

THE

MUSIC BOX

JOURNAL OF



THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Volume 2, No. 2, Summer, 1965



THE EDITOR WRITES:

W. H. H. H.

This, the tenth issue of our Journal, is to be circulated to many of the corners of the world. It will be read in America, in Canada, Rhodesia, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, Australia. It will bring the intimate details of our May meeting to Members who were unable to attend in person, Members in other countries. This indeed is a great achievement and a far

cry from our small beginnings three years ago. Within our Membership, we are proud to have such expert and knowledgeable persons who are able to contribute the fine material which we publish. Much of that which we have printed has never before been recorded and most of our contents can honestly claim never before to have been collated and published. I come back to my own basic premise that individually we all know something - together we know just about everything. THE MUSIC BOX is unfolding so much that is intriguingly fresh in automatophonica that we must all now know that my original premise is correct. To all of you who can contribute something - one little piece in the historic mosaic, one small item of interest, please do not hesitate to put pen to paper.

CYLINDER RE-PINNING

This job is undertaken by Messrs. Baud Freres of Geneva who are Members of the Society. Due to the ramifications and viscissitudes of customs duties, any Member wishing to have a cylinder re-pinned is urged to



contact The Secretary for full details as to how to go about arranging this.

Concurrent with this, several Members have been experimenting with varying degrees of success with re-pinning cylinders themselves. Among these, the achievements of Mr. David Tallis of Pinner are particularly praiseworthy and he has recently completed a 9" Nicole four-air cylinder in under fifteen hours. The box plays perfectly and David has promised to prepare an article for the Autumn issue on his trials and tribulations. In the meanwhile, he entreats me to say that he is in no way enthusiastic at the present moment

to entertain such work for Members and he begs to be left alone to perfect his techniques for a while. Sporting the oak, chaps!

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION - NOTHING TO DO WITH MUSSORGSKY

Many have been the congratulatory letters from Members concerning the new production techniques used in THE MUSIC BOX, in particular the fine illustrations. This is, of course, entirely thanks to the magnificent gesture of Messrs. Gilchrist Bros (Photo Engravers) of Leeds who, through Mr. & Mrs. Gilchrist, provide us with eight photo-pages per issue printed from fine-screen half-tone blocks on art paper completely free of any charge. Anyone who has the slightest experience of block-making and of printing will recognise that this is indeed a generous action.

EXPANDING OUR INTERESTS

Because we are The Musical Box Society, it is all too easy to forget that our aims and objects clearly show that we exist to uphold a co-operative interest in all forms of mechanical musical instruments, not just musical boxes.

Indicative of these broad interests is the contents of THE MUSIC BOX and in this issue we have articles on barrel pianos, a mechanical zither, a review of fairground organ records and so on. Forthcoming issues will include articles on the Imhof & Mukle Orchestrion, an unusual Regency-style barrel piano, very early musical movements and similar diversified items.

And for no sane reason whatsoever, the attached drawings are reproduced with credit and grateful thanks to PUNCH magazine....



SUMMER MADNESS, GRASSHOPPERS, NICOLAS, CAST IRON - & PLASTIC MACS

It was one of those very loud mornings - the sort you usually find hand-in-hand with a hangover. The birds were puffing out their cheeks and going it full volume, the crickets were doing whatever it is they do with their legs as loud as they could and the air was full of that peculiar sort of hum which means a warm summer day. And I hadn't been drinking, either.

I was sitting on a grassy knoll in the Forest of Dean, musing on my musical boxes and pausing only to mete out vengeance to those ants who preferred the texture of my legs to that of the aforesaid grassy knoll. High above in the almost tropical blue sky one of those aeroplane things droned deeply, invincibly and invisibly, belying its precise presence only by a burbling and billowing gossamer strand of white. Still the crickets cricked and the birds blew fortissimo. It was indeed a loud morning. I fell to considering this fine modern age with its solid titanium sonic flying machines, its transistorised radios, its cubist homogenised architecture, its journeys into space and its codein tablets.

How modern we all are today! Even here in the forest, the woodman's axe no longer takes an hour to end the life of a 100-year old conifer - one weedy, asthmatic individual can do it solo in a minute with a buzz-saw. Now there's progress for you! Mind you, it's all too easy to forget how highly specialised and industrialised were our forefathers one hundred and more years ago. Some of the skills of the ironfounder, patternmaker and wood carver have never been surpassed and are seldom even equalled today. True we can make a plastic table look just like carved wood. True we can grow real flowers almost as good as the plastic ones. But the life-long acquisition of skills of the hand has certainly had its day.

