 150 rolls. A preview of the 2019 AMICA convention follows, with reports from no fewer than six AMICA Chapter meetings. (I admire AMICA Editor's style: he makes no apology for absence of captions to images in some cases, explaining contributors failed to supply them. I doubt I would get away with that ...)

AMICA Bulletin, Vol 57, No 2,
March/April, 2019

(see also www.amica.org)



After the preliminary columns we get down to serious business with Matt Jaro's regular Nickel Notes, whose topic on this occasion is the result of a trawl through the trade press for 'obscure, unsuccessful and strange machines that never made it to the big leagues.' Amongst these he lists the Melodette Automatic Piano, the Midget Orchestra, the Coté Orchestrelle, the Rand Automatic musical instruments, the Pianora piano, the Regal Piano company, Playola, the Ariston {Player Piano company, the Tammany Organet [sic] Company, the Price and Teeple Carlton Line, The Geweena Organ company, and The Waltham Piano Company. This is followed by the first in what is promised to be a three-part series from Editor Glenn Thomas entitled 'An Introduction to MID: What is it? Why do I want it? How do I get it? How do I use it?' As part of this project, Julian Dyer then writes about 'Roll Scanning and Roll Replication' – which extends over 10 pages, followed by four pages from Jack Breen on 'Installing MIDI in a Pneumatic Instrument', and then Sandy Lechtick's 'If you can't fight em, join em ... The MIDI is here to stay!' On a lighter, joyful note, we are then treated to a report on the 'Sanfilippo and Krughoff Holiday Extravaganza' which took place in December 2018. Apparently it has become somewhat of a tradition now that the Sanfilippo Foundation open its collection to four music associations for two days in the run up to Christmas, while the Krughoff family do the same for one day. Writing this review of the magazine at this point in time (February 2020) is particularly poignant since we recently learned of the death of Jasper Sanfilippo, following not so long after that of Jim Krughoff (who had already passed on by the time of the event reported.) Back to the more prosaic with an item by Glenn Thomas and Doug Hershberger about 'Music Roll Perforator Tempo

Compensation and Wurlitzer Perforator "Special Instructions." We then have a preview of the 2019 AMICA convention and no fewer than meeting reports from seven Chapters. Anyone wishing to have more detail about the more technical articles – or indeed, any of the articles referred to here – please contact the MBSGB Editor.

The Key Frame No 1 2019

(see also www.fops.org)



In this edition, Andy Hinds writes about Hermann Blankenburg, German composer of marches. IN all he composed 1328 marches, many of which are popular on fair organs. According to the author, he composed 'as the mood took him and named marches after people who inspired him or events which he found interesting. He competes with Paul Lincke for the title of Germany's greatest march composer; Lincke wrote a couple of very patriotic marches, which in due course endeared him and his works to the Nazi regime, whilst Blankenburg was ignored. There follows five pages of 'Fantasia Diaries', an on-going series of which this is Part XVI, by Alan Roberts, who chronicles his work on his organ and its trailer. Having published a photograph of a bust of Blankenburg captioned 'The King of March', a few pages later FOPS treat us to an article on 'The March King', John Phillip Sousa, by Paul Bates. (No doubt more familiar to us.) Sousa composed 138 'easy on the ear, delightfully catchy' marches, and is quoted as saying that a march should make a man with a wooden leg want to get up and stride down the road. Nowadays, particularly here in Britain, but a few are familiar to us. Sousa was one of ten children born to a Portuguese immigrant to the USA and his German wife. In a short, but welcome, item Dave Smith explains what a real 'hurdy gurdy' is – definitely not to be confused – although it often is – with a hand-cranked organ or street piano! The final item in this edition is a register of

