

The **Music Box**

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue

Notes on the Dolcine Organette

Rebuilding a Rococo Disc Box Case

Symphonion Widowmaker

What the Blazes?

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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'This is not a task for the well-meaning amateur woodworker ...' (see Terry Pankhurst's 'Rebuilding a Rococo Disc Box Case', p 224)



'My wife, Judy ... told him she forgives him for making her a Symphonion widow.' (see Bob Caletti 'Symphonion Widowermaker', p 228)



'The mechanism is housed in a relatively plain box, with an in-built storage drawer ...' (see 'Unusual Listings on the Cylinder Box Register', p 246)



Front Cover: Detail showing motors of P V F Serial number 11250 – a monstrous-sized machine. See 'Unusual Listings on the Cylinder Box Register', page 246. Photo credit: Laurence Fisher

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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

What a difference a couple of months make! When the previous edition, Vol 29 No 5 went to press towards the end of February of this year, coronavirus was a footnote to the international news, as far as the British media was concerned, and devastating viruses were what you avoided infecting your computer. Now (at time of writing) it is not only an all-consuming topic, but a facet of life we would rather be without but cannot ignore, and indeed, are unable to ignore with the social measures that have been imposed to mitigate its impact on society. By the time you read this it is likely that you will know of someone who has contracted the illness, even possibly you yourself. A day does not pass during this crisis when I do not think of our many members and readers and wonder how they are coping, and whether they too have suffered or are suffering. Many of our members will fall into the 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' category, if for no other reason than their age, and I dread what I fear will be the inevitable news of the loss of someone – perhaps more than one - we know and respect and will miss, during the course of this pandemic. As this may be the only opportunity I have, I wish each and every one of you the best of good health, and, if you have been struck, a speedy and full recovery.

At time of writing we are not allowed to meet together to share our love of mechanical music; all the organised events which had been planned for the next several months have had to be cancelled or postponed. (Further details can be found in the 'Dates for Your Diary' section.) Normally, this edition of *The Music Box* prefigures the Society's Annual General Meeting, but this too has had to be postponed!

We are left with the internet and the magazine to stay connected as a Society, so I hope you will find something of interest in this edition, as well as some ideas as to how you can exploit this time of social isolation and crack on with some of those 'one day' jobs without interruption. Disappointment and frustration can at least be a little mitigated by a sense of satisfaction derived from achieving one of your long-term goals. There are countless videos to be discovered on the internet to keep you entertained and distracted. If you understand French, take a look at their new project, Engrenage, www.aaimm.org/category/engrenage.

I make no apology for scrounging from our American sister Society, the Musical Box Society International, the excellent article from Bob Caletti on the restoration of a Symphonion Orchestrion, and am indebted to him and their Editor, Russell Kasselmann, for permission to use as well as forwarding all the files. Bob is an extremely methodical person as the article testifies, and has written an account which is both thorough and accessible. Elsewhere in these pages Terry Pankhurst

shares with us another restoration article, this time of a rococo style case, and Roger Booty writes about the Dolcine organette. Somewhat of a 'shaggy dog' story, and only tangentially relevant, I include an item about a rather strange invention called a Flamephone, technically a gramophone. There is a tenuous connection with the MBSGB stretching back thirty years – but you need to read the article to learn what it is ... I include it on the off-chance that someone reading it may, just may, know more about the Flamephone, or have images of it that they can share. An attempt to describe it recently led to the question: why on earth was it invented? Who knows – my suggestion, albeit somewhat flippant, was that maybe the inventor was in some sort of quarantine situation at the time, and looking for something to do ...!

PLEASE NOTE THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT & BALANCE SHEET FOR Y/E 31st DECEMBER, 2019, IS PUBLISHED OVERLEAF:



Better than a virus!

MBSGB Financial Year 2019

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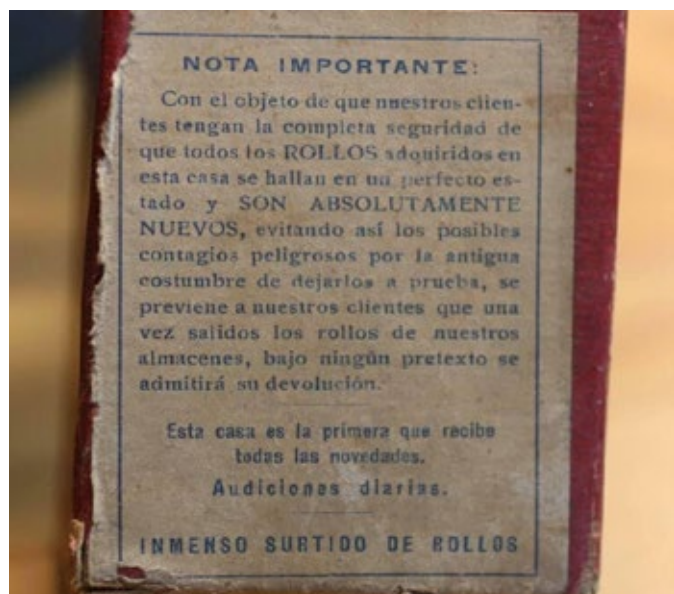
News and Society Topics

History repeats itself...

Here is some interesting trivia related to the 'Spanish 'flu' of a century ago, of which we are occasionally reminded in comparisons made with the current coronavirus and its associated illness, 'Covid 19.'

Why was it called 'Spanish 'flu'? According to a documentary made a few years ago and recently re-broadcast by the BBC, the pandemic of a century ago started in the USA, with 'patient zero' contracting the disease while working on a farm in 1917. Called up for military service in Europe, he quickly spread it during transit. Eventually an estimated 500 million people world-wide were thought to have contracted it before the end of the pandemic in December 1920. Despite its originating in the USA, and initially affecting those involved in the European theatre of war, it was labelled 'Spanish 'flu.' Spain was a neutral country during WWI, so unaffected by the need to maintain morale at a very challenging time, and therefore not prone to national propaganda. While the allies were keen to suppress news of the outbreak, Spain openly acknowledged there was a crisis. The disease was consequently identified with the country which openly spoke about it, and became known as 'Spanish 'flu.' One manifestation of Spain's willingness to acknowledge it is the message attached to piano rolls, an example of which is shown here. Translated, it says: 'Important notice: so that our clients can be assured that all the ROLLS acquired from this firm are in perfect condition and absolutely brand new, thus avoiding the possible dangerous contagion through the traditional custom of testing them, we advise our clients that once the rolls have left our stores, under no pretext will their return be allowed.' I am grateful to Áurea Domínguez in Catalonia and her (unnamed) friend for permission to share.

Meanwhile, as you can see, some enterprises took advantage of the situation to promote their goods, encouraging people to stay at home. As in 1920, so in 2020 ...



Time on Your Hands? Those Mechanical Music 'One Day' Jobs, and Other Suggestions

Now that we cannot go and visit friends, museums, collections, or have get-togethers to share and enjoy mechanical music, here are some more suggestions of how to put your time to good use and fill up those empty hours with your special interest. Depending on how long this state of affairs continues, you may be glad of some ideas after painting the house three times or fixing the garden fence.

- Make a list of your 'one day' jobs
- Make an inventory of all your instruments
- Register your cylinder boxes, if not already done so, along with photographs
- Add photos and serial numbers to your insurance details
- Catalogue all discs, rolls, cobs, etc., on a database; note any duplicates you may wish to sell
- Tackle restoration jobs – sort into those you can do, and those you need to send to a 'pro' You can find lots of help in back issues of *The Music Box*, and on-line, including the Mechanical Music Digest archive (free.) Examples: repairing cases, de-rusting discs, repairing rolls ...
- Create information labels for your collection items to enhance their display
- Construct some simple storage units for your media
- Collate your copies of *The Music Box* in binders (available from MBSGB – see website)
- Get up to date with MBSGB publications and peruse at leisure (see website for how to obtain)
- Explore the internet for good recordings of instruments and note the links to share with others
- Send in more titles of discs, rolls, etc., to the MBSGB database
- Catch up on reading back issues of *The Music Box*
- Do some research
- Write something for *The Music Box* (choice of topics is endless; it can be technical, historical, personal, whatever ...)
- Photograph and make video recordings of your instruments
- Spring clean behind instruments which never get moved
- Tell us what you have achieved
- Sit back, play, listen and enjoy ...

Notes on a Dolcine Organette

by Roger Booty

14, 16 and 17 note organettes are, usually, not likely to be called inspiring musically. Of course there are always exceptions, and in my opinion an instrument that is very good for its small size is the 16 note Dolcine. A keyed machine of German origin, the arranger of the music seems to have been quite at ease with the small scale.

The example pictured here is from the 'Cotton Museum of Mechanical Music and Bygones' which is now included with the 'Grange Musical Collection', near Diss, Norfolk. It had been in the collection for over thirty years but never exhibited due to a tendency towards mangling its card music. Now back in fine voice, it is on show at the Grange.



Fig 1

The music bands consist of two lengths of presspahn card, each 14 1/2 " long, with the ends joined by a cloth hinge to form a loop that when stored, lies flat. When playing it is held in place to form the loop that very easily revolves around and through the keyframe (Fig 1). The punching of the card for each tune starts just after one of the joins and is always positioned to ensure that when the second hinged join passes through the keyframe there are either long notes or nothing playing. Music width is 2 13/16", 71.5 mm.

Kevin McElhone's Organette Book carries a picture of Dolcine music, page 273, beneath which he indicates that one of the 'Direction of Play' arrows is pointing the wrong way. The present instrument has 25 bands with it, four of which have arrows wrongly stamped. Each band has the triple 'Beginning, Commencement, Anfang', but the titles on all but two are in English only. The scale on this example is:

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



Fig 2

The sound is loud for the small size with a good tone. The key action is light.

The earliest reference I have found for the Dolcine is in the *Musical Opinion & Trade Review* for July 1893, when the magazine paid a visit to the premises of Mortiz & Co. in London to report on new instrument they were offering. They noted, 'The "Dolcine" is an automatic organette, with perforated metal sheets ...' Reference to metal sheets is repeated in a Campbells of Glasgow 1895 advertisement (Fig 2). I imagine these bands were made of zinc. They are of the same two-piece design as the card bands. For mention of card, or 'presspahn', we have to see the advertisement from 1898 (Fig 3).



Fig 3

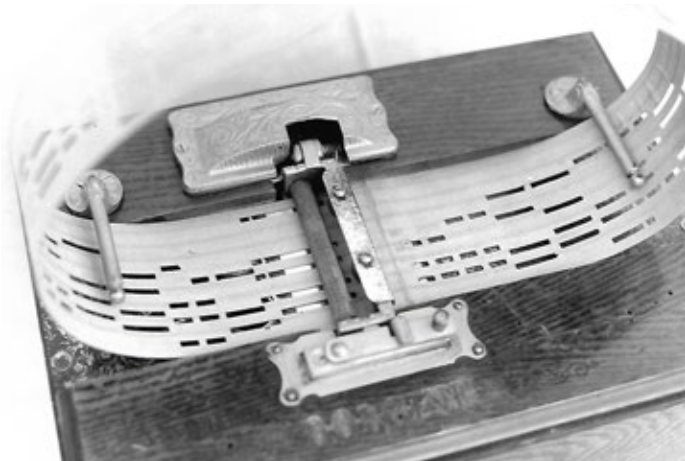


Fig 4



Fig 6

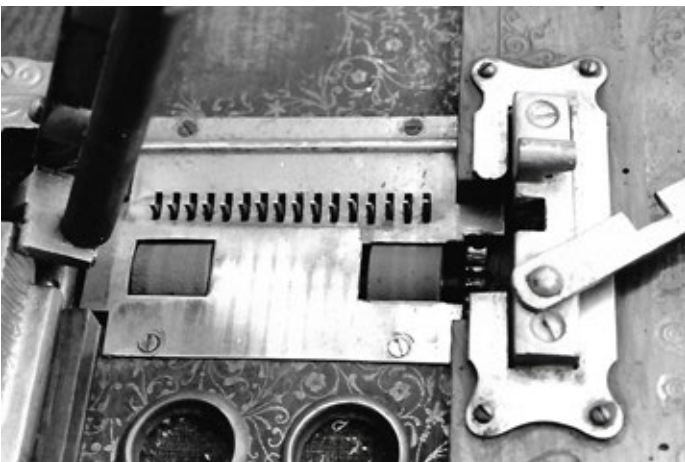


Fig 5



Fig 7

In all contemporary references I have found, the name is always 'Dolcine.' Of the 25 bands with this machine only nine have just the 'Dolcine' name, the rest are all titled 'Dolcine Piccolo.' The origins of the second name can perhaps be found in the fact that there were two basic 16 reed models. The first was listed as having 16 steel tongues while the second had 16 wide steel tongues. My thought is that the first was the Piccolo model and the second, with wider reeds, and probable richer sound, the Dolcine. A 1903 German catalogue lists three models of the Dolcine, pointing out it is, 'well known and with long card music playing on top.' Model numbers 1 and 11 are both as noted above. Model number 111 is 24 note but with 36 brass tongue reeds, meaning it is part double reeded. All were with polished black cases, unlike the instrument shown here. Kevin notes other models came with percussion.

Captions:

Fig 1 The Dolcine ready to play. The fine-looking case can clearly be seen. However, all is not as it seems as the grained finish is either painted or a paper image. The overall measurements are: 12" long, 8 1/4" wide, 6 1/2" high.

Fig 2 Campbell & Co of Glasgow, 1895

Fig 3 Ernst Holzweissig of Leipzig, 1898

Fig 4 A closer view of the keyframe with music in place

Fig 5 One of the reasons for the mangled music can be seen here before restoration: misaligned keys

Fig 6 With the music clamp in place it is clear to see the splined shaft which keeps the music in contact with the two rubber-covered drive rollers visible in Fig 5. At the right hand end of this shaft is the gear which drives it, and in turn, takes its drive from the gear at the right in Fig 5

Fig 7 The underside showing the two feeders with central reservoir

Rebuilding a Rococo Disc Box and Analyzing the Construction of the Case

by Terry Pankhurst

I brought a badly damaged Rococo music box case just for the challenge of repairing it. It had no mechanism as this had probably been moved to a better case years before. I have heard a few stories on how Rococo Music box cases were made. One quite recently when I was told “they are all machined from solid timber, you know”. Another was that a timber block was heavily compressed into a mould. Having worked in industry and have knowledge of timber and what a large press can do, I found this most unlikely. Well, I have a third method that I believe is more realistic having just restored the Rococo Music Box Case in question and have had a first-hand opportunity to study its construction in some detail. This is not a task for the well-meaning amateur woodworker. I have worked with timber from leaving school, more years than I care to remember, (food was still rationed) and still the restoration was quite a challenge. If you ever consider restoring a box of this type the one thing you will need is patience.