Again how many people really realise that the art and craft of cast-iron, for example, developed at the end of the 18th century and reaching its peak in the last century, is never approached today. Who cares, you say! Why, our predecessors thought nothing of designing and making the most genuinely delicate things in cast iron such as flower vases, tables, chairs. Even today, given that we have more refined metals to work with, the magnificent finery of the balcony-work within the Corn Exchange in London (melted down only last year in the path of the cubist onslaught) could never again be equalled. And one of Telford's great achievements in cast iron bridges has now been declared redundant and is to go for scrap to rid us forever of the embarrassing thought that we couldn't do it today - concrete is so much cheaper and nicer to look at. Not that there's anything new in this vandalism of progress. Our Victorian predecessors even tore down one of the most attractive of London's Wren churches - St. Benet Finks in Threadneedle Street - in 1842 to make way for a horseway through the city.

Few today could reproduce the grandiose and grandiloquent complexity of a large Polyphon cabinet or the tracery of the inlay of a Nicole case. Think of the skill that went into designing and making cylinder pricking machinery, production jigs and equipment. Then look at the credit side of artistic progress today! Who wants a marquetry space-ship? Or a hand-made, curlicue-bedizened motor-car? No, we should face that, as with the great Chinese civilisation 4,000 years ago, we are on the decline. Our ikons demand utilitarianism, rapid cheap production and feature a consequent happy disregard for practical or artistic durability. We no longer really know how to do fine things - and only just know how to appreciate them on a minority basis. Perhaps it is as well, therefore, that we are on the way down for he who cannot appreciate things beautiful - natural or man-made, he whose attitude is perverse enough to see beauty in the ugliness his own misdirected mind creates - he's a jolly poor character with which to share the joys of living.

Quite suddenly, I realised that the sun had gone in and it started to rain. I fumbled in my pocket for my folding plastic rain cape. Jolly good things, y'know. Bet old Dave Lecoultre never had one of these naty devices in Geneva a hundred years back!

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

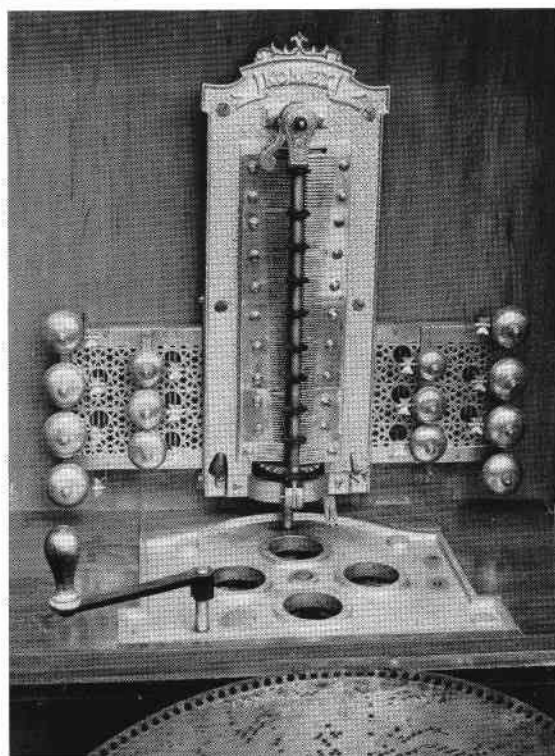
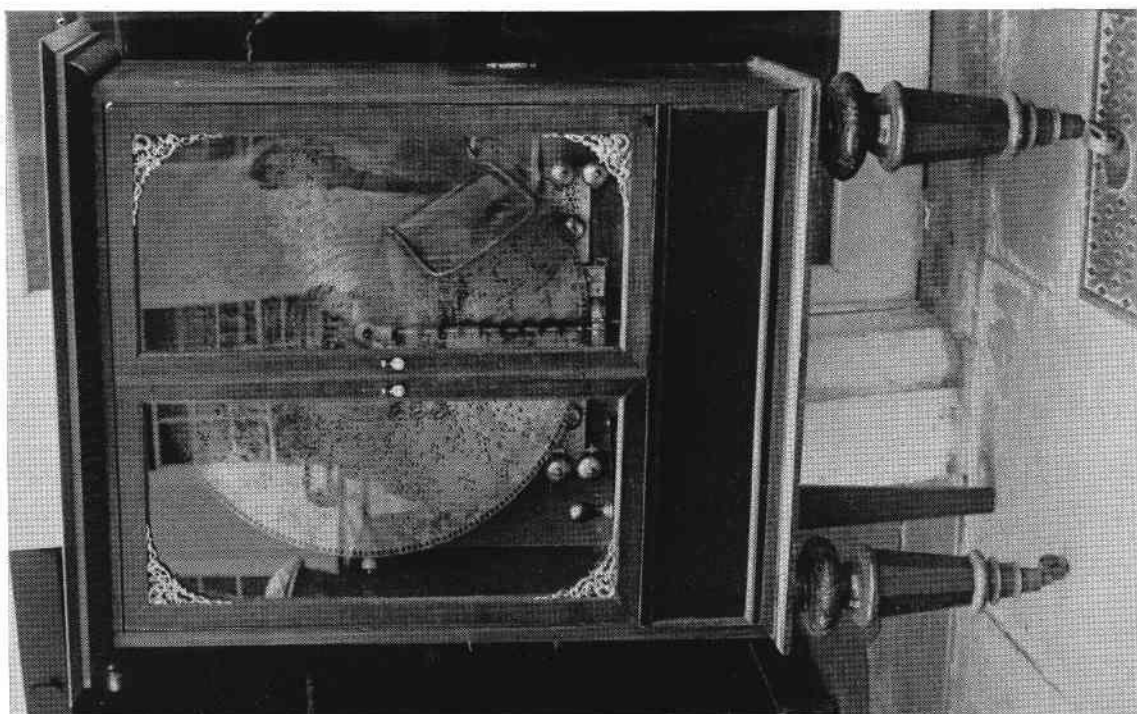