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 2 – 4 April 2020 | MBSGB Spring Meeting. To be held in the Scarborough area with a private visit to the famous Scarborough Fair Collection of fairground rides, vintage vehicles, cinema organs and mechanical music. The meeting starts with a visit to Allerton Castle which has a collection of mechanical music. Full details from David O'Connor: davideoconnor@aol.com . Please note that this is a Thursday to Saturday meeting. |
| 18 April 2020 | MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. St Mark's Church Hall, Church Lane, Colney Heath, Herts, AL4 0NH. Arrive from 10.30am. Full details and booking through Kevin McElhone, kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com 01536 726759. |
| 25 April 2020 | MBSGB Midlands Group. To be held at the home of Keith Reedman in Long Eaton. Please book by contacting Keith on 01159 732150 or k@reedman.org.uk |
| 3 May 2020 | RetrotechUK, previously known as the National Vintage Collectors Fair. Warwickshire Event Centre, The Fosse, Fosse Way, Warwickshire, CV31 1XN. https://www.retrotechuk.com/ |
| 16 May 2020 | The Grange Musical Collection, Open Day. Jonny Ling, The Grange, Palgrave, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ. 01379 783350. musicmuseum54@yahoo.co.uk |
| 17 May 2020 | Diss Organ Festival. Organs of all sizes converge on the pretty town of Diss for the biennial organ festival. Participation details from Jonny Ling, see above. |
| 23 May 2020 | MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11.00 start. Please contact John Phillips, 01584 781118. |
| 6 June 2020 | MBSGB AGM & Society Auction. Roade Village Hall. NN7 2LS. Doors open at 10.00am. Meeting starts at 11.00am. |
| 19 – 21 June 2020 | International Organ Festival. Waldkirch, Black Forest, Germany. |
| 19 July 2020 | International Festival of Mechanical Music. Les Gets, France. |
| 11 – 13 Sept 2020 | MBSGB Autumn Meeting. To be held in the Welsh spa town of Llandrindod Wells at the four star Metropole Hotel. Visits include the National Cycle Museum and Abbey Cwm Hir, a local stately home kept in the style of the Victorian period. Please see the enclosed flyer for full booking details. |
| 5 Dec 2020 | MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11.00 start. Please contact John Phillips, 01584 781118. |

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all the organs available for hire for events. The covers of this edition show 'before' and 'after' photographs of the 67 key Limonaire 4147 now in the Bob Gilson collection in USA, and formerly in Paul Corin's, on which the decoration has been restored and enhanced by additional lighting.

The Key Frame, No 2, 2019

(see also www.fops.org)

There is a two-page report on the 2019 FOPS AGM, which was followed by music at the venue, the St Albans Organ Theatre. FOPS' new Membership Secretary, Sarah Calladine introduced herself over the following two pages. Sarah comes from a family of enthusiasts and has inherited their passion. Andrew Leach writes about the restoration of the Hollycombe Collection's 87 key Gavioli, originally built as a 75 key Gavioli barrel organ, and converted by Jimmy Verbeeck of Islington in around 1920-30. There is very little Gavioli pipework left now! With many illustrations, this article stretches over nine pages. There is also a small 'filler' item reporting on the organ in Paris' Notre Dame. The cathedral was badly damaged by fire in early 2019, but fortunately the organ, with just slightly fewer than 8000 pipes, was not destroyed, but suffered water damage from fire hoses. (Our founder member, Arthur J W G Ord-Hume knows considerably more about this.) As a follow up to the previous edition, there is a brief item about a frieze in the parish church in Adderbury, near Banbury, Oxon, which depicts a 'hurdy-gurdy' player. (I myself have seen a number of similar carvings in churches across Northern Spain.) Andy Hinds' regular column, 'Musical Roots' this time features Milton Ager. Among his better known compositions are 'Aint she Sweet' and 'Happy Days are Here Again.'



Mechanical Music 65 No 1, Jan/Feb 2019

(see also www.mbsi.org)

In his President's Message, then MBSI President Clay Witt makes the point that when trying to identify



unknown tunes on musical boxes, we have to remember that what was very popular 100 years ago may be virtually unknown today. This edition carries reviews of the two Kevin McElhone books, *The Organette Book Supplement*, and *The Disc Musical Box Book Supplement*. In his regular column, Nickel Notes, Matt Jaro writes about Joe Hilferty of York, Pennsylvania, who restores mechanical musical instruments. According to the author, Joe is more 'mechanical' than 'musical.' With there being no market for player pianos these days, there is little call for their restoration, and the restorers themselves are dying out. Bob Caletti, a restorer who is in demand, writes about his work on a 27 1/2" Symphonion upright with bells, which he calls 'Widowermaker' since it took up so much of his time. Bob's articles are always a delight to read as they are so accessible, and he is as methodical in their writing as he is in his restoration projects. Inserted in the article is a side bar, describing the steps to making a router bit to cut a molding profile, when the original molding itself cannot be cut. The regular Chapter reports include one from the East Coast Chapter, with an account of a weekend meeting held in October 2018, which incorporated a visit to the Mason & Hamlin factory. Golden Gate, Northwest International, Southeast, National Capital and Southern California Chapters all have reports, the last two with two each.