Front panel before restoration

The case in question was for a 15 ½ inch Regina Disc Box and comprised a lid and four side panels. Because of glue failure the side panels could be removed with relative ease, only being held on with rusty steel pins. Although the lid was in remarkably good condition that could not be said for the side panels.



View of unrestored case from the back

Having taken the damaged side panels off my case what was left was the roughest carcass you could ever imagine, very crudely made. The glue had failed holding the veneer on the inside of the box and this came off with minimal damage and was readily re-glued. I understand the purists amongst members using original animal glue but with a problem box like this I used a PVA glue. Yes, I can hear the shouts of horror but it's far more practical to use.

Well, just how were these ornate panels made? Certainly a steel mould would have been needed to mould the ornate shapes. Clever as the Victorians were they would not have machined the complex designs. The shape for the steel mould was almost certainly made by a pattern maker, most likely in timber with ornate motifs made from plaster or similar material stuck on to the surface. On my box it was Cherubs blowing horns and angel-like figures playing harps with the base areas filled with complex deep cut squares. The wooden pattern would have been used to form a sand mould to cast a steel female tool. The tool would have formed the bottom

of a steel box in which the finished moulded panel would be pressed. It would probably be a little oversize in length and width to allow for trimming.

Having made the mould, how was it used? I had the advantage of seeing first-hand how my panels were disintegrating and could study the construction prior to me gluing back together all the small pieces.



Side panel before restoration



Detail of damaged side panel



Author Terry Pankhurst at work



Work begins on one of the front panels

First, a very thin sheet of oak veneer, only .012 inches thick was laid in the box over the mould surface. (For those with a non-engineering background and cannot visualize what .012 inches

looks like, the paper page this article is printed on is .008 inches thick). Then it seems two or three layers of odd pieces of veneer were laid randomly in different directions over the first veneer.



Detail of damaged panel

Then the secret ingredient, a mushy compound of hot animal glue and timber rubbish, resembling modern-day high-density chipboard, but even finer. Quite what else is included in this mush is uncertain. I have seen it described as Rookwood but can find no reference as to what 'Rookwood' is. Certainly it blunts chisels and plane blades very quickly, so I suspect some mineral content. Finally further layers of veneer randomly place to top-off the sandwich to form what will become the inside surface of the panel.



Detail of damaged panel



One of the panels after restoration

Then the press. A shaped plate placed on top to press the whole lot into the mould. A mechanical press would then apply a high, constant pressure and push the veneer and filler material into every crevice and shape of the mould. The mush material used would mould and flow quite easily and the pressure would push the veneer over and into the complex shapes of the mould. I would suspect the glue in the mush material would quite easily push through the veneers to glue the loose veneer sheets together. Many sharp edges on the mould would cut the veneers as the shapes were formed but when all was dry these cuts and blemishes would not show. It's only years later as the glue fails, usually because of damp and general neglect that these faults become apparent, and in fairness they were never meant to last 130 years. The pressure would be maintained until the whole sandwich was set.

The repair task was gluing back hundreds of loose pieces of veneer. Building up layers of new veneer to form sections that were missing was much like making three-dimensional marquetry pictures. I used wood filler to repair very small missing pieces. This was well colour matched and took polish successfully, just fiddly to form and time consuming to do. All that was left to do after two months work was to flood the completed panels with layers of French Polish applied with a good soft brush; a further coat of French Polish was applied one coat a day for a week.

Some repairs were needed to bring the base back to a reasonable standard, but this was basic woodworking and was easily restored. I took the lock apart and made a new key. When it came to fixing back the side panel to the case, I had no wish to nail them back

as originally done. I contemplated for some while what was best to do. My solution, because the back surfaces were uneven, was to use four blobs of wood filler on each panel in turn. My wife and I held each panel firmly in place for a few minutes while the filler set. The panels will be hard to remove in the future but if looked after the box should last a few more decades or more. Now I need to find a 15 ½ inch Regina Disc player to fit in the box with winding handle in the top, as I have no wish to drill a hole in the side of my shiny new case.

That's how my Rococo box was built and subsequently restored. I will be interested to hear if other members, doing a similar repair, had found that they were all made in the same way.

Text & Photos:

Terry Pankhurst January 2020



Repairing the base



Detail of base repair process



Views of restored case

Symphonion Widowmaker

**Otherwise known as the resurrection
of a 27½-inch Symphonion upright
music box with 12 bells**

By Bob Caletti

The restoration journey detailed in this article started when I saw an ad on the bulletin board at the MBSI convention a couple of years ago in Minnesota. Marty Persky was advertising a machine for sale listing it as a 27½-inch Symphonion “Project.” He had a picture of what a restored version should look like since he had recently sold one just like it to Jonathan White. I learned later that this particular machine is quite a rare model and the one Marty sold ended up being shipped to New Zealand. The fellow that Marty bought the “Project” Symphonion from had given up on restoring it. Since I am not one to shy away from a challenge, I decided to buy it. My wife, Judy, saw Marty shortly afterward and told him she forgives him for making her a Symphonion widow. She didn’t know how long it would be before she would see me again as I would be so focused on restoring this “Project.”

A few months after agreeing to purchase the machine, Marty was able to get it shipped to me in California from Chicago. It arrived on my birthday with all of the pieces packed inside the cases (top and bottom) plus an extra box or two. After unpacking the pieces, I laid them all out on my backyard patio to assess what I had and find out what might be missing. I find

it’s always hard to really know exactly what parts are missing or wrong until you get into the restoration.

A careful inventory of all of the parts was undertaken to determine which parts were damaged and which ones were completely missing. It was determined that the restoration work should start at the bottom of the case and proceeded upwards to the top where the entire gallery and center

- Photos of original machines/parts in New Zealand by Jonathan White and Rod Cornelius
- Restoration photos by Bob Caletti and Jonathan Hoyt
- Woodwork mostly by Jonathan Hoyt
- Missing parts design/drawings by Bob Caletti
- Mechanism restoration by Bob Caletti and Jonathan Hoyt
- Photos of finished music box by Robert Thomas



The door and case parts as received were laid out on the patio.





Symphonion upper and lower case as received from Marty Persky, most of the case needed re-veneering.



The bottom of the lower-case section being glued back together.



The bottom of the case showing missing moldings being fitted in. Note the double miters.



The door corbels are shown in the process of patching new wood into places where it was missing or chipped.

crest was missing.

We started by disassembling the entire bottom of the case section as it was coming apart in places and appeared to be warped. Each piece that came off was carefully examined for damage and notes were made about the type of repair that would be employed to bring the case back to a proper alignment and appearance.

Chips and bits missing from the door corbels were filled in so they could be carved to match the original curves and corners. Replacement pieces were also glued onto the door columns so they could be carved to match the original length and size.

This case was very fancy with a lot of interesting details. In order to make new versions of the missing molding pieces, custom router bits had to be manufactured.

Ordering custom router bits involved first sending the router bit manufacturer an accurate profile of the desired molding. (See sidebar on Page 232 and 233 describing how to do this.)

Computer Aided Design (CAD) drawings were sent back to me from the router bit manufacturer. I compared them to the original moldings and found that they matched up exactly, so I gave the router bit manufacturer the go ahead to make the new router bits.

When the new router bits arrived,



Chunks of wood are fitted to the door columns in preparation for finish carving.

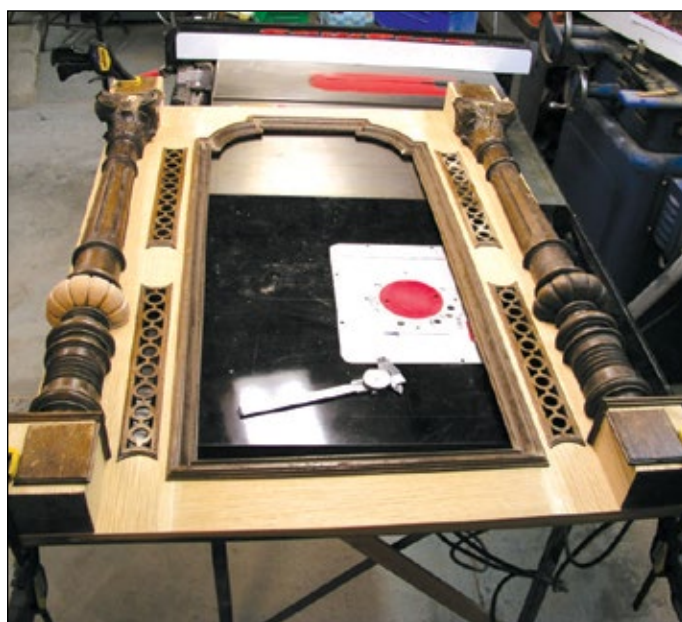


A round rosette shape had to be replaced on one of the columns so a new one was carved and fitted onto the column.

SYMPHONION | See Page 235

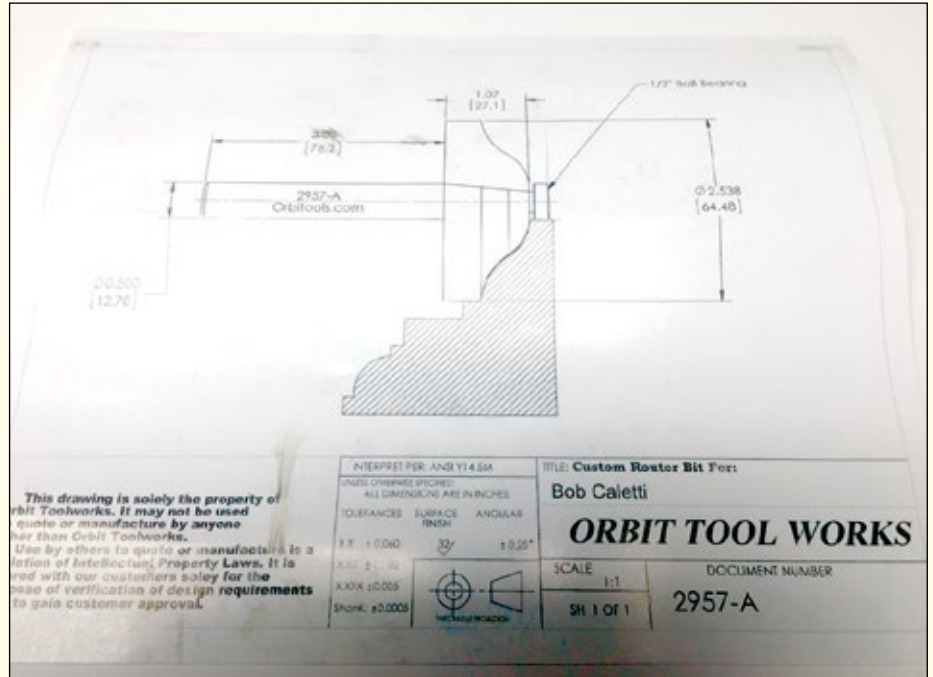


Above: Fretted moldings for the upper door mid-repair. Right: Upper door assembly nearing completion. The door has been re-veneered. Note the left column piece that was incorrect and had to be made new to match right side, new part shown.





A closeup showing the lower door mold-ing cutter.



An example of the CAD drawing that is compared to the molding before a custom router bit is created.

Making custom router bits

By Bob Caletti

There were a lot of missing and incorrect moldings on the 27½-inch Symphonion case that were the result of previous attempts at restoration. Replacing these moldings required first making several custom router bits that would cut the exact patterns needed to bring the case back to its original appearance. The following text and pictures show how that process is done.

If the molding to be replaced can be cut and placed flat on a piece of paper, simply tracing the profile of the molding actual size and sending it to the router bit manufacturer is all that is required. If the molding cannot be cut, the process on Page 231 should be used.

The router bit manufacturer will then generate a CAD drawing to scale and send it back so it can be compared to the original molding profile. Each line in the drawing must match up perfectly with the molding profile, so it is worth paying extra attention at this point in the process, or as the old saying goes, “measure twice, cut once.”

If all the lines match up and the measurements are exact, then authorization can be given to the router bit manufacturer to make a carbide cutter like the one shown on the top left of this page.

Some of the moldings for this case took two separate cutters and multiple passes to produce the profile that was desired..



CAD drawings and cutter for moldings shown with the resulting product.

How to make a router bit from a sample molding that can't be cut

Mark Slabaugh,
Orbit Tool Works

Here is how to make a cast of the existing shape. This works well if you cannot cut a cross section, and cannot photograph the cut directly.

I find that Bondo body filler works well when making a cast of the shape. You can purchase Bondo at your local auto parts store. You will also need a mixing stick, plastic wrap and masking tape. Cover the part to be molded with plastic wrap and hold it in place with masking tape. Leave slack in the plastic so that the Bondo can be pressed in (Fig. 1).



Figure 1

Mix the Bondo, and fill the area to be molded. Place more plastic wrap over the Bondo and press it into the cut (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).



Figure 2

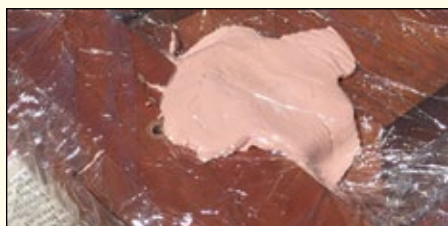


Figure 3

The Bondo will harden enough to handle in a few minutes. Remove it from the form and cut a cross section using a hacksaw. Sand or file the face to form a sharp edge on the Bondo, and check the fit (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).



Figure 4



Figure 5

Scan the Bondo shape with a scale and send the scan to us. Include pictures of the part you are replicating so that we can better match the shape. Notice that the Bondo did not replicate the undercut well and we will need to make a correction during the next step (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7).



Figure 6

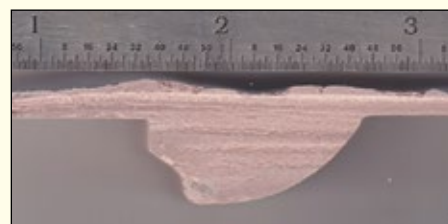


Figure 7

When we receive the scan and pictures from you, we use them to create a scale drawing of the shape (Fig. 8).