Schutzmarke.

KOMET TRADE MARK

Following the article in the Christmas issue of THE MUSIC BOX, we reproduce here the KOMET disc machine trade mark.

The Komet is known to exist in at least four sizes - 13", 17", 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ " and 33 $\frac{3}{8}$ " disc diameters. German in origin, the discs are richly ornamented with decoration and are polished bright steel with printing in black. The manufacturer and exact location are as yet unknown but the model depicted on the right seems to be a product of the early 1900's - fairly late for a disc machine. Of gargantuan proportions, the instrument is driven by a spring motor measuring almost 15" across, the spring being 1/16" thick! The case of the model here pictured in the Portobello Road probably is not original.





The barrel organ shown on the facing page was made about one hundred and fifty or so years ago by the London firm of Longman & Broderip, one of the foremost manufacturers of barrel organs at a time when this instrument was in great vogue both for providing religious music and dance music. The barrel organ enjoyed the then unique responsibility of being the only mechanical musical instrument upon which current musical works could be preserved. Many of the dances and jigs of the time as well as now little-known hymns and fanfares owe their performance today to having been pinned for posterity on a barrel organ.

LONGMAN & BRODERIP BARREL ORGANS

The particular purpose of this article is to record the makers label of instructions and the programme of this particular organ - both of which are of interest to musicologist and collector alike.

The instrument is a 21-key organ mounted on a separate stand which contains storage racks for the two barrels. Featuring three ranks of pipes - stopped diapason, principal and fifteenth, the organ has been restored to original condition and is complete in every respect.

Each barrel plays ten tunes and the titles are as follows: Barrel 1 The Devonshire Minuet, Prince Wales's Minuet, The Welsh Jigg, The Princes Favourite, Jenny Sutton, The Fife Hunt, The Haunted Tower, Kiss me Sweetly, Munny Musk, The Storace. Barrel 2; Morgan Ratler, Nottingham Races, The Agreeable Surprise, La Bella Catherina, Mrs. Casey, White Cockade, Chelmsford Races, Patty Clover, The Nymph, The Plough Boy. The spellings in this list are as written on the parchment tune sheet stuck on to the lid of the organ above a large label which reads as follows:-

"Directions for the Management of Longman & Broderip's Barrel Organs manufactured and sold wholesale and retail at No. 26 Cheapside and No. 13 Hay Market.