Mechanical Music 65 No 2, March/April 2019

(see also www.mbsi.org)

MBSI's Mechanical Music 'shares' AMICA's Matt Jaro, in that sooner or later, MBSI publishes Matt's 'Nickel Notes' from an earlier AMICA Bulletin. In this issue the topic is the formation of the Nelson-Wiggen Piano Company. We then move on to another 'regular' feature: 'The Hunt.' This issue's contributor is Charles Levy, who tracked down a French couple, M and Mme Farkas, who made automata, and visited them in Brittany on one of his trips to Europe, where he was able to see the Farkas's extensive collection of automata, and purchasing



one of their creations. Robin Biggins is the author of the next item about 'An E Karrer-Hofmann Musical Box' which he restored. Tom Kuehn, who at the time was MBSI's Vice President and is now its President, devotes ten pages to his account of restoring a Loesche Flute and Violin Solo Piano, serial number 2753. The item concerns an organ museum in Westerlo, Belgium, and a sampling of its many exhibits. There is then a sense of déjà vu, with the publication of the report on the 2018 'Holiday Extravaganza' at the Sanfilippo and Krughoff collections, reported already in the contemporary AMICA bulletin. This is 'filed' under one of the Chapter reports; there are further reports from another six Chapters.

Player Piano Group Bulletin, 218, Spring 2019

(see also www.playerpianogroup.org.uk)

The Chairman's opening remarks



welcome members to the Group's Diamond year, and announces an updated version of Rollin Smith's *The Aeolian Pipe Organ and its Music*, originally published in 1998 and now with an additional 100 pages. The Editor's column develops into a review of some old marketing material for the pianola. There is a short item about how EMI came to record an LP entitled 'Pianola Playtime' and a report of a social meeting in Bournemouth. This is followed by 12 pages of biography, taken from Annette Hullah's *Theodore Leschetizky*, published in 1906, of the Polish child-prodigy pianist. His great friend, Filtsch had been a pupil of Chopin's, and through him and the pianist Schulhoff, Leschetizky was greatly influenced by Chopin. After a visit to Italy, Leschetizky went to work in Russia for the Grand Duchess Helen, sister of Emperor Nicholas I, whose palace in St Petersburg was the centre of culture in the city, and whose salon was visited by men and women from all parts of Europe. From 1862 onwards Leschetizky was famous all over Russia, Austria and Germany as a pianist and a teacher. He also made some brief visits to England, and finally settled in Vienna in 1878. This edition of the

bulletin also contains reprint of a review of a highly acclaimed Duo Art Recital in held in San Francisco in February 1919.

Player Piano Group Bulletin, 219, Autumn 2019

(see also www.playerpianogroup.org.uk)

This edition is hailed as the 60th anniversary edition, and celebrates along with the anniversary the 110th anniversary of its founder, Frank Holland (who was also a member of MBSGB.) In his 'Editor's Note' Edward Cheese recalls some of the musical highlights (for him) of the year, which included a Promenade concert recital given on Queen Victoria's golden Erard, loaned for the purpose by Her Majesty, the Queen. Edward Cheese writes: 'The interest in historically significant pianos is still keen in musical circles: but what of the player- and reproducing-piano? Despite the enthusiasm of specialist groups such as the PPG, the significance of the player-piano in music history, not to mention its musical potential today and in the future, is still overlooked.' He then reports that the Music Department of Cambridge University is showing 'glimmerings' of interest. One of the items in this bulletin is a humorous account by Robert Cowan (again, another member of MBSGB also), of how he came to acquire a Blüthner pianola [sic]. He failed to purchase one from a council estate resident, (it looked 'as if it had ben dismantled by a cannibal chief with a knife and fork and reassembled by a blind cobbler with a 7-lb hammer and a monkey wrench') but was subsequently given one by a lady living in a large Victorian house – the only consideration asked was that he 'paid' for it some time with a good deed. Patrick Handscombe writes about a Steinway grand piano which once belonged to Denis Lane who converted it to a Duo Art, 'with suction ... supplied by a vacuum cleaner hidden under the floor in the kitchen' – a set-up not unfamiliar to myself! It his attempts to find rolls for it, Denis had contacted a Lord Black, who had written back that his 'duo art rolls were burnt by my gardener', with no explanation as to