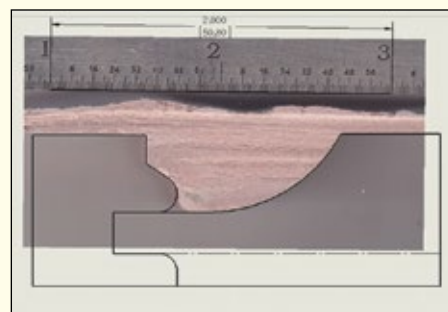


Figure 8

This trace of the shape is used to create the cutter drawings (Fig. 9).

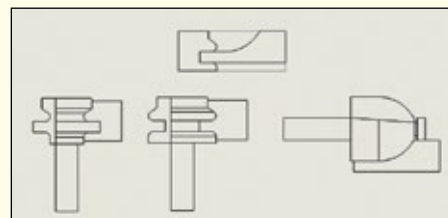


Figure 9

Dimensions are then added and the drawing is sent to the customer for approval.

Approved drawings are used to create a CNC lathe program to cut and mill the body of the custom router bit. A steel blank is rough turned, and the shank is ground to size. The router bit body is turned to size on the lathe and the blade pockets are cut on a milling machine.

The drawings are used again to create a CNC grinder program. Carbide blades are brazed onto the body of the router bit and the blades are ground to shape on the grinder.

The router bit is then inspected, packed and shipped to the customer.



Making the round corner moldings for the upper top section.



A close up of routing operation for round corner moldings.



Finished round molding with center section cut out and ready for cutting segments needed to make other pieces like the one shown.



The top section molding as received with pieces missing and veneer coming loose. The molding is shown upside down. A completely new molding was created in solid oak.



An all new solid oak molding made for the upper part of the top section (below the gallery). Note the elaborate corner details.



Repaired parts sanded, carved and ready for the refinisher.



Bob Caletti makes scale drawings and layouts for missing parts. Note the many images enlarged to actual size on the desk.

SYMPHONION | From Page 231

we got to work right away making new moldings out of solid oak.

We soon discovered we would need to order another custom router bit so that we could make a replacement molding for the bottom door. Part of the molding was original and part was a different molding that was pieced in before we got it, so we decided to just make all new molding for this door panel.

A third custom router bit was ordered to make new moldings for the upper top section. These moldings were made using the router bit and a router table for the straight sections then a rotary table on a milling machine for the curved moldings. (See images on Page 234.)

MBSI members Jonathan White and



Checking the height of finial and gallery spool pictures with a ruler.

Rod Cornelius from New Zealand both have 27½-inch Symphonions and were very helpful in providing pictures and measurements to help me identify and make new parts to replace those that

were missing.

Most significantly, the entire gallery that sits on top of the machine was not present when I purchased the “Project” Symphonion. Johnathan



Finished CNC turned finial and spool ready to be stained and installed.



Custom made parts for the top gallery are glued together before installation.

White sent me one extra spool, several images and a variety of different measurements to help me make all new finial and gallery spools. Scale layouts were done, and drawings were made for each of the parts and assemblies that were missing.

A lot of time was spent analyzing the pictures of parts, comparing the relative size and locations of the parts and their radiuses, so that we could be sure all the parts would fit together correctly and be consistent with the original music box. Some of the pictures of the case were blown up to actual size to better see the details of the case.

Actual size layouts were also done to determine the size and location of the missing top gallery and other assemblies. Some parts required special tooling or cutters to make, others would be made by Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines. CNC is the automated control of machining tools (drills, boring tools, and lathes) by means of a computer.



The top Gallery was laid out on paper to scale and the needed pieces were made to fit the layout.



The top gallery features a complex molding configuration. Careful attention was paid to grain directions



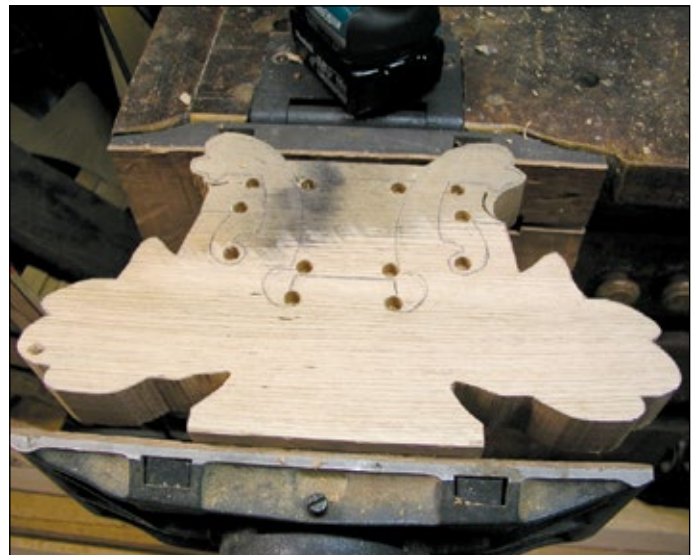
Another view of the top gallery bottom board nearing completion.



The top gallery including spindles, corner blocks, and top molding is left to dry.



A photo of the gallery center pediment block from Jonathan White in New Zealand was used to copy carving details.



An outline of the top crest is roughed out and holes are drilled for center cutout patterns.



The top crest cut is cut out and made ready for carving.



Enlarged pictures were used to get the proper dimensions for the top crest carving.



A photo showing finished turned spools and finials in what will be their final positions.



Boy this case is tall - nearly 9 feet.



Frame for the new soundboard is laid out and center board glued in.

Missing carvings were made by first cutting out the rough shape and then hand carving the detail into the wood.

The soundboard for this particular machine was a piece of plywood when it arrived at my door. A new soundboard was constructed using Sitka Spruce, and attached to the original frame.

To make a missing disc support bracket (photos at the bottom of this page) I used a picture sent by Jonathan and scaled it using Photoshop to the actual size it would be in the machine. A mockup was then made in aluminium, which is soft and pliable, so that the part could be bent and changed to fit. The aluminum mockup was then used to make the final brass piece. The dimensions on the disc support bracket are very critical and position sensitive.

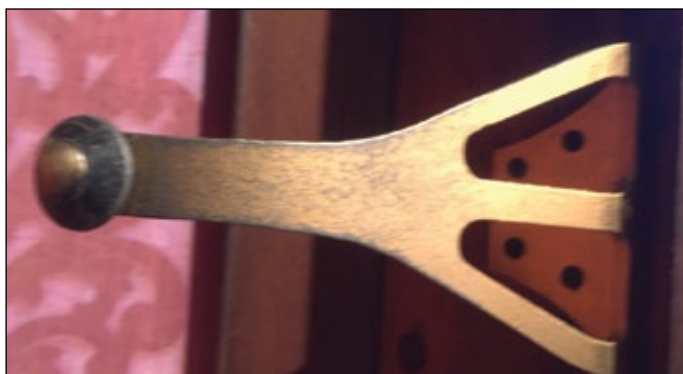
Missing brass pieces, like the key escutcheon and the winding crank,



Remaining Sitka Spruce boards are laid into the diagonal pattern and trimmed to the correct size.



The finished soundboard prior to installation.



This photo of a disc support bracket was used as a template to make new brackets during the restoration.



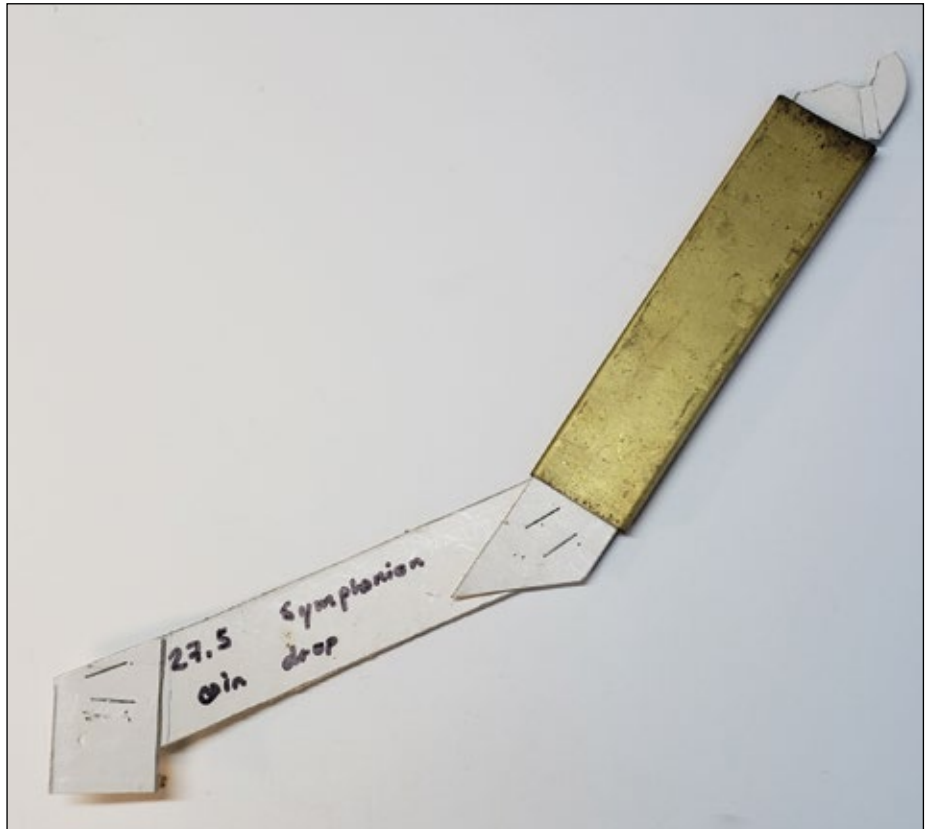
A mockup of the disc support bracket was made out of aluminum so it could be bent into the needed shape.



The top photo shows the fancy cast pattern on an original crank handle while the lower photo shows a side view. These images were used to make drawings so new crank handles could be cast.



Door key escutcheon photo sent to help make replacement parts.



The coin tube mocked up in cardboard.



The new coin tube installed just under the bell assembly.

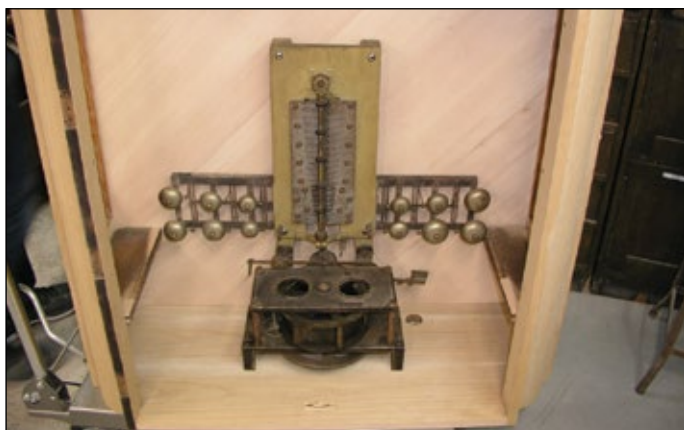
were made by scaling pictures, making drawings by hand, then having CAD drawings made so that CNC machines could carve patterns in wood that were then used to make sand castings and finally brass castings.

A new coin tube was mocked up in cardboard and then made in brass and installed where the original had been. The machine takes English pennies as

payment to play a tune.

This completed the parts for the case and accessories. Now attention was turned to the music box mechanism.

The comb and bedplate as received showed very little wear and only light surface rust. The combs were cleaned, screws polished, and the bedplate painted gold. The pressure bar was polished, and the pressure bar rollers



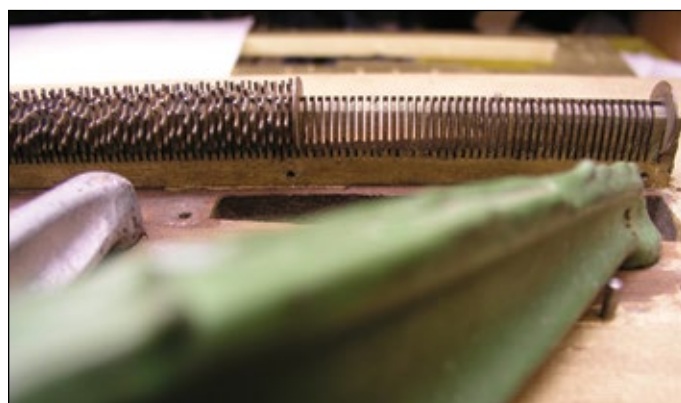
The fit of the spring motor, bedplate and bell mechanism was checked in the restored case.



The comb and bedplate as received. Fortunately, the combs had very little wear and only light surface rust.



The bedplate was completely disassembled for restoration.



The star wheel gantry is shown with some of the star wheels removed.

were checked to make sure they were all the same size, round, and rotated freely.

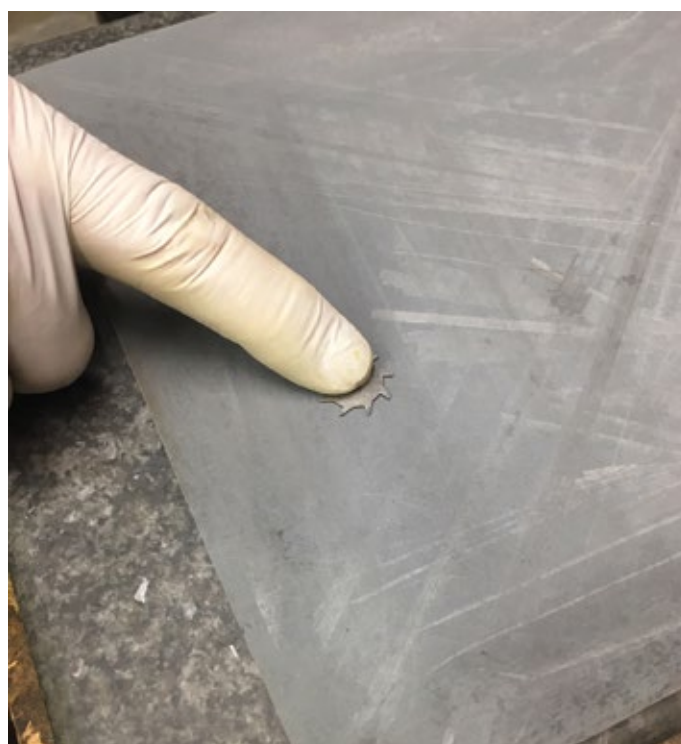
In the star wheel gantry there were some bent and corroded star wheels that had to be removed for straightening and lapping. This meant that the damper rails and center post had to be removed so that the star wheels could be taken out and restored.

It is imperative that the star wheels rotate smoothly. If any of the star wheel spokes are bent and don't turn freely, that star wheel can destroy a disc projection which would cause the music not to play correctly.