"To change the Tunes, and shift the Barrels - Observe on the Right hand side of the Organ, there are two brass sliding plates, one cross the other, the top plate draws towards you and that raises the keys from the barrel and prevents the keys and pins from touching each other while you change your tune, the upright sliding plate is for fixing the tune in the round pin that comes through the pannel on which is cut ten knotches for the tunes on the barrels; while the keys are free from the barrel you may shift it backwards or forwards by the brass pin, and set it to any tune you would play, counting the outside knotch for the first, push down the upright plate into the knotch and the cross plate from you that lets the keys on the barrel in order for playing. When it is set, you may play the tune over as oft as you please. When you change a barrel, pull the cross bolt towards you and raise the upright one that sets the barrel at

liberty, pull it out and let the two sliding plates remain untill you put in the other barrel and then you set your tunes as above directed".

The barrels of the Longman & Broderip organs are covered in a white paper and printed on this in a very decorative design is the following wording:

"LONGMAN & BRODERIP, No. 26 Cheapside and No. 13 Hay Market. Manufacture, repair and sell, wholesale and retail, organs, piano fortes, harpsichords, spinets, violas, guitars, flutes, fifes, horns, clarinets and every other kind of musical instrument. Also engrave and print the greatest variety of music by the most approve masters. Harpsichords, piano-fortes and spinets tuned in town and country on the most reasonable terms by the year, quarter or p^r time. NB Import the best Roman strings and genuine German wire. Large allowances to Merchants, Captains of ships and others who take for sale."

The inference of the last sentence suggests that sea captains took it upon themselves to shop for suitable wares to dispose of at their ports of call - not altogether an unlikely state of affairs at this time. The reference to 'Roman strings' illustrates that the Italians - who at this time were making stringed instruments and pianos (barrel and otherwise) in great numbers) were recognised as the best makers of musical instrument strings whilst the special flat brass wire used for barrel organ bridges and pallet springs hailed from Germany.

Longman & Broderip was founded in 1767 largely with finance provided by Muzio Clementi, the composer and keyboard instrumentalist. In addition to their role as musical instrument makers and distributors, they were also publishers of music. In 1798, they went bankrupt, Clementi losing heavily. From this dissolution, Clementi united with John Longman, founding with three others a new company at the old address - 26, Cheapside. Francis Broderip in the meantime founded a new company with C. Wilkinson at the other address, 13, Hay Market, as Broderip & Wilkinson, becoming Wilkinson & Co. by 1808. The Longman/Clementi partnership dissolved later and by 1806 the company was known as Clementi & Co. and they were in business making and selling musical instruments and publishing music. This explains the 'family likeness' between the barrel organs of Clementi, Broderip & Wilkinson and Longman & Broderip (see picture on Page 91 of the Clementi organ in Birmingham City Museum and compare with the illustration of the Broderip & Wilkinson organ on Page 17, Issue 4, Volume 1).

CAMPBELLS of 116, Trongate, Glasgow were one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of musical instruments in the North and the advertisements reproduced on Pages 49, 50 and 87 are from their catalogue of circa August 1894 (Contributed by A. Member)



THE NEW "AMOBAN" MUSICAL BOX,

WITH INTERCHANGEABLE CYLINDERS AND THE CHARMING ZITHER ACCOMPANIMENT.

THIS MUSICAL BOX differs from the ordinary Musical Box in this most important particular, that you can be supplied at a merely nominal cost with an unlimited number of Cylinders, playing an unlimited number of Tunes, without requiring to send us the original Box to be fitted with the Cylinders. This new system will be admitted by all lovers of the Musical Box to be a great advantage over the old system of Musical Box with fixed Cylinder.

THE PERFECT INTERCHANGEABLE MUSICAL BOX.

This splendid Musical Box has been made up specially of the very best material and workmanship, the Mechanism also being equal to the finest clockwork, and the melody of the various Tunes harmonised to perfection.

With Six Cylinders 6½ in. long, 2 in. diameter. Inlaid Fancy Wood Case, with Two Drawers to contain the Cylinders; Zither Accompaniment, Nickel Movement, winds up by means of a Detachable Crank Lever from outside, instead of the old style of Lever Winder. 36 Tunes with 6 Cylinders, 6 Tunes each. Price only £8 8s.

ENORMOUS DEMAND LAST SEASON FOR THIS SPLENDID BOX.