why. This piano was featured in 1969 on Radio Brighton, as reported in a reprint from PPG Bulletin No 43, December 1969, while Paul Collenette recalls his first visit to Frank Holland's collection in about 1962 where most noticeable immediately were 'the swathes of polythene sheeting suspended from the roof to keep the heat in and the rain out.' Julian Dyer writes about an Ampico 'Special recording', of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in B-flat minor. After careful analysis with another (non-'special') roll, Julian concluded that it was the production roll with 5 feet of music cut out. However, *The Music Trades Review* recorded that it had been used for a concert on 14th August, 1921, which was a charity event used as an Ampico promotion. There are reports of meetings in St Leonards, Chelmsford and Ditchling, followed by eight pages about 'Sylvia and Harry Medcraft [and] their story and place in piano-roll history', based on the transcript of a telephone interview from the 1990s. This enterprising couple, after a colourful career in retail, set about making a roll-copying machine, and then copying the rolls. Finally, in a brief review of two new publications, we learn from one of them, *A history of Intellectual Property in 50 Objects* (CUP 2019), that, according to contributor Prof Maurizio Borghi of the University of Brighton, that piano-roll publication 'fundamentally changed the way that we experience music; and the copyright battle that the technology generated was the beginning of a war over the control of music content that is being fought to this day ... One of the contributing factors to the success of the pianola was the lack of enforceable intellectual property rights in the music.'

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXVIII, No 1 2019

(see also www.reedsoc.org)

In this edition Pamela Robinson, born in 1947, describes how her interest developed from the age of five, and how it ultimately led her to composing for the reed organ; Michael Hedron submits an item on Victor Mustel, watercolourist, who was the grandson of Victor Mustel, founder of



the French harmonium manufacturing firm. Charlie Robinson introduces a new Officer of the Reed Organ Society, Jim Germann, and relates an encounter in Weston, Missouri, with a previous one, Jim Quashnock who is a ROS member but also interested in mechanical music, such as musical boxes, nickelodeons, and street organs. Jim Tyler then writes about 'Rebuilding the Holy Grail', aka his Estey Grand Salon style 910, made in late 1893. This is followed by a fascinating article, entitled 'Cornelia Sings Again', in which we learn about a Billhorn folding organ, which had travelled during its lifetime over 300,000 miles, with a Sunday School missionary in Colorado over a period of over 25 years. The Missionary, a Mr Shureman, visited 215 Sunday Schools. He also made trips to the Eastern USA to raise funds for his missionary work, assisted in his presentations by Magic Lantern slideshows. Peter Phillip Billhorn was a well-known evangelist singer and composer with the Moody and Sankey evangelistic team. The restored instrument is to be displayed open, under a plexiglass cover by the Presbyterian Historical Society. The final item in this edition is 'A John Holt Trio' by Milton Wainwright, who has three John Holt organs, made in Birmingham, England, which were imported into New Zealand in the 1920s. One of them went back and forth several times between the author and a former owner, until its final resting place.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXVIII, No 2, 2019

(see also www.reedsoc.org)