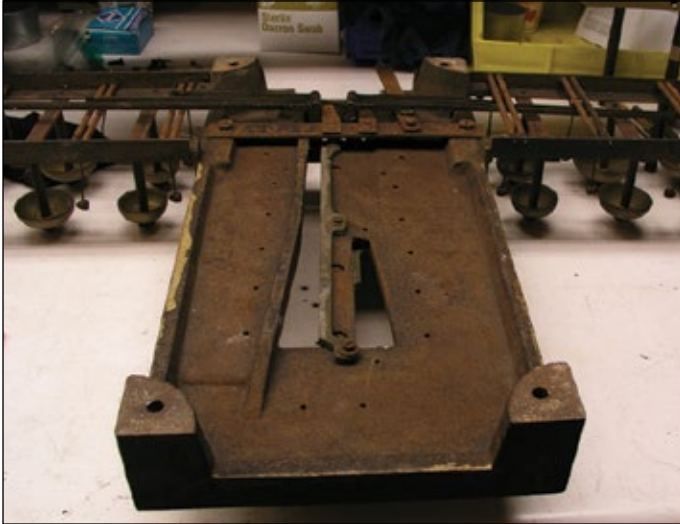
When I got this machine, I noticed that all of the bell tracks were wiped out on the discs I got with the machine. This was because of stuck star wheels shearing off the disc projections. That will not happen any more.

Great care was taken to identify where all the parts of the bell assembly were located so that it could be put back together the same way. The bells were marked with numbers 1-12 and each bell was kept with its striker and connection hardware so they can be put back on the bell assembly in the same location they came from. Each bell sounds a different note, and bell strikers had to be individually adjusted after assembly for proper striking.

Turning my attention to the center post and the damper rail, I fixed metal plates into position before removing



A starwheel is straightened and lapped to ensure that it will rotate freely on the gantry.



The back side of the bedplate showing the bottom of the bell assembly before separation.



The bell assembly was completely disassembled, and great care was taken to identify where all the parts were located so that they could be put back the same way.

either the center post or the damper rail. This was so that they could both be put back in exactly the same position they were taken from. The damper rails and center post have very critical alignments and need to be put back exactly where they were.

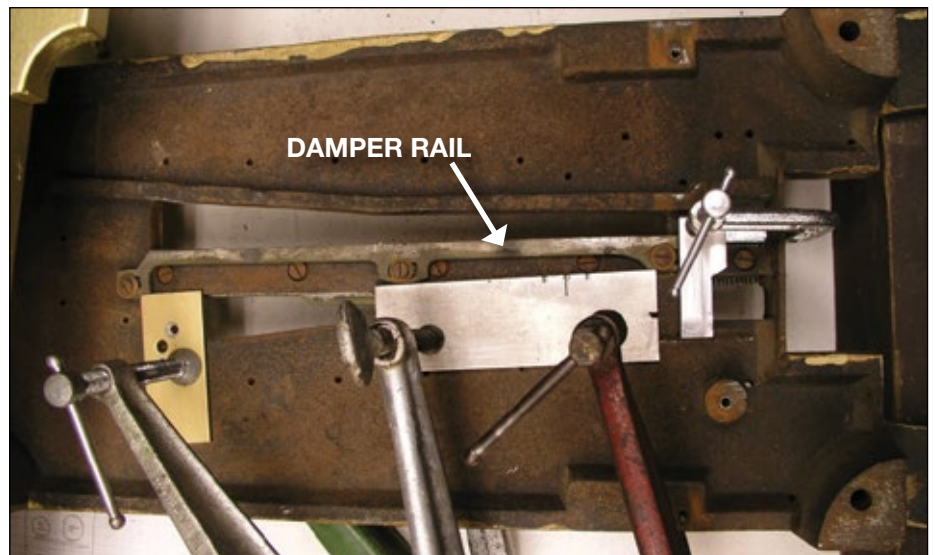
Fair warning, the job of removing the center post and damper rail is not a job for an amateur. Done incorrectly, it can negatively impact the operation of the entire machine and reduce its value.

The center post was checked to make sure there wasn't any wear that would affect the centering of the disc.

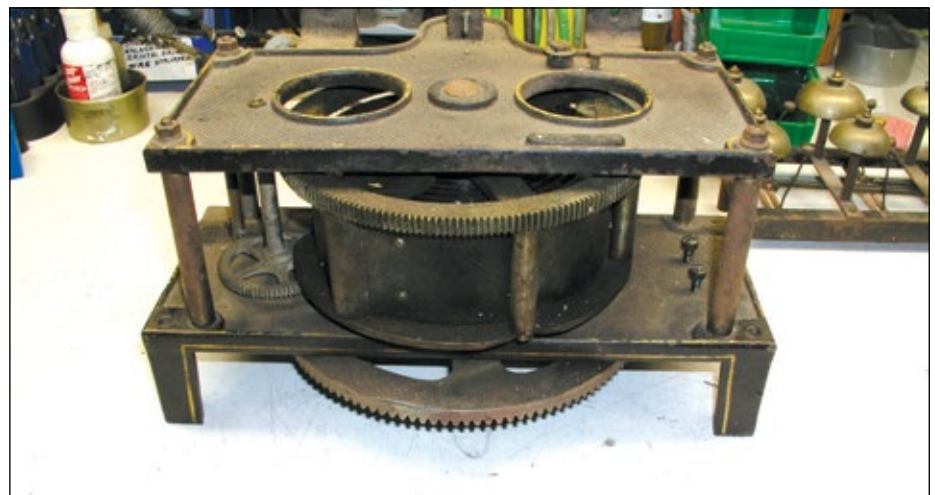
The mechanism that rotates the disc is a dimple drive style from the German version of this music box. Anyone who purchased this same music box in the United States would have gotten a conventional sprocket drive that interfaces with the holes in the perimeter of the disc.

The parts were all removed from the motor drive casting, the casting was cleaned, painted and pen striped. All bearing holes were cleaned and readied for reassembly.

The spring barrel needed a new Geneva stop that had to be fabricated as the original was missing. The spring had been stored in a wound-up position for a long time which resulted in a spring that had taken a set and lost its power. A new spring had to be installed. The governor had to be rebuilt, including a new jewel and



A bottom view of the bedplate showing fixturing to preserve the original location of the damper rail before removal.



The spring motor assembly with governor and winding shaft removed.

a rebuilt endless screw. New fan blades had to be made because the original ones were damaged. All of the parts were assembled into the top and bottom castings minus the spring barrel and governor to make sure all the parts rotated freely. The governor was then added and free movement of the parts were checked again.

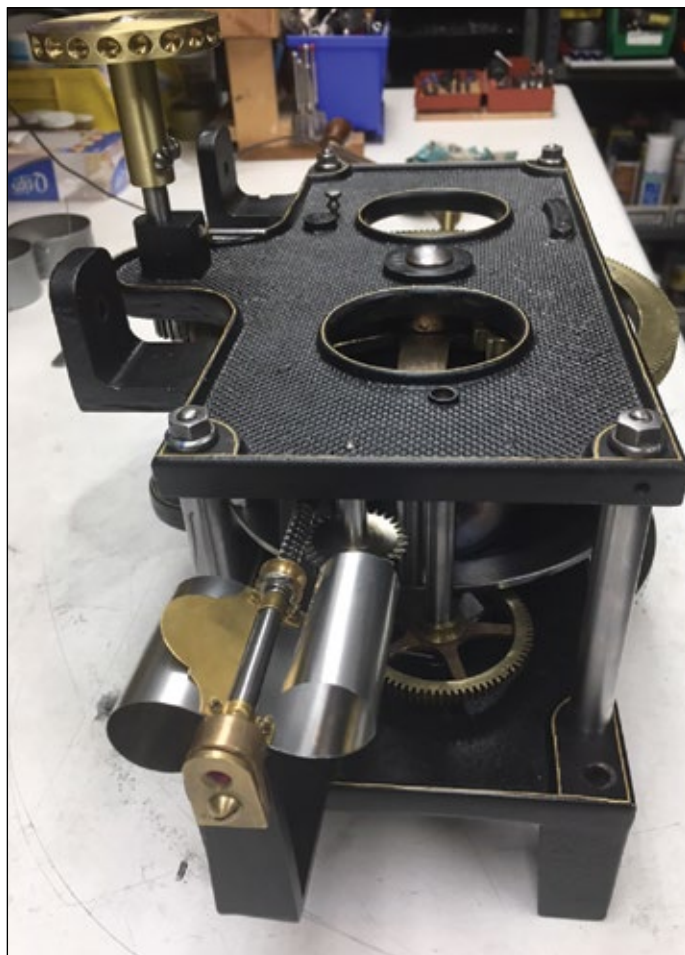
Lastly, since all the discs I received when I purchased the machine had the bell projections missing, I ordered a

new set of 27½-inch discs from Lester Jones who lives in the United Kingdom.

Standing nearly 9 feet tall, this Symphonion is once again a wonderful machine to look at and listen to. I know my family will enjoy it for many years to come. ■

Credits:

Thanks to my wife, Judy, for her support and encouragement through this whole project including giving up a dresser in our bedroom to make space for this very large music box.



The spring motor sparkles after restoration.



The motor installed and ready to play a disc.

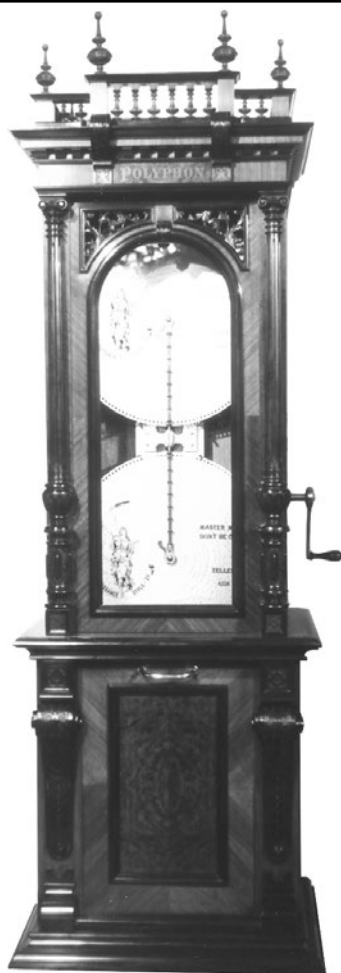


Discs are stored in a fold out drawer at the bottom of the case.



A view of the bedplate, motor and bells with no disc.

This article first appeared in *Mechanical Music*, Vol 65, No1. We are extremely grateful to author, Bob Caletti, and MBSI for permission to reprint it here, and to MBSI Editor, Russell Kasselmann, for sharing the files.



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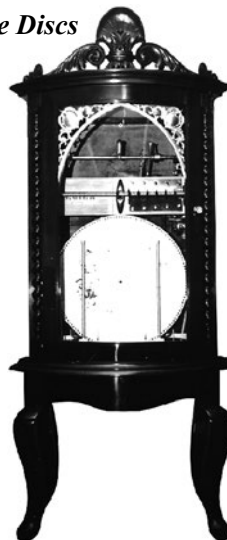
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This That and T'Other No 30

Looking at the way Society is changing these days, I am more convinced than ever that preserving all forms of mechanical music is very important. With our houses becoming smaller there is less space available to store items. This does result in more and more items being thrown out as being out of date and useless. I hope that no item of mechanical music will ever fall into that category.

The reason for these "This That and T'Other" articles was never to provide very serious or lengthy articles but more to provide snippets of information which could be of interest to any collector. With that in mind I have jotted down various bits and pieces of information mainly to do with the years 1890 to 1906.

The music of a later period composer named Charles Lecoq is sometimes found on late period boxes. He was born 3rd June 1832 and died in Paris on the 24th October 1918 aged 85. He is remembered for his operettas but from my personal observations, only the music from four of them are to be found repeatedly on the repertoire of musical boxes.

The four in question are 'La Fille de Mme Angot' (1872) 'Girofle Girofla' (1874) 'Le Petit Duc' (1878) and 'Le Jour et la Nuit' (1881) In 1910 Lecoq was appointed an Officer of the Légion d'honneur even though he had not composed much from the turn of the century. It is said that Lecoq and Bizet took a dislike to each other but that Halevy and Lecoq remained friends into old age.

Godfrey is a name that comes up on some late period boxes. Daniel Godfrey was a military bandsman who lived from 1831 to 1903. Largely through the influence of Albert, the Prince Consort, he became a household name. He rose to become the bandmaster of the Grenadier Guards regiment which was regarded as being a high honour at the time. Godfrey composed "The Guards Waltz" at this time no doubt to celebrate his rise in the world.

In later life Godfrey toured America and Canada. By now he had his own private military band so he must have been very popular to achieve this life style. Two

years before his death in 1903, he was decorated with The Jubilee Medal which again illustrates just how important in the world of light music he had become. He is buried in Beeston in Nottinghamshire.

A couple of late period boxes that have come to light recently play melodies from the period 1880 to about 1906. They provide a glimpse of what was entertaining people in those far off days.

"Listen to my Tale of Woe" or to give it its alternative title of "A little peach in an orchard grew" is one such melody found on one late box made just after 1881. This was the date H.T. Smith composed the song. It tells the tale of Johnny Jones and his sister Sue who came across a peach growing in an orchard. Jonny ate the peach and became very ill, so much so the doctor could not cure him or prevent his death. Why the Victorians enjoyed such sad songs I find a mystery but there do seem to be many with distressing lyrics.

Another popular song of the later Victorian era was "Nancy Lee." It was composed by Stephen Adams. Two corrections really need to be made here in that Adam's real name was Michael Maybrick and the full title of the song was "The Wreck of the Nancy Lee."

"Up in a Balloon" was composed in the year 1869 and the composer was George Leybourne. He lived from 1842 to 1869 so any box playing his compositions must fall within those dates or later. What is particularly unusual is that two versions of the song were published one being the "Gents" version and the other being the "Ladies." I have not discovered what the difference is but I would suspect the "Gents" would be slightly more risqué. The song at the time was described as a 'humorous song.'

A number of boxes noted as being in America play the tune "Push dem Clouds away." This was an American old-time song with the words and music by Percy Gaunt. The song was published in 1892 so we know any box playing that tune must have been made after that. What is interesting in the lyrics of the song is that they make reference to nickel plating in the line "If you want to git to heaven

on the nickel-plated road, just push dem clouds away." Many of the boxes of the period do have nickel plated parts.

Similarly another line of the song goes "There'll be no boy's puffin' cigarettes when you push dem clouds away." It looks as though cigarette smoking must have been quite popular at that time. This is a fascinating insight into the social habits of those bygone days.