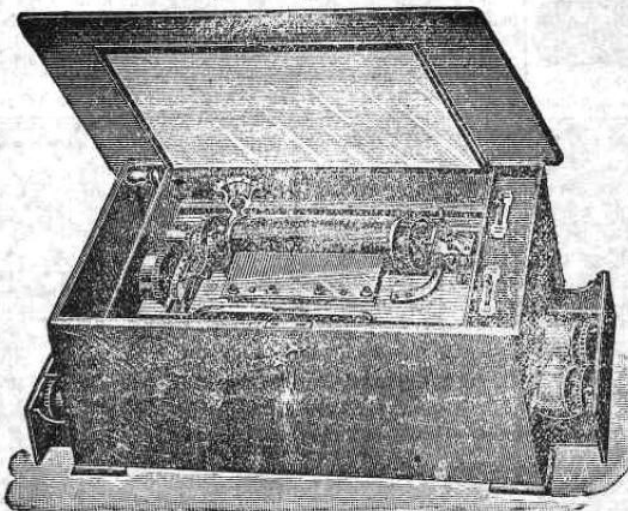
"A Thing of Beauty and a Joy for Ever."

THE NEW AMOBAN Musical Box PLAYS THIRTY-SIX TUNES.

Testimonial.

Broadhayes Farm,
Stockland,
Honiton, Devon, 1894.
Gentlemen,—The Amobean Musical Box arrived quite safe, and I am highly delighted with it. It is a perfect work of art, and it plays the various tunes, 36 in all, to perfection; the tone also is really splendid.

I am, yours truly,
GEORGE NEWTON.



THE NEW AMOBAN Musical Box PLAYS THIRTY-SIX TUNES.

Testimonial.

Strathern Lodge,
Crick.

Dear Sirs,—Miss Bainbridge wishes me to write and inform you that she duly received the New Amobean Musical Box safe and sound, and she is very much pleased with it. Its charming music gives her every satisfaction, and thanks you very much.

I remain, yours truly,
JOHN EWBANKS.

Inlaid Fancy Wood Case, with 2 Drawers to contain the Cylinders, Nickel Movement, 36 Tunes, with 6 Cylinders, 6 Tunes each. Price only £8 8s.

Carriage Paid to any Address in Great Britain with the following Coupon.

CAMPBELL'S PRESENTATION MUSICAL BOX COUPON.

Entitles the holder to the above-described Musical Box, playing 36 Tunes, with the New Tune Indicator, ZITHER and 6 Cylinders playing 36 Tunes, on receipt of P.O.O. for £8 8s. (ACCOMPANIMENT.)

This Coupon is not available after 30th September, 1895.

Cut out this.

Cut out this.

THE ABOVE BOX PLAYS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING TUNES.

SACRED SONGS.

CYLINDER No. 35.

Jesus of Nazareth.
Tell Me the Old Story.
Hold the Fort.
The Gate Ajar for Me.
Sun of My Soul.
Sweet Bye-and-Bye.

CYLINDER No. 47.

Awake, My Soul.
Glory to Thee, my God.
Old Hundred.
From Greenland's Icy Mountains.
A Few More Years Shall Roll.
Onward, Christian Soldiers.

FAVOURITE SONGS.

CYLINDER No. 36.

Robin Adair.
Annie Laurie.
Ye Banks and Braes.
Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled.
Auld Robin Gray.
Bluebells of Scotland.

CYLINDER No. 28.

Star-Spangled Banner.
Kathleen Mavourneen.
In the Gloaming.
Last Rose of Summer.
Blue Alsatian Mountains.
Auld Lang Syne.

FAVOURITE SONGS.

CYLINDER No. 40.

Oft in the Stilly Night.
Kate Kearney.
The Harp that once thro' Tara's Hall.
The Minstrel Boy.
Garryowen.
The Tar's Farewell.

CYLINDER No. 19.

Bay of Biscay.
Rule Britannia.
The Harmonious Blacksmith.
Home, Sweet Home.
The British Grenadiers.
Ehren on the Rhine.

A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF OTHER POPULAR TUNES NOW READY.

Sold only by CAMPBELL & CO., Musical Instrument Makers, 116 Trongate, Glasgow.

✱ THE LATEST MUSICAL MARVELS! ✱
 UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS OF THE "GEM" AND "CABINET"
AMERICAN ROLLER ORGANS

No Home Complete Without One. The Demand Last Year Greater Than Ever.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS ON A LARGE SCALE FOR THIS SEASON'S BUSINESS.
 These Organs have the Largest Sale of any Automatic Musical Instrument in the World.