Novice to the 'Groupmuse', Jim Tyler briefly writes about his experience of hosting an 'intimate' gathering of about 25 enthusiasts to his Victorian home to hear his harmoniums, and other instruments. Tyler also authors an article entitled 'Hell's Bells' – a feature found on Shoninger 'bell' organs – describing how he dismantled and cleaned a set for the Shoninger 'Centennial.' It must be stating the obvious to say that the bells have to be kept in the correct order – but less obvious is the challenge that arises because there are no



markings to distinguish one bell from another. In a relatively lengthy article, Michael Hendron writes about 'Making Arrangements', which falls across the centre of the magazine where there is the usual music score, this time for *Andante Festivo* by Jean Sibelius and arranged by Michael. After an announcement of author Allen C Myers comments that it was 'surprising to find fourteen red organs on an island only six miles by two, much of which is uninhabited.' The ten previously not covered in Part I represented a cross section of reed organ stories. The island, just off the Maine coast, did not receive reliable access to electricity until 1975, and the collection of reed organs reflects this as it fulfilled at least part of the island's musical aspirations. And so this fascinating article continues over the next eight pages, until the end of this bulletin.

Non English-Language Journals

**L'Antico Organetto Year
21, No 1, April 2019**



(see also www.ammi-mm.it)

This edition celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Armacord Museum, with its aim to 'surprise, amaze and [create] wonder.' The Museum is part of the 'agritourism' initiative, and is located in Via Marconi, Terricella del Pizzo, and exhibits a wide range of mechanical musical instruments. This opening item is followed by an instalment in the 'hot-air' driven machines series, shared between the German and Italian societies. The centre pages are occupied by an article about a barrel piano, and an interesting anecdote he heard from its owner, who had inherited the instrument from his uncle – which naturally the author, Walter Fila, shares with the reader. A short item relates how a hand-turned organ animated the interval at a special Christmas production of *The Nutcracker* in Milan's La Scala Theatre. The production was primarily for the children of theatre employees, and the organ interlude was much appreciated by adults and children alike. A kindly member of the Italian society contributed two pages of images of a Pathé gramophone, to give pleasure to the readers of the magazine. This edition

closes with a brief item from Franco Severi entitled 'A Fortuitous Encounter', which by a rather tenuous connection to a meeting with the niece of Alfred E Norris, one-time President of the Regina Company, affords the opportunity to share some photos from her collection and briefly describe the history of the Regina output. (With the emphasis on 'briefly'!)

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument, No 134, April 2019

(see also www.musica-mechanica.de)

Reviewing this magazine is always a great joy – and great frustration. The articles are consummately written, but not knowing German, I have difficulty in understanding very much. Notwithstanding ... this edition opens with another instalment in the series on music machines operated by hot air. To prove my point about the quality of writing (and scholarship) it extends over 16 pages. Paul Erich and his family form the subject of the next item, prompted by the previous GSM AGM where the host was Paul Gauselmann, whose wife is Erlich's great grand-daughter. Fourteen pages later we arrive at the next article – about the Philipps firm of Frankfurt am Main. Much of the remaining content of this edition is given over to 'news' type reports, albeit some quite detailed and lengthy, mainly about individual collections, and book reviews.



Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes, No 109, 1st Quarter 2019

(see also www.aaimm.org)

Jean-Pierre Arnaud, President of the French organisation opens with a metaphoric call to arms, following the terrorist attack in Strasbourg in December 2018, insisting that more than ever we need to share our passion and interest with others to forge stronger ties, and cites the lyrics of late singer, France Gall's famous song. 'Resiste!' (Strong stuff for a magazine about mechanical music!) In a tribute to some well-known enthusiasts who had recently passed