Thanks to the Internet it is easier to see how and when boxes are changing hands or being moved from place to place. Nowadays I believe that the vast majority of boxes are sold either in specialist auctions or online. Most of them could be described as "ordinary" but every now and then a box will turn up which could best be described as a "high flyer".

It is always good to check what is on offer as some smaller auction rooms don't really know what they are selling or how best to describe them. I have seen a forte-piano overture box just entered up as "A Victorian music box". It did sell very cheaply. Yes, this really did happen to me a long time ago and I did miss it completely. It still hurts!

On the other side of the coin I have come across boxes that have just one tune stated as being the overture to an opera whist the rest of the tunes were very ordinary. Some people in the past have tried to sell these as Overture boxes which is rather naughty.

Now and again a box turns up that has a "wrong" tune sheet. Most times it is because some dealer in the past added any tune sheet he had to hand just to increase the value of the box.

Another reason is that when a musical box without a tune sheet or a badly torn sheet came in to a manufacturer for repair, part of the repair was to place their own tune sheet on the box which of course had their name on it. I remember the late Anthony Bulleid telling me he had also come across this being done. In both of these instances it makes the job of any historian or researcher almost impossible.

Unusual Listings on the Register

Recently one has been reminded of the old joke about waiting for a bus that never comes, and then three coming along together. How often does one come across a plerodiénique musical box for example – never mind two within a few months of each other. ‘Plerodiénique’ describes a particular style of cylinder box, the patent for which was granted to Paillard-Vaucher-Fils in 1882, although a number of examples were also made by Mermod-Bornand, differing from PVF’s in the position and construction of the governor assembly.

The plerodiénique consisted of a system to extend the playing time of a cylinder, not by increasing the dimension of the cylinder, as in the grand format box, but by increasing its length. To be more precise, this was achieved through using a cylinder of two halves, often described as one telescoping slightly within the other during revolution in such a way that the comb could be plucked continuously without interruption to the music. It would be more accurate to say that rather than telescoping, the cylinder expands slightly. However, for most of the playing time the two halves of the cylinder act as one rendering a sublime harmony effect. More precise information and detailed technical specification will be forthcoming in a later issue of this magazine when the two latter boxes here are dealt with in much greater depth.

Looking at the Cylinder Musical Box Register, we find to date no more than five boxes of the plerodiénique type listed; as if to prove their rarity, writing in *The Music Box* (Vol 3, No 7) Arthur Ord-Hume notes that:

‘only a very few were built and, even with the discovery of a fresh specimen in England recently (now in America), the number known is little more than half a dozen.’

Ord-Hume was writing in 1968,



Movement of PVF serial number 24190

and things have changed – but only a little. Laurence Fisher says that in 24 years of having been involved in assessing mechanical instruments and/or the sale of them, he has only ever come across three, while a source in the USA opined in 2019 that the existence of approximately a dozen was known worldwide.

Four of the examples found on the Register have featured previously in *The Music Box*. P V F serial numbers 9735 and 10277 are both to be found in Volume 8, No 2, on pages 56-59. The first of these is noted to have an ornate case and table, with a mirror inside the lid, a cylinder of 42 cm long and 9 cylinders; the second also with an ornate case with matching table. Vol 9, No 1 features Paillard 16783, and is listed as playing 8 airs and having two cylinders. The fourth of these boxes to be mentioned in *The Music Box* (Vol 13, No 7), Paillard 18762 is listed as ‘Grand Format’ with four cylinders, with a differing number of tunes on the cylinders. It too has a matching table with storage drawer. The last of the plerodiéniques to be listed on the Register is attributed to Mermod, serial number 15229. It has a S Troll trade

label affixed, and is fitted into a large mahogany case with a matching table, with a drawer for storing the cylinders. It is noted as playing 8 airs and having 4 cylinders.

These listings are about to be joined by two more examples, again both thought to be by P V F, although their initial respective descriptions attribute them elsewhere (Nicole Frères and J Manger.) The first, serial number 24190, has no fewer than twelve cylinders, according to its current owner; 6 of them playing extracts from ‘Mozart’s 12th Mass’ (pace musicologists.) The mechanism is housed in a relatively plain box, with an in-built storage drawer, and comes with a matching table with additional drawers. The second movement, serial number 11250, is housed in a massive piece of furniture, (see illustration), and has ten cylinders with varying numbers of airs. Of note is the fact that a number of pieces by Chopin are included in its repertoire, as well as Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No 1. The date of manufacture is assessed to have been 1882.

As a footnote, the word ‘plerodienique’ has been found spelt in no fewer than four different ways in different sources:

as here, with no accent, in a number of publications; with an acute accent on the first 'é': plérodienque (Jean-Claude Piguet, *The History of Music Box in Ste Croix*, MBSI's English translation 2004); on the second 'é': plerodiénique (Arthur W J G Ord-Hume, *The Musical Box – A Guide for Collectors*, Schiffer, 1995); and finally, on both 'és': plérodienique (Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, *Klang Kunst, 200 Jahre Musikdosen*, 1996)!!!

Alison Biden, Arthur Cunliffe &
David Worrall

*Photo credits:
Laurence Fisher & Alison Biden*



'Case' (and some!) of PVF serial number 11250.

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PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING TO CHECK OPENING TIMES

What the blazes?:

A Shaggy Dog Story from the Society's Archivist

Nowadays the Archive receives relatively few enquiries, possibly a reflection of the increased access to information that the internet provides. Notwithstanding this, in recent months there have been a few unusual and interesting requests which have led on to further research. One such was from a gentleman making enquiries about a former owner of the house he had recently purchased on the Isle of Wight; from what he knew to date she had been an avid collector of musical boxes and a member of the Society. Thus it was I learned a lot about Founder Member, number 14, Mrs G Gilchrist. Two of our surviving members still remember her from way back in the 1960s. This may be a topic I return to in the future if/when I ever get around to writing about prominent collectors of the 20th century. Another enquiry came from a lady asking for information about former member, the late Freddy Hill. It turned out it was not so much Freddy who was the object of her interest, but a barrel organ he had once restored. Further investigation on my part furnished her with more information, plus links to other people with overlapping areas of research – all of whom had originally surfaced through making enquiries of the Archivist. In due course we hope to report more about the project.

But perhaps the most intriguing of all recent enquiries was the one I received relating to the 'Flamephone' ...

The email address associated with the Archivist, like many others, is prone to receiving the occasional spam 'email', and Outlook is inclined occasionally to file these under 'Junk' rather than send them to my 'Inbox.' And so it was that one day I received a message, (did I detect a slightly peeved tone?) via Facebook that a certain person was still awaiting a response from me to his email. When I read the email, sent a second time, I was astonished not only at the sheer bravura of his enterprise, but the extent of his sleuthing. Said gentleman, with whom I am now on first-name terms, was keen to obtain images of a device called a Flamephone, which for all intents and purposes is a type of gramophone. Because my curiosity had been piqued I resisted the temptation to brush off the enquiry on the grounds that ours is a Society dedicated to mechanical musical instruments, and gramophones really are not my thing. Also, I do like to be of help if I can. I reproduce the email here:

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am currently trying to recreate a 1922 "Flamephone" which was a gramophone that used flaming gas jets to amplify sound. I was previously going on guesswork working off of several written descriptions and an advertisement of the only known drawn depiction of the item as none seem to have survived to the present day.

However, on the [web]site in the Summer 1990 issue of *The Music Box*, Volume 14 Number 6 (p. 155 according to the archived version), there is an extant black and white photo of a Flamephone. As far as I can tell, it was exhibited from the 30th of March to the 1st of April 1990

at the Spring Meeting at Bowness-On-Windermere at the Windermere Steamboat Museum. The picture carries the following caption:

*"An intriguing exhibit
"The Flamephone," a
London made novelty
clockwork gramophone
which produces dancing
lighting effects. The supply
of gas to a double burner
mounted above is varied
by the movements of the
diaphragm and the effect
amplified by the movement
of air from the horn in the
rear reflector."*

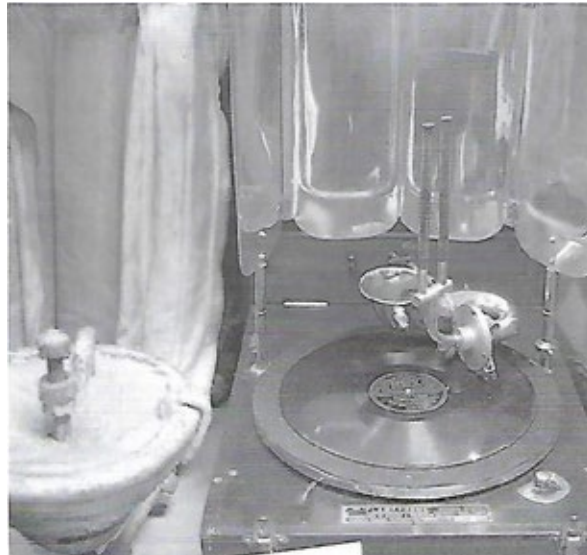
Would you happen to know the whereabouts of the machine? Is it still at the

Windermere Steamboat Museum or was it brought in for the meeting by a member? Was there an actual, working demonstration?

Though for the reasons of safety, lighting the gas on the original would probably not be a good idea today, but photographs of the machine would be extremely helpful on the recreation. I would be particularly interested in knowing more about the tonearm support mechanism as very little detail can be made out on the current photographs I have.

And then:

Thank you so much for getting back to me. I had been looking for any and all documentation on the machine. I eventually backtraced to a 1972 biography of the inventor of the Flamephone patent, John George Aulsebrook Kitchen, read at the Science Museum in 1972. He led



*Reprint from The Music Box of the original photograph
of the Flamephone which sparked this story*

a fairly colorful life as the eccentric inventor, including among others, a reversing rudder and a Lune Valley Boiler, one of which was used by George Pattinson of Windermere and his Lady Elizabeth in the 1920s as well as by other boating enthusiasts. Kitchen also settled down in Windermere when he was 53 and contributed a number of other boating inventions.

On a lark, I searched up Windermere and Flamephone and came across your site.

Perhaps this connection with the Flamephone was brought up at the 1990 meeting at the Windermere Steamboat Museum.

So, it transpires there is a connection with the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, albeit somewhat tenuous, and it has to be said there is more in common between musical boxes and gramophones than with steam boats! (Note how musical box maker Paillard went into the manufacture of gramophones and parts for them.) Maybe someone reading this will remember the event (I have photographic evidence that several of our members still with us today were present.) As you will see from the reprint here, the photograph in the magazine report is somewhat indistinct, and not a lot of use to someone trying to replicate it.

The museum cited closed a few years after the Society's visit. It had been predominantly based on the collection of George Pattinson, whose 'baby' the museum very much was. However, the collection has now come under the auspices of Lakeland Arts, and is housed in a state-of-the art, lottery funded centre (I hesitate to call it a building as part of it is on water.) As my new 'friend' Dwight relates below, the inventor of the Flamephone went to live in the Lake District; it sounds as though he became a friend of Pattinson's, and perhaps the example on display viewed by the members thirty years ago was his very own. **If there is anyone reading this who remembers anything about it whatsoever, please do get in touch!**

But I am getting ahead of myself. One of our past Presidents has expert knowledge of gramophones, so I asked him if he could shed any further light on this particular curiosity. This was his response:

'I do remember that at some time in the 1980s someone rang me up at CSK who claimed to have one he wanted to sell. However, as he thought he was sitting on a rather larger pot of gold than I considered likely, the matter went no further. I have a vague memory that, some time later, I heard on the grapevine that it had been sold. Assuming it hasn't succumbed to conflagration, it must still be extant, but I have no idea where! It would need to be converted for natural gas, of course, which might affect it acoustically ...

I attach a contemporary advertisement, and also a report from The Gramophone. When the CLPGS had its 60th Anniversary dinner in 1979, among the special guests was W.A. Chislett, a veteran Gramophone contributor,

who remembered this, and considered the Flamephone to be memorable for its visual rather than its audio effects, especially after dark!

Another contact not unfamiliar with 'talking machines' and such like opined:

Certainly NOT a gramophone for the cushioned-lined parlor. I would question the technical rudiments of how fire can alter the tone or volume of sound, however firemen have reported their shouts over fire can be heard a lot further if the fire was violent enough but only in an upwards direction. Would be nice to get hold of one of these and do some proper lab-condition tests on it. Wearing asbestos underpants of course.

Meanwhile, back to the (replacement) museum, now known as The Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories. (We shall certainly have one of the latter to add to its collection in due course.) It boasts nowadays that it

'is one of the world's most important collections of boats related to a single location. Originally brought together by George Pattinson, a private collector of steam launches who founded Windermere Steamboat Museum in 1977, the collection now comprises 40 vessels that tell the story of boating on Windermere from 1780 to the present day ... Our collection includes some of Lakeland's finest examples of boatbuilding, including SL Dolly, one of the oldest mechanically powered boats in the world; Margaret, the oldest sailing yacht in the UK; world record breaking speed boats; Esperance, one of boats that inspired Captain Flint's



Original advertisement for the Flamephone

The catalogue of records obtainable contains an appallingly large proportion of rubbish. There are, however, a fair number of records of serious music, especially of vocal music. I may notice especially Freda Hempel's *Casta Diva* and *Non mi dir*, Anna Case's *Qui la voce*, some violin records of Spalding and Prihoda and many piano records, where, though the selection of artists and of decent music is not very wide, the reproduction is, as I have said, beyond anything hitherto achieved.

The sound-box which is recommended by Mr. Edison for use with his machines when needle-cut records are to be played turns out to be none other than our old friend the Jewel sound-box with the Nom-y-ka diaphragm referred to in our September issue, page 72. I heard several of my favourite H.M.V., Columbia and Vocalion records on the Edison machine with this sound-box and the results seemed to me as good as on any machine I had heard, and I propose shortly to try this sound-box on other machines and also on the Edison under test conditions. The same sound-box when turned over and fitted with a diamond point can be used for playing Edison or Pathé records on an ordinary machine. The results on a large H.M.V. machine with Edison records though, as was to be expected, not so good as on the Edison machine with its own sound-box, were nevertheless not much inferior, and a very adequate idea of the quality of the Edison records can be obtained in this way.

The Edison is not a cheap machine. The table model costs £23 and the cabinet models up to about 100 guineas. The Jewel sound-box and tone arm will cost I understand about £2.