THE MUSIC IS NOT PRODUCED WITH FRAGILE PAPER, BUT WITH
WOODEN ROLLERS!
 Outlasting a Thousand Perforated Paper Sheets.

1000 Rollers ready.
 List of Tunes sent on application



Only 1s each.
 List of Tunes sent on application.

THE "GEM" ROLLER ORGAN

The great demand last season for the Patent Roller Organs took us somewhat by surprise, and caused some delay in the execution of Customers' orders. This season we have prepared ourselves for a much larger demand, and we can send off all orders on the day after receipt of same.

P.S.—At 30s the "GEM" Roller Organ is simply given away.

1000 Rollers ready.
 List of Tunes sent on application



Only 1s each.
 List of Tunes sent on application.



✱ **IMPORTANT MUSICAL TESTIMONY.** ✱

The Editor of the Music Trades' Paper, "The Musical Instrument Maker," says—

"Messrs. Campbell & Co.—Dear Sirs,—I received on Monday the Automatic 'Roller Organ,' and tried it yesterday. I consider it very simple in working and easily adjusted in changing the tunes, which cannot fail to make it a favourite with the general public; at the same time it appears very durable, and will therefore bear severe handling. Another most important feature, in my opinion, is the sweet, round, mellow tone, which eminently justifies its title of 'Roller Organ,' and gives it a distinctive character from the Paper Music Instruments, which lovers especially of Sacred Music will appreciate.

"Yours truly,
 H. BROOKS, Jun."

The Editor of the "Court Circular and Court News," London, says—

"Within the past few years there has been—thanks to the strides of science—a remarkable improvement in the manufacture of Automatic Musical Instruments, by which we mean instruments so constructed that they can be played by persons who do not possess any knowledge of music. For years the Barrel-Organs had it all their own way; they were the only representatives of this class of invention. Following these came a class of instrument that plays music with Paper Rolls; but now our attention has been drawn to a wonderful musical instrument sold by the well-known musical instrument makers, Messrs. Campbell & Co., of Glasgow, called the 'Roller Organ,' which purports to be, and has every appearance of being, the latest musical marvel. The tone is simply magnificent, and is equal to any Organ."

For Descriptions and Drawings of "GEM" and "CABINET" ROLLER ORGANS, see next pages.

Most probably of German origin and circa 1900, the mechanical zither or Triola (pictured on Page 53) sets out to perform in the way of a zither from paper roll music. The device by which this is achieved, whilst being simple and effective, still demands not inconsiderable practice and dexterity to perform with success.

Shaped like a normal zither, the Triola has 25 single right-hand or finger strings covering three octaves. On the left hand side are 6 groups of 4 strings each to play the preset chords of C, G, F, D, A and E. The mechanical player fits quite separately over the 25 finger strings and is secured with three wood screws.

Contrived to be played on a table or other flat surface, a single folding leg is fixed beneath at the back but, as experience has shown that there is insufficient weight in the instrument to keep it steady whilst turning the handle and playing the chords, the fact that some other support is required in playing probably served as a contributory factor to the comparative rarity of the device today.