away, Jean-Pierre reminds us that the best way to pay them homage is carry them in our hearts and remember them. Reading this half-page column, one cannot but be amazed once again at the sheer enthusiasm and energy emanating from the French society. Several pages of this edition are dedicated to preparation for the AAIMM AGM, and these are followed by an account by Jean-Marc Lebout of the society's visit to Cesena in Italy, where it enjoyed the inevitable warm hospitality of the Italian society. Jean-Marc is joined by Philippe Beau in compiling more information about retailers and makers of mechanical and automatic pianos. Raymond Messelier then conjures an article from having rescued a battered organ roll carton from a rubbish bin. Confused by the unknown arranger's name, shown on the carton as D Alphonse, the sleuthing M Messelier discovered the maker/arranger was in fact an Alphonse Dufey of Brussels. Mystery solved – with additional information about Dufey. Philippe Beau then offers us a treatise on the Pathé phonographs, while Pierre-Louis Freydiere writes a paean to Dutch arranger of organ music, Tom Meijer, who provided him with music for his self-built organ. A somewhat unusual subject is the feature of the next article: a duo by the name of Belem & the Mekanics. Their performance at the 'Open Door' days organised by Decap at Herentals impressed author Yves Roussel, who writes about how the two musicians, who play a diatonic accordion and 'cello, were accompanied on this occasion by the orchestral ensemble Decap of Walter Hus, with organ pipes, an accordion, percussion, xylophone and a metallophone, operated by a computer. Philippe Sayous relates how some of his automata were hired out to be used as props in a cinema film starring Catherine Deneuve. This edition closes with a Christmas story taken from a 1931 publication, in which his passion for repairing broken items overwhelms a grumpy recluse, forcing him to repair a broken-down fair organ which had until the moment it stopped had been making his life a misery, and a 'round up' from the 2018 November Breker sale at which many items from Luuk Goldhoorn's collection were sold.

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes, No 110, 2nd Quarter 2019

(see also www.aaimm.org)

This opens with a piece about 'Engrenage' (which translates as 'gearing.')



This is the name given to a series of video about *Musique Mecanique Vivante* produced by Jonathan Mathis and supported by AAIMM. (Jonathan Mathis, in case anyone is wondering, is the talented son of Patrick, whose YouTube video of Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal* has delighted so many.) The videos are to feature organ makers, arrangers, collectors, organisers, and so on, with the aim of showing a parallel between those engaged in the interest nowadays and those from the past. To sum it up he says 'Engrenage is therefore a series of web documentaries which will accompany your quarterly magazine.' Each episode is reviewed in the respective magazine, and can be viewed on the AAIMM website and social media. Bravo for the enterprising French – this is something I have dreamed of doing – but never had the time or human resources to pursue. The first main article in this edition, heralded by an image worthy of a Christmas card, concerns the 'David Missilier' cousins, pioneers of musical box manufacture in France in the first half of the nineteenth century. Identifying who made what has been complicated in the past, since only Jean-Michel David signed his work – but confusingly used two different means of doing this. Making use of data recorded in the Musical Box Register, Jean-Marc Lebout has identified 20 boxes which Jean-Michel David made, out of an estimated 3000 all together. Until this recent research, it had been suggested that one of the 'names' used referred to a retailer, rather than a maker. Meanwhile, Jean-Michel David's cousin, Jean-Pierre remains a shadowy figure ... Jean-Marc Lebout is also responsible for the next article, in collaboration with Raymond Messelier, on mechanical, automatic and electrical piano firms in Brussels in the first part of the 20th century. The saga of Alphonse Dufey continues, since after publication of the previous edition of this

journal, Björn Isebaert submitted further material on the subject. We then come to the second instalment of yet another feature from Jean-Marc Lebout on 'The Evolution of Musical Movements within Musical Boxes.' This instalment focuses on the move away from the expensive elements of cylinder and comb in cylinder boxes (the cylinder in particular was expensive to arrange and then to pin) towards other means of programming the music. This article extends of several pages and is beautifully illustrated, making it a joy to read.

Het Pierement, Vol 66, No 1, January, 2019

(see also www.draaiorgel.org)

Part of the attraction of street and fair organs for me is often their appearance. The subject of the cover photograph on this magazine being no exception, is of the 'Veronica van Gossling', owned by Dennis and Edwin Meulkens of Rijswijk. This edition opens with an account by Wim Snoerwang of the 'Minifestival Waldkirch.' We are all familiar with the three-yearly Waldkirch Festival which takes place, but what is less well-known is that in between times, other, smaller events, are regularly held. As visitors to Waldkirch will know, the town honoured the memory of the late Jan L M van Dinteren, prominent former member of the KDV (Dutch organ society), and each year, about the middle of October, an event takes place to continue the tradition. Although predominantly an organ event, at the 2018 event, attended by members of KDV, Raphael Lüthi demonstrated some of his collection of musical boxes. 'De Veronica van Gossling' is the topic of the next article; originally this was a Limonaire barrel-operated organ, which was acquired by Hans Gossling in the 1950s and made into a 56 key street organ, and was hired out to play in Den Haag, Utrecht and Amsterdam. This is followed by an item about a book in progress (at time of the Dutch magazine's publication), called *The Mortier Story*. Another slew of reminiscences comes from Joop Walter, in the series 'Before I forget ...', featuring the Wipprecht family, Piet Appel, Henk