The London agents for the Edison gramophone and the Jewel sound-box are Messrs. Murdoch, Murdoch & Co., Ltd., 461/3, Oxford Street, London, W. Our readers who do not live in London should apply to Thomas A. Edison, Ltd., 164, Wardour Street, W.1, for the address of the nearest agent.

THE FLAME-PHONE

WHEN we invited Scientific and Projections, Ltd., of Crawford Passage, Farringdon Road, London, E.C. 1, to send a Flame-phone to this office for our tests of portables we did not know that it was beyond the scope of the tests owing to its price and also because, though it is portable, it requires gas in order to obtain its especial effects, and is therefore hardly in the class of gramophones that can be carried and played *anywhere*. However, the makers very kindly sent us a model of the "semi-portable type" to see, and we are extremely grateful to them for having given us a chance of examining what is certainly a most interesting, and even exciting, invention. In a fine mahogany case it costs £17 10s. and weighs 22lb., and when put together is a distinctly handsome machine. But the fittings which make it specifically a Flamephone can be put on to any ordinary gramophone for £6, and this fact removes the invention at once from the realm of fantastic gadgets. It deserves the serious consideration of all gramophonists.

To quote from the description of it, "the mica diaphragm in the sound box is associated on one side with the horn, the mouth of which is directed upwards, and at the other with a gas chamber leading to two small upright burners, which are perforated with a number of very fine holes, gas being led into the chamber by a small rubber-tube attached to a cock at the back. The gas jets are directed horizontally across the mouth of the horn." There are a hundred jets, and in a darkened room these are very pleasantly reflected in the aluminium shield which protects the woodwork and also acts as a sounding-board. By a simple balancing device the weight of the soundbox and horn on the record can be adjusted to suit individual taste.

Mr. Kitchen's invention is founded on the fact that a gas jet is extremely sensitive to sound waves over a very wide range, and it is claimed that though the flame-phone without any gas has a quality of tone "comparable with that of the average gramophone," the effect of turning on and lighting the gas is not only to augment the sound but to improve the quality of the tone in a wonderful way. There can be no doubt about this improvement in volume and in tone. By many experiments of turning the office gas on and off as we tried the various records we satisfied ourselves that in some mysterious way the vibrations of the gas jets had a clarifying and strengthening influence on the soundbox.

The clearness of the tone was even more evident when the Flamephone was contrasted with the Orchestraphone in the office, which for the moment appeared to be almost woolly; and if a long length of tube were not required in order to have the Flamephone out in the garden, one would say that it would be at its very best in the open air at night, with the picturesque illumination of the gas-jets. On the whole, however, we felt that for normal purposes indoors it was slightly hard—not by any means *harsh*—in tone; it was not so comfortable, for instance, as the Kestraphone; but this must be largely a matter of individual taste, and it can at any rate hardly be doubted that the Flamephone principle applied to one's favourite make of gramophone would improve it. It is the principle rather than the semi-portable model submitted to us which won our respectful admiration, and the fact that a demonstration before the Royal Society was, we are told, greeted with unqualified approval, inclines us to recommend our readers to take an opportunity of judging the Flamephone if possible. Evidently this is one of those inventions which cost a good deal to start, but which, if able to establish themselves, may be offered to the public subsequently at a much reduced cost.

C. R. S.

houseboat in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, and even Beatrix Potter's rowing boat.ⁱ

Its publicity goes on to relate that the collection includes every type of wooden boatbuilding construction, charts the development of boat design and innovations in engineering, with many of the boats made by local boatbuilders.

I contacted the museum, who referred me to Lakeland Arts. This was their (very prompt!) reply:

I've had an initial search of our inventories and unfortunately have not yet located anything that matches this description. Just to give you some context; when Lakeland Arts took over the Jetty site in 2007, it was fortunate enough to accept some of the Windermere Steamboat Museum collection as part of an "acceptance in lieu" of tax scheme. As far as I am aware, this did not include the entire museum collection. I suspect that the Flamephone may have been one of the items that was not transferred to Lakeland Arts during the transfer of ownership.

I'll continue to have a search through our records and see if I can locate anything relevant or point you and Mr Chia in the right direction of where the Flamephone may now be. It is possible that it was loaned to the Steamboat Museum for display in the 1990s and may have returned to a private collection.

As it happens, my in-laws live in the Lake District; my parents-in-law lived, for two different periods, in houses built by the Pattinson family, who were well-respected as local builders. We ourselves took a mini-voyage on Lake Windermere as recently as New Year's Eve, 2019, on one of the Museum's very own steam launches. We had been planning a visit to the Lake District again this Easter; what better opportunity for following up on the research to date? But, like so much else, this trip has been postponed ...

So, I am resorting to these pages to see if any of our readers can help out at all. Meanwhile, here is a more detailed explanation from Mr Chia, as to how he got involved in this project. Aficionados of gramophones (as well as physicists, acoustic engineers and pyromaniacs) amongst you may find it interesting:

I have become tangentially aware of flame powered gramophones mostly because they tend to muddy up the search results, the most prominent probably being the Paillard Maestrophone, complete with Stirlingⁱⁱ hot-air motor and additional (venting?) horn on the base. These, however, are powered by fire which doesn't directly affect how the music is sounded out.

What I'm struggling with is how the Flamephone was supposed to do its function of amplifying sound and "eliminating harshness" via fire. Probably the most interesting quote was from a 1991 book saying the

Flamephone worked for "uncertain scientific reasons". And there's a whole array of fire and sound related experiments like the "sensitive flame", the Rubens tube, the pyrophone, the Koenig's manometric flame apparatus, and the "flame speaker", some of which still survive as novelty science lab classroom demonstrations.

The closest thing in function to what the Flamephone does for a gramophone seems to be the Auxetophone which used compressed air to amplify sound coming from the record, although the air compressor itself can be quite loud. This technique is still used in some speaker systems today.

I'm primarily doing experiments with placing a tuning fork in a Bunsen burner which does have some interesting effects (though inconclusive) on the sound amplification. This is based on a 1903 paper from the Proceedings of the Physical Society, "On a Method of Mechanically Reinforcing Sounds" by T.C. Porter. He claims that the loudness of the note in the fire is "very materially increased" and actually goes on to describe making a similar apparatus for an Edison cylinder phonograph, perhaps what Mr. Kitchen based his patents on for a disc gramophone. I can see it warranted a mention in various trade magazines at the time like *Gas World*, *American Gas Association Monthly*, *The Commercial Motor*. Though until I can find an actual copy, I'm not sure if it was a token description or an in-depth analysis.

The Bunsen burner was working off methane or natural gas, the contemporary descriptions use town gas or office gas, and Mr. Porter used coal-gas (but mentions ethylene and acetylene for future tests). I'm not sure what are the effects of the types of gas would conduct though Mr. Porter seems to think coal-gas is good enough. For the conversion, there is some concern over the effect of natural gas vs. propane and the tube material of copper vs. iron pipe, mostly from home contractors. I can only hazard a guess that the Flamephone used copper tubing. I probably will try to run my replica on propane since tanks for camping and barbecue are readily available. There's even butane and propanal. Who knows what effect on the acoustical quality that will have?

I'm not sure if modern ears are less impressed by the sound amplification powers of fire, but the contemporary accounts describe it as "loud", more or less. The Auxetophone which works on a similar principle is "loud" based on video footage. Then again, there is no existing footage or recording of a working example of a Flamephone, hence my replica efforts.

The advertisement and the article also indicate that the Flamephone-specific parts could be attached to any existing gramophone with little modification, but I'm not sure how many people took that offer.

There is a mention in the Talking Machine Review no. 34 of June 1975 of an additional article of the Flamephone being demonstrated to a group of gramophone enthusiasts in May 1920. I thought this was a mistake for the 1923 article in *The Gramophone*, but the description further mentions the diaphragm being loose and chattering in the soundbox when not connected to the gas as “an ordinary soundbox did not activate the ‘singing flames’ sufficiently”. There’s even further detail of the construction regarding the hole placements, but I have been unable to trace if such a demonstration occurred in 1920 considering the advertisement is from 1922.

ⁱ Website of *The Jetty, Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories*, <https://windermerejetty.org/>

ⁱⁱ Editor’s note: A very lengthy and comprehensive series of articles about musical instruments driven by Stirling motors has been published by the German Society, *Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente e.V.*, in its magazine *Das Mechanische Musikinstrument*, and also reprinted in the Italian Society’s magazine.

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In Memoriam

Jasper Sanfilippo, 23rd March, 1931 – 28th February, 2020

For many in Great Britain, Jasper Sanfilippo may be merely a name heard in passing in relation to collections of mechanical music, possibly one a friend or associate has had the good fortune to have visited. However, described in one obituary as a ‘nut mogul and eclectic collector’, Jasper’s is much more of a household name in North America, and for good reason. It takes a special sort of person to put their fabulous wealth to good use and to share more widely some of the benefits that wealth brings.

Jasper Sanfilippo is believed to have amassed the largest mechanical music collection in the world, and once visited it is hard to believe there could be one any larger. He made his fortune through the family’s nut business joining his father after having graduated as a mechanical engineer at the University of Illinois, and then serving in the United States Army. Jasper’s involvement began when he was nine or ten years old (accounts vary) when he had the job

of shelling nuts. After his national service, he entered the company with the ambition of introducing automation and expanding the business, at times to the exasperation of his father. However, when in 1963 Jasper’s father died, Jasper took over the day-to-day control of the company, running it for almost 50 years and building up its business from a local one to being nation-wide, diversifying and developing the mechanical shelling and processing of a variety of nuts. (Perhaps it is time to dispense with the expression ‘peanuts’ meaning of little monetary value!)

According to his son Jeffrey, Jasper’s passion for mechanical music was engendered by a visit to Knotts Berry Farm in California during a family vacation, although it may have been on an earlier occasion when he found himself in Angelo Valente’s ‘House of Nickelodeons’ on his wedding day, of all days! He started his collection soon after returning from that vacation with the purchase of a Bruder fairground

organ – all in bits at the time, but now a prominent feature of the collection. He particularly liked orchestrions, as they appealed to his fascination for intricate mechanical technology combined with his love of music – although he himself was no musician. The collection expanded as his family, and the family house, expanded – from the original 6,000 square feet to the current 44,000 – and Jeffrey recalls that growing up was always lots of fun and very noisy. The collection grew to include dance organs and calliopes, leading to the acquisition of a world class Wurlitzer theatre organ. It was originally built in 1927 for the Riviera Theatre in Omaha and Jasper had it restored to look like the original organ at Chicago's Paradise Theatre. The largest of its kind in the world, it

has 8,000 pipes, with a 50HP motor pumping 10 cubic metres of air into the chambers. This required the creation of an organ room, or music hall, completed in 1991, which can seat an audience of 350, and has been refurbished to resemble a 1920s movie theatre with the use of an amalgam of theatre fixtures and fittings. It is indicative of the sort of person Jasper was that he offered a home to the chandeliers from the derelict Chicago Uptown

Theatre and had them restored and installed in his home, known as the 'Place de la Musique' on the understanding that they would be returned to the theatre if it were ever restored, 'as a gift to Chicago.' Copies have been made to replace them on leaving his collection.

Restoration was an important aspect to his collecting; he particularly liked to obtain items which needed restoration in order to preserve them for future generations to appreciate, understand and enjoy, and there is a large annual budget for 'maintenance.' Over the years he gathered a number of highly skilled craftsmen and mechanics able to carry out the work – amongst them Russell Wattam from Yorkshire who has been a regular visitor to the estate to carry out work on the organs.

Eventually a 27,000 square foot pavilion was added to house the Eden Palais Salon Carousell, made in 1890 in France, as well as several other large items including a number of organs, working steam engines, bi-polar generators, over-

head line shafts, an 1881 Grant Steam Locomotive with restored caboose and 1890's Pullman passenger car and several examples of tower clock mechanisms.

Jasper's fascination with all by-gone technology led him to amass a huge collection of musical boxes and phonographs, coin-operated pianos, violin machines, photoplayers, American and European orchestrions, dance-, fairground and street Organs. In addition it contains very many examples of coin-operated machines including vending and arcade amusement machines, Tiffany glass and other decorative items. The overriding theme is to display machines which changed the way people lived during the period of industrialisation, educating the public about

automatic music instruments and other turn-of-the-century antiques.

Jasper and his wife, Marian, established a family foundation in 2007 to help preserve the collection and also to manage the many charity events that are held on the estate. They started their philanthropic work in 1985, offering their extended home to charities for fundraising events, concentrating on supporting women and children's causes, before adding education and arts-related charities to their

list of supported causes. In the last decade charities hosted at the Sanfilippo estate have annually raised total funds of well in excess of \$1million.

Despite all of this and his drive for perfection, Jasper was an unassuming person and displayed a warm and friendly disposition on meeting people for the first time, genuinely welcoming them to his home. One gets the impression that for all the ostentation of this French Second Empire style home and his vast collection, Jasper retained a sense of humbleness and humanity, treating others as his equal, and his motive was never to impress but to create the opportunity for people to learn and enjoy. What a legacy to leave the world. Both in terms of a magnificent collection of beautiful machines, all in perfect working order, and a personal philosophy of combining education with philanthropy.



MBSGB/MBSI members flanking host, Jasper Sanfilippo (centre), September 2013. Left to right: Bob Yates, Mike Biden, Alison Biden, Jasper, Pam Evett, Roy Evett.

In Memoriam

Josef Raffin, 24th May, 1932 – 26th February, 2020

A few weeks ago we received the sad news that Josef Raffin, doyen of contemporary hand-turned organ builders, had died, aged 87. Herr Raffin rightly belongs in the pantheon of those who through their work and lives have enriched those of others, as well as assisting in popularising this particular field of mechanical music. Who amongst us, after a minimum of exposure to hand-turned organs cannot pick out and identify a Raffin at distance, simply by its distinctive mellifluous tone, and the outstanding projection of the music? Much of the music available for this organ has been produced by the Raffin company, another factor contributing to its highly pleasing sound.

It is therefore appropriate to pay tribute to Herr Raffin in the context of his work; anyone who was privileged to meet him in person, to visit the organ-building works, or has had the opportunity to see and hear its products, cannot but help sense that for Josef Raffin organs constituted life itself. His work was more than a mere commercial enterprise, and his dedication, continual interest, and constant striving for improvement, even when perfection had been attained, must surely be indicative of the old cliché of 'living, sleeping, breathing' one's passion.