the mechanism of the **MECHANICAL ZITHER**

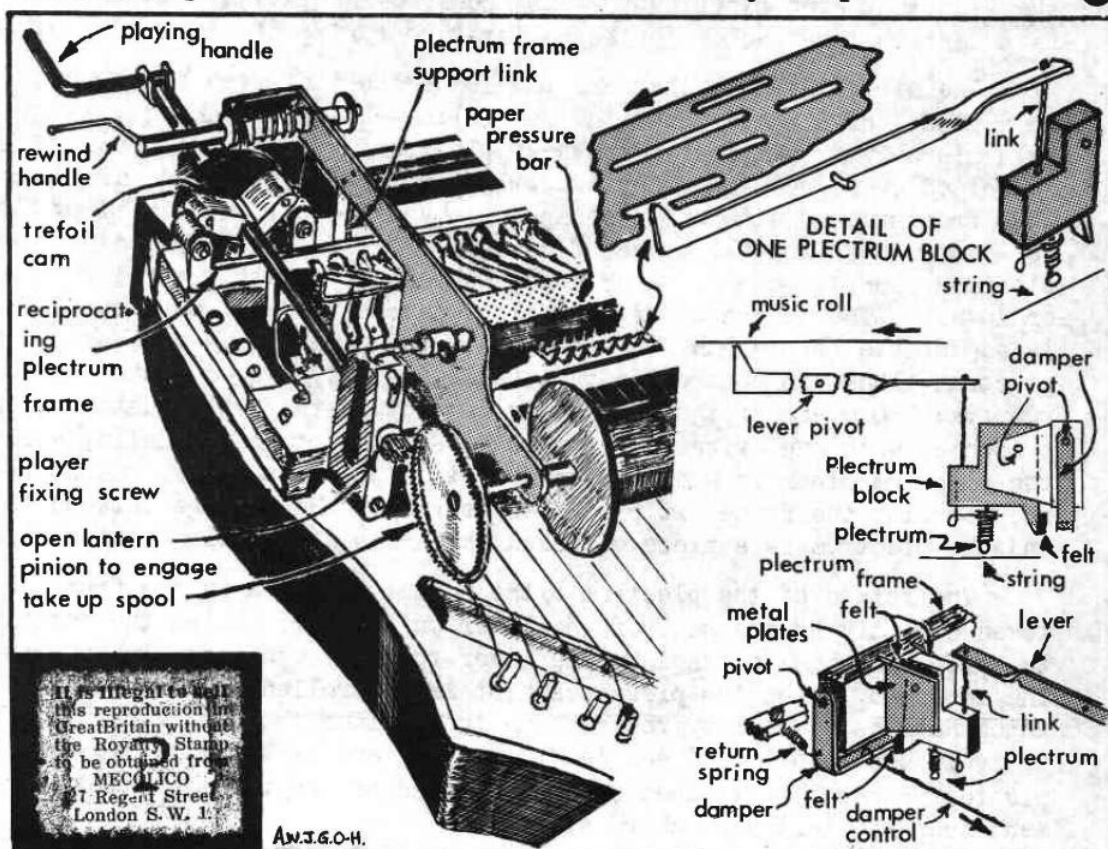
by **ARTHUR ORD-HUME**

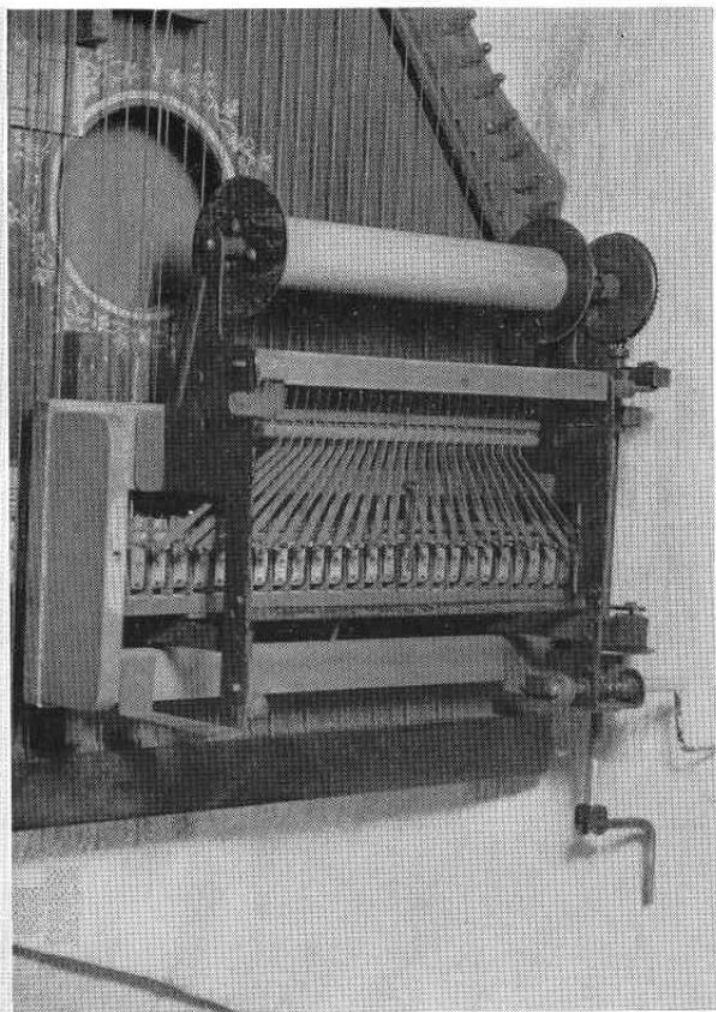