Dissel and various fairs at which various organs played. J D Phillips & Sons who made pianos and orchestrions are the subject of the regular feature by Maarten van der Vlugt, *Het Symphonia Archief*. In this 11th instalment he describes the relationship with Howard and Farny Wurlitzer. Henk Hiddinga reveals why the tune 'Japanese Lantern Dance', popular on organs in the Netherlands doesn't sound very Japanese – the real identity of the composer is Carl Zimmer, a German, who used the pseudonym Yoshitomo. There is a brief obituary to Hendrik Strengers, whose name will be familiar to some members of MBSGB, and a number of organ events are reported on/ previewed

Schweizer Verein der Freunde, No 133 January 2019

(see also www.sfm.ch)



The front cover of this magazine inspires me with envy, showing as it does a musical box installed in a case configured like a model Gothic church. The movement is a Bremond organocleide. I foolishly eschewed attempting to acquire one at auction some years ago, and have regretted it ever since. This edition opens with an item about Rudolph Ganz, described as 'probably the best Swiss pianist of the 20th century, hardly known in Switzerland.' In the regular series about 'special' instruments, Raphael Lüthi writes about a flautist automaton. Located in the David Jacobavilli museum in Moscow, it was made around 1880 by Alexandre-Nicolas Théroude. The magazine then becomes a series of short reports, mainly 'news' announcements or reports about events or collections. It is not until we come to Peter and Jacqueline Both's article about the Mills Violano-Virtuoso in their collection, the 8th in a series, that we get to some more 'meaty' material. The final substantial item is based on an interview with Christa Hohnhäuser.

Classified Advertisements

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For sale: The Brian Tolley Collection see last Journal about 30% left now. Ex-Alan Wyatt's Museum Ampico upright Player Piano [Cambridgeshire]; **Aeolian model "F" Orchestrille** 8 feet tall, 116 note, fully rebuilt new bellows, pouches and valves etc [URGENT]; **Symphonion** 13 ¼ inch edge drive nice clean working well; **Concert Cob Roller Organ** fully restored with 20 cobs, a further 100 cobs available. Piano rolls including newly made Boogie and upbeat titles; **50% off original pianola rolls** to clear, cheaper by the car-load. Organette music, discs, rolls, books etc. new piano roll boxes.

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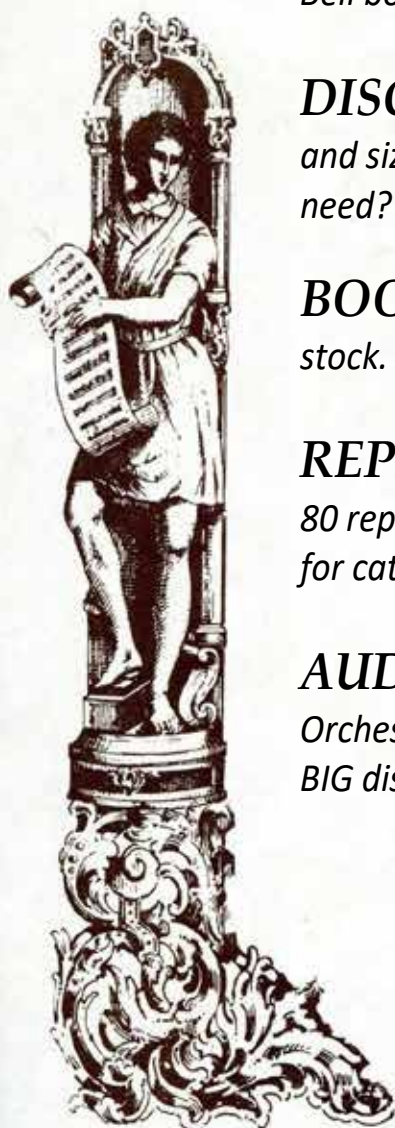
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