Josef Raffin was born in Überlingen on Lake Constance in Germany, on 24th May, 1932, and as a young man trained to be an organ builder, first in Ludwisburg, then received his qualification in Stuttgart, following which he set up his own organ-works in Überlingen at the very beginning of January 1960. It was not until he took in work restoring hand-cranked organs sometime in the early 1970s that he became interested in this particular field. The rest, as they say, is history. It inspired him to develop a street organ himself, exploiting the latest available technology, with 13 of the first model being produced in 1977. The extraordinary rich sound of the high-quality pipes and the above-average high quality of his products helped the company to achieve great success. Over the years other models have been added to the range, and modifications made, resulting in his contribution to the industry being recognised with the presentation of the 'Oscar Europe' in Rome, in 1988. In 2012, on his 80th birthday, Josef Raffin was presented with a 50 Year Master Craftsman Award.*

Every organ is unique - perhaps a reflection of Herr Raffin's personable manner in engaging with members of the public, whether potential customers or otherwise. His attention to detail, use of quality materials and best-practice methods ensured that every instrument was testament to craftsmanship to be proud of. In 1997 the family business



Josef Raffin demonstrating his latest creation in Les Gets, France, July 2016

incorporated, and whilst still hands-on and taking a keen interest in the manufacturing side, in latter years Josef concentrated more on developing new models and roll production, leaving the business management to his two daughters and their husbands.

Not only his organs but he himself were well-known on the continent. In addition to running the organ-works and developing new designs, he participated in numerous recitals and was a familiar face at international organ festivals where he was extremely popular. His contribution to these events and outgoing larger-than-life personality will be sorely missed. Fortunately, he had left many outstanding organs as his legacy, as well as the organ-building business which will be carried on by his family.

* You can see this on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M687GdLDB0U&feature=youtu.be>

We are reprinting here an article about Josef Raffin's organs, first published in *The Music Box* Vol 10, No 7

THE JOSEF RAFFIN FACTORY, UEBERLINGEN

How the monkey organ is being built today

By "Hank" Waelti

At every organ festival in Central Europe there is always a small number of neat little monkey organs, each one hand-painted in a different pattern and in different colours. With their 22 or 31 wooden pipes (on the newer organs the 9 melody pipes are doubled) they give quite a pleasant sound.

Operating with perforated paper rolls, there are 20 notes of which 2 bass notes are octave coupled (two pipes each). On a painted nameplate underneath the prospect is the name of the maker: *Orgelbau J Raffin, Ueberlingen*.

Since I own one of these organs myself and since Ueberlingen is not so far from home, practically at the Swiss border, across the Lake of Konstanz, I decided to visit the place.

Ueberlingen, a town of approximately 30,000 inhabitants, is conveniently situated at the northern border of Lake Konstanz. The narrow north western part of this lake is also called *Ueberlingersee*.

Organ building seems to be quite a tradition at this place since there are three firms in the business, one of them producing tin pipes as well.

JOSEF RAFFIN, Organ-builder by profession, started to make little monkey organs as a side line. It all started when people brought some old street organs to him for repairs and rebuilding, round about the year 1970. Since 1977 this small firm, of about 5 or 6 people, has produced this popular street organ on the scale of about 150 a year. They also make parts for church organs.

The principle of the monkey organ is the same as for any church organ, with the exception that instead of keys operating the valves mechanically there is a tracker bar and the valves are operated by air pressure, depending on the "programme" punched into the paper roll, gliding over this sensing device.

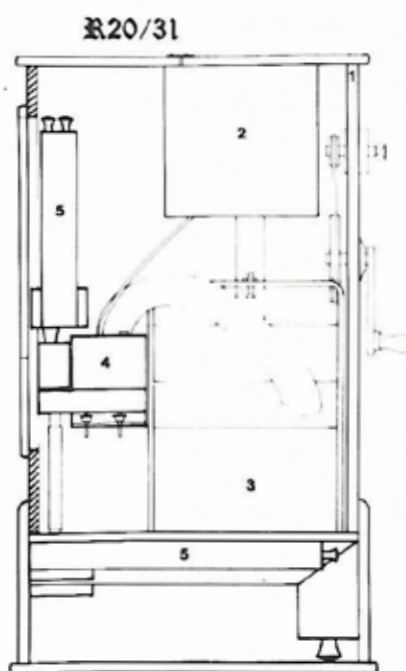


Diagram 1

Diagram 1 shows how the different units are lodged within the case.

Diagram 2 is the enclosure containing the roll mechanism and tracker bar.

Diagram 3 illustrates the double action bellows with a spring loaded reservoir on top of the unit.

Diagram 4 is the wind chamber which contains the 20 double valves and in Diagram 5 can be seen the wooden pipes, arranged in the prospect, along the sides and at the bottom of the case.

The operating principle is illustrated in Diagrams 3, 4, & 5.

By turning the crank, the roll mechanism operated through a train of gears, as seen in Diagram 2. At the same time the bellows are moved by the lever, which is directly coupled to the crank (Diagram 3).

Air pressure is built up in the reservoir and transmitted through the tube to the wind chamber.

Diagram 4, a cut-through wind chamber, valves, tracker bar and pipe, shows the situation when the whole of the tracker bar is blocked by the paper roll. Through the bleeder connection (with the regulating screw) air pressure on both sides of the piston is equal. By its own weight, piston and valve assembly fall down and the duct to the pipe is blocked off by the upper valve.

If a hole in the paper passes this particular opening of the tracker bar, pressure on top of the piston is instantly relieved, the piston with the two connected valves rises, so that air pressure is going to the pipe (Diagram 5). When the opening in the tracker bar is blocked off again, pressure on top of the piston is allowed to build up again through the bleeder connection, the valve assembly falls down again, blocking off the pipe duct from the wind chamber and relieving pressure from the pipe at the same instant.

A short and "snappy" repetition is obtained by the valve construction and the passage of the bleeder by adjusting the regulating screw.

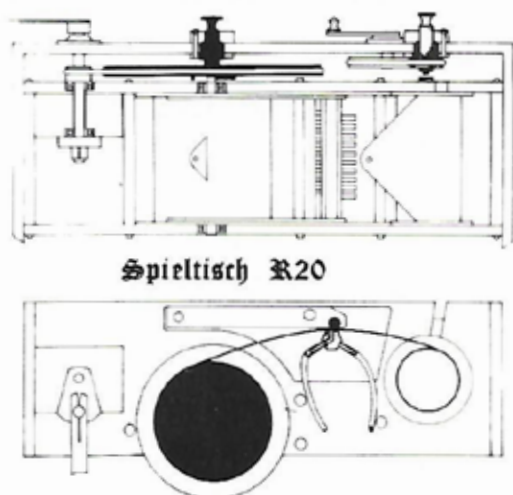


Diagram 2

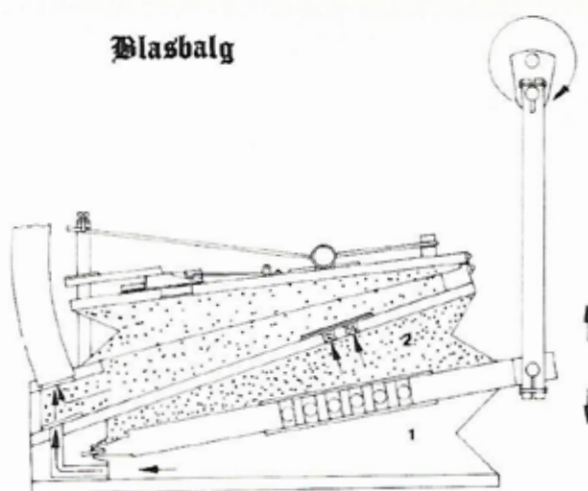


Diagram 3

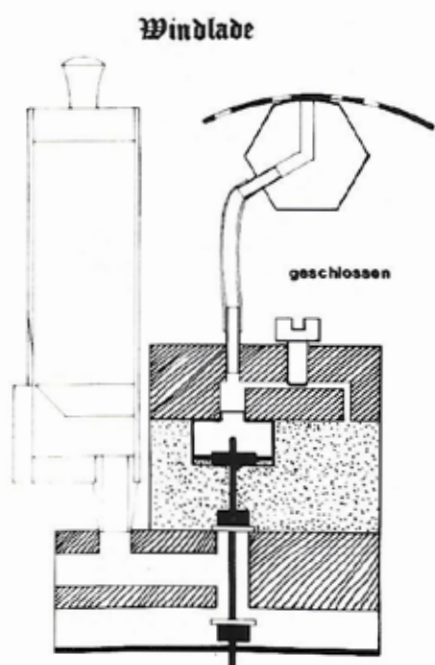


Diagram 4

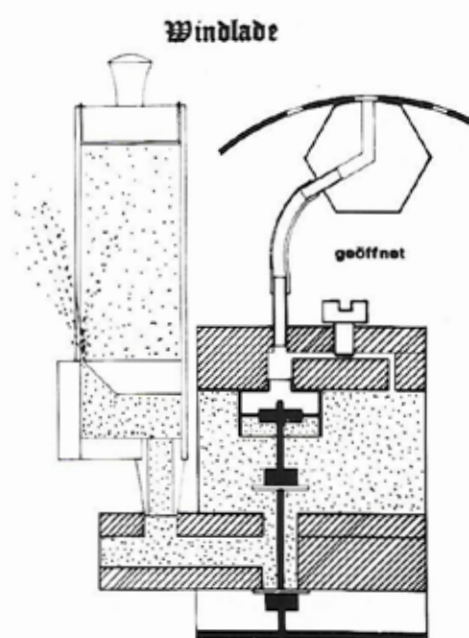


Diagram 5

As a final piece of information I want to include the tracker scale of this 20 note, roll operated "keyless" organ:

Nr.	Note	Nr.	Note	Nr.	Note
1	F	8	g^0	18	b^1
1a	f^0	9	a^0	19	C^2
2	B	10	b^0	20	d^2
2a	b^0	11	c^1		
3	c^0	12	d^1		
4	d^0	13	$d^\#$		
5	$d^\#$	14	e^1		
6	e^0	15	f^1		
7	f^0	16	g^1		
		17	a^1		

News from Other Societies

Periodicals published in English:

AMICA Bulletin, Vol 56, No 3,
May/June, 2019

(see also www.amica.org)



The first five pages of this edition are dedicated to the Bovey Collection – a large collection of mechanical instruments in Virginia City, Montana. Virginia City is a ghost town. At its zenith during the gold rush its population was over 10,000 but by the 1940s this had dwindled to 150. Charles Bovey was motivated to buy all the buildings in Virginia City and Nevada City and restore them to their original condition. Through a lucky coincidence, he was able to purchase the Molinari Organ works in New York, with its inventory, which formed the basis of the collection, which has expanded dramatically. Following Charles Bovey's death, his family sold the two towns to the state of Montana, along with the collection, which has over a million and a half artefacts. Over the years many items had deteriorated, but are gradually being restored. For more information you can go to www.virginiacitymt.com.

The subject of the regular column, Nickel Notes by Matt Jaro is Sandy Lechtick, whose main interest is coin-operated machines, some of which are musical. His collecting philosophy is to focus on quality, not quantity, and to forge relationships with other collectors. On meeting Frank Nix he developed an interest in mechanical instruments. The article is very long as it goes on to describe the collection in detail – and it's a big collection! Many pieces have fascinating stories behind their acquisition. Spencer Chase then writes about 'The Value of MIDI' which is followed by an item on how to convert a roll to a MIDI file by David Burritt. These are two in the series on MIDI, and more follow: MIDI History and Technical Component by William Klinger; Arranging Music Rolls Through MIDI by Mikey Mills; Useful MIDI Programs by Spencer Chase; The Steinway Spirio: a Reproducing MIDI, Solenoid Piano for a New Generation, Part One: An Owner's Report, by Brian Wenzinger, and Part Two: A Technician's Report by Paul Manganaro. There is a then a short feature

by Matthew Caulfield on the Wurlitzer's use of Sousa's Liberty Bell March, which it issued in three different versions. There is then a brief account of an event staged at the Seattle Museum of History and Industry on Veterans' Day, 2018, timed to be a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI, and an opportunity to introduce the public to the player piano. The contents for this edition conclude with reports from the Founding, Northern Lights and Pacific Can-Am Chapters.

Mechanical Music, Vol 65,
No 3 May/June 2019

(see also www.mbsi.org)



An interesting snippet in the message from President Clay Witt, who relates that Nico Wiegman has drawn his attention to a website, musipedia.org, which can help you identify those unknown tunes on your instruments.

The opening pages proper of this edition prefigure the 2019 annual convention by publishing biographies of three incoming Trustees, and the new recording Secretary. Don Teach is the subject of the regular Matt Jaro column, Nickel Notes. Based in Louisiana, Don's specialty is pianos and orchestrions; as well as owning several, many have passed through his hands as restoration projects. Charles Hildebrand describes how he repaired his take-up roll drive on his 20/31 Raffin organ, whilst Bill Wineburgh writes about making a missing winding handle for a box he was working on. We then have a five-page item about electric banjos, penned by Dr Wayne Finger. Another restoration story has been submitted under a pen name, so we don't know the author, about using a 3D printer to make missing parts from plastic to restore a Regina disc box. Al Zampa then tells the story behind the Zampas' 'Jello Box' – a 24 1/2 inch interchangeable cylinder musical box by Mermod Frères. Another brief item features a sur plateau snuff box, restored by Robin Biggins. The contents of this packed edition conclude with reports from the Southeast, Sunbelt, Golden Gate, and Southern California Chapters.

North West Player Piano Association
Journal Spring/Summer 2019

(see also www.pianola.org.uk)



I have to endorse the sentiments of the Editor who says 'playing rolls should be fun' and that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to play a roll. In the first article of this edition we are introduced to some of the keyboard instruments in the royal collection. The 'gold coloured' piano seen behind the Queen as she gave her traditional Christmas address to the nation in 2018, was made by Erard of Paris, a manufacturer favoured by Chopin and Liszt. It had been bought by Queen Victoria, who played it alongside her Consort, Albert. Other instruments briefly noted are a Steinway and Broadwood, as well as a baby grand piano by Octavius Newcombe of Toronto, Canada, and the organ in the ballroom of Buckingham Palace. Other royal residences also house keyboard instruments. As far as automatic instruments go, Queen Victoria had an Aeolian 'push-up', Queen Alexandra (wife of Edward VII) owned a Wilcox and White player piano, King George V owned an Aeolian player piano, Queen Mary (wife of King George V) bought an Ampico grand, George VI had an Ampico upright and Princess Margaret a Weber grand pianola. There are no conventional pneumatically operated player pianos currently in the royal collection as far as is known. Francis Bowdery summarises (over a number of pages!) some observations made by Association members on Ampico A and B rolls, before we move on to a piece entitled 'Player Piano Notes from "The Gramophone" Player Piano Supplement.' There is an item on the St Albans Organ Museum describing a visit to it by a member, and then Chilean pianist, Claudio Arrau, is the subject in the series 'Famous Musicians.' He is described as one of the most celebrated pianists of his era, his era being 80 of the 100 years of the twentieth

Continued on page 258

century. He was the skilled interpreter of the music of many composers of different types and eras. He seems to have been somewhat of a prodigy, and, after travelling to Germany to continue his musical studies, was only eight years old when he recorded his first rolls. A particularly profitable time for him was learning under the tutelage of Martin Krause, who unfortunately subsequently succumbed in 1918 'Spanish flu' pandemic. Well, and so the biography continues for another 6 pages! I always find this publication extremely interesting because it is full of personal detail, and most of the articles are relatively brief. Thus we have one about internet sites where you can see and hear player pianos, one about music produced on rolls aimed at children, one on Cavendish pianos, one about an art creation involving the digitisation of the notes of the first movement of the Moonlight Sonata, with the resultant signal being fired off at the moon – and being reflected back. One longer item features Bösendorfer pianos and player pianos, while another, Steinway & Sons Pianola Pianos. There is a more a more technical piece on Duo-Art spool box switches, before we have another biographical piece, the subject of which is Frederic Lamond, another of the 'great pianists of the player piano era ...' On a different note – I have rarely seen anything in this publication about barrel pianos, but five pages are dedicated to a description of what they and their history. Almost at the end and we find some brief notes on the 'Neo-Bechstein Piano, and Music Typewriters,' five pages about the well-loved hymn Jerusalem, a light-hearted look at 'Instrumental Multitasking' and a report of the meeting held 16th September, 2018, in Rutland.

Vox Humana, July 2019

(see also www.moos.org.uk)

In the opening article entitled 'An Introduction to Vibratones and Jazz Flutes' we learn that the distinctive sound which separates Belgian dance and café organs from other mechanical organs is the incorporation of the ranks of pipes

known and the 'Jazz flute' and 'Vibratone.' The article goes on to elaborate how they work, along with the 'tremulant' device to render the characteristic dance organ sound. Dr Andrew Leach writes about his father, Ronald Leach, as a tribute to the latter, who died aged 93 in 2019. Ronald saw and heard many fair organs as he grew up, and was determined to have a 'music machine' of his own day. Having qualified as an architect, the first machine in his collection was a Welte cottage style 2 orchestrion(!), which he restored and got working without any previous knowledge. He then added a player piano, various music boxes, a Mills Violano Virtuoso, a Philips piano orchestrion, and then an 84-key Mortier organ, known as 'The Trumpeter,' which he restored. His son goes on to say that Leach snr was a pioneer in the early days of mechanical music instrument collecting and restoration, from the late 1950s and early '60s, and a founder member of the Mechanical Organ Owners Society. Peter Craig then describes, briefly, a trip he made to the Munich Oktoberfest, first in 1983 and then again in 1989; on both occasions there were some organs present, but played very little. He asks if anyone has been since. We are then treated to Rosemarie Hood's American Road Trip part 2, which took her to the respective collections of Bob Gilson, Bill Nunn, and Dick and Lynn Lokemoen. This edition concludes with a tribute to Dorothy Robinson, who passed away in January of last year.

Non English-Language Journals

**L'Antico Organetto 21,
No 2, August 2019**



(see also www.ammi-mm.it)

This edition opens with a feature about the restoration of the hydraulic organ at the Villa d'Este, Tivoli, which was built in 1567 to entertain the guests at the Villa. Naturally over the years it suffered from wear and tear, not to mention atmospheric conditions. Something completely different, a barrel piano from the 'Musicalia' Museum was used as a prop during shooting of the live-action

film Pinocchio, starring Roberto Begnini – who, if my memory serves me right, won an Oscar (or two) in 1997 for his film, *Life is Beautiful*. A rather splendid example of a 'whistling man' is the subject of the next article, acquired by the Musicalia Museum. This is followed by an article the topic of which is recording on wax, 'from Leonardo to Edison', and then Part 4 in the series (shared with the German Society) on mechanical music machines powered by Sterling motors.

Het Pierement, Vol 66 No 2, April 2019

(see also www.draaiorgel.org)

The first article describes how an annual organ day came to be held at the Arnhem open air museum from 1977 until 2018, with an account of how the event developed. We are then treated (and it is a treat, as the images are in colour) to seven pages about the organ building tradition in Cuba – a subject which surfaces from time to time in various periodicals, although the Dutch have the advantage of a Cuban-built organ located in Amsterdam. We then move on to the 12th instalment of the series entitled 'The Symphonia Archive', relating to Popper orchestrions found in the Netherlands. This is followed by a very wordy item 'Out and about with the little radio', and then a response to an article in a previous edition. Henk Hiddinga writes about Maria Grever, 'the first female Mexican composer of international renown.' Her music, performed by (amongst others) Dinah Washington and the Andrews Sisters, is known to organ enthusiasts as her compositions are found on organ music. There is then a promotional piece about a forthcoming book, 'The Mortier Story', and a short report on Rein Schenk receiving the award of Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau, in late 2018. This edition concludes with a feature on an accordion duo called Kermisklanten (= fairground customers) and a few short reports of various open days and events.



Schweizer Verein der Freunde,
No 134, April 2019

(see also www.sfm.ch)



This opens with an account of an SFMM society visit to the Seewen Museum in November 2018. About 60 members attended, split into two groups. I am intrigued by the photographs, which appear to show lots of different instruments in a storage cupboard – only because I have seen a similar cupboard in UK, but less well-organised. Also in November 2018 there was a large mart for buying/selling mechanical instruments held in the KMM (Klang-Maschinen Museum in Dürnten.) This looks as though it has become an annual event. This is followed by an article posing the question as to whether UNESCO is about to recognise watchmaking and ‘art mechanics’ (whatever that is!) as cultural heritage. We then have our attention drawn to the fact that the Seewen Museum will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in March 2019, with a special exhibition, until March 2020. A provocative title, ‘What do the Russians and Zurich citizens have in common?’ It goes on to relate how Peter Rohrer acquired a ‘black monster’ – but which after restoration became a natural wood-coloured orchestrion, from Odessa. And what do they have in common? They both like the same march tune, as discovered on the orchestrion. After three pages of tribute to the late Eric Traber, there is an extensive account of a visit to the 50th Great Dorset Steam Fair. Peter & Jacqueline Both then continue their series on ‘Madness or passion and fascination’, focusing on two Regina instruments of theirs, an auto disc changer and a writing desk. This is followed by more on the Seewen museum and how a private collection became a public museum, in the form of an interview of the original collector, Dr h c Heinrich Weiss.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020

2 – 4 April 2020	MBSGB Spring Meeting. Scarborough. Due to the Social Distancing Restrictions imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic this meeting is postponed until Spring 2021
18 April 2020	MBSGB London and Home Counties Group. Cancelled
25 April 2020	MBSGB Midlands Group. Cancelled
3 May 2020	RetrotechUK, previously known as the National Vintage Collectors Fair. https://www.retrotechuk.com/ Cancelled
16 May 2020	The Grange Musical Collection, Open Day. Jonny Ling, The Grange, Palgrave, Norfolk, IP22 1AZ. 01379 783350. musicmuseum54@yahoo.co.uk Status unknown at time of going to press. Please check before travelling
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. Postponed until 16 May 2021
23 May 2020	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Cancelled
6 June 2020	MBSGB AGM & Society Auction. The AGM is postponed and will take place immediately before the AGM in 2021. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR Y/E 31/12/19 PUBLISHED ON PAGE 220
19 – 21 June 2020	International Organ Festival. Waldkirch, Black Forest, Germany. Cancelled. The next festival will be 24-26 June 2022
19 July 2020	International Festival of Mechanical Music. Les Gets, France. Status uncertain at time of going to press
11 – 13 Sept 2020	MBSGB Autumn Meeting. To be held in the Welsh spa town of Llandrindod Wells. Postponed until 10 September 2021
5 Dec 2020	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. 11.00 start. Please contact John Phillips, 01584 781118. Status to be confirmed in forthcoming issues

STOP PRESS

Steve Tanner has uploaded a short video of his harmonium player automaton, featured in *The Music Box* last time (Vol 29 No 5), which can be viewed at

https://youtu.be/mmpp_1l7rlw

Do watch this delightfully entertaining piece.

Classified Advertisements

FOR SALE

For sale: Cabinetto six music rolls [would split] including selections from Mary Poppins, My Fair Lady, Music Hall; Rare **Edelweiss** 12 inch Disc musical box [mechanism just professionally restored]; Aeolian model "F" Orchestrelle 8 feet tall, 116 note, fully rebuilt new bellows, pouches and valves etc; Set of Piano tuning tools and wad-punches for punching out leather & felt, I will not need these any more; **Triola Zither** + up to 40 rolls; **Concert Roller Organ** [fully restored]; Tanzbar 28-note roll-playing Concertina, bellows rebuilt so plenty of air; Cylinder box large 10 tunes; Symphonion 13 1/4 inch edge drive nice clean working well; **Amorette** 24 note; **Phoenix** 24 note [two available] Also **Piano rolls** including newly made Boogie and upbeat titles; original rolls NOW HALF-PRICE to clear. Organette music rolls, discs, cobs etc. Last 300 new piano roll boxes [cutters also for sale now for 65 and 88 note sizes as I will not be having any more boxes made]. Disc storage bags, spare parts for Organettes. Clearing last pre-punched 20-note music for card-strip playing musical boxes and blank card for the 15-note size. Wooden disc storage boxes to clear space.

About 100 other instruments all around the UK, two large collections in Hampshire, one is for restoration, the other has all instruments professionally restored already, other instruments in Sussex, Luxemburg and France. please ask for list & photos.

Kevin McElhone 01536 – 726759

kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com

(note the underscore _ between my 2 names)

For sale: Book of Little Slaves of the Harp by John E. Zucchi. Hard back book of 208 pages complete with dust cover in very good condition, all about Italian children being used on the streets to play street pianos, barrel organs etc. Seen on Amazon priced £73. Offered at £50 + P&P.

Mrs Joyce Turner 01924 272418, joyce.turner1@talktalk.net

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

Copy deadlines are normally:

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Publication dates:

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

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

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Kevin McElhone 01536 - 726759

kevin_mcelhone@hotmail.com (note the underscore _ between my 2 names)

New members

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

Steve Barret-White	Surrey
Robert Whitehurst	Northants
Alexander Singewald	Netherlands
Rosemary Prime	Sussex
Freddy Heyse	Belgium
Mr Leslie Garner	Lancashire
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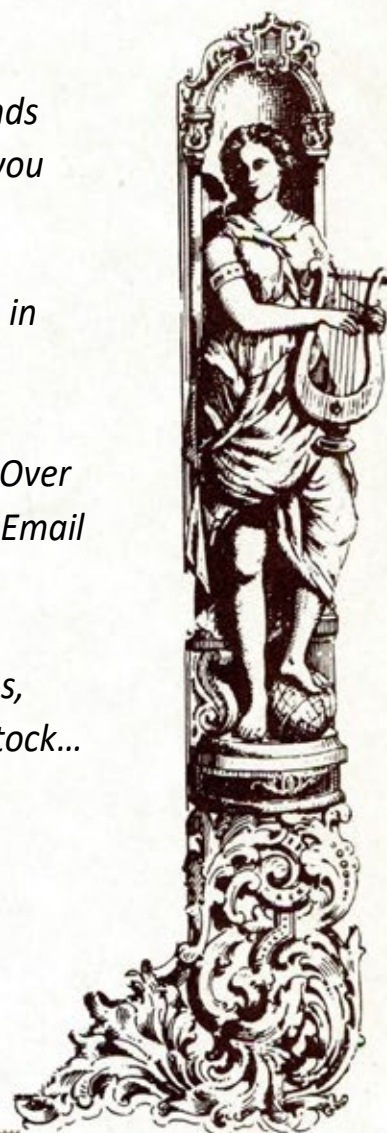
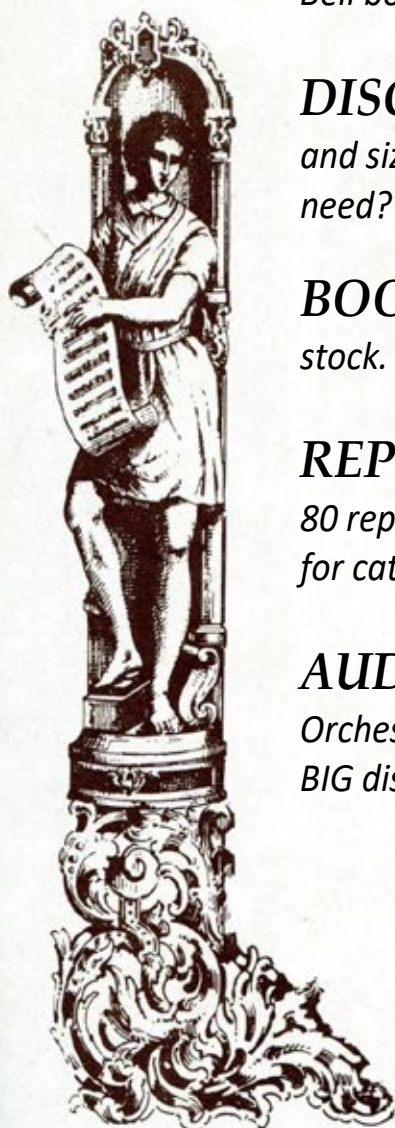
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“Clown sur Chaise” Musical Automaton by Leopold Lambert, c. 1900

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“Harp Piccolo” Musical Box, probably Karrer, c. 1885
Estimate: 6.000–8.000 € / \$ 6,660–8,880



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Estimate: 3.000–5.000 € / \$ 3,300–5,550

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“Airophon” Fairground Organ by Gebrüder Bruder, Waldkirch

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Polyphon Style 4 Automatic Disc-Changing Musical Box, c. 1900

Estimate: 18.000–22.000 € / \$ 19,950–24,400



Frisian Musical Hall Clock by Abenius, 1796

Estimate: 12.000–15.000 € / \$ 13,300–16,650



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Estimate: 15.000–20.000 € / \$ 16,650–22,200



Rare Empire Timepiece with Organ, probably by Christian Ernst Kleemeyer, c. 1800

Estimate: 15.000–20.000 € / \$ 16,650–22,200

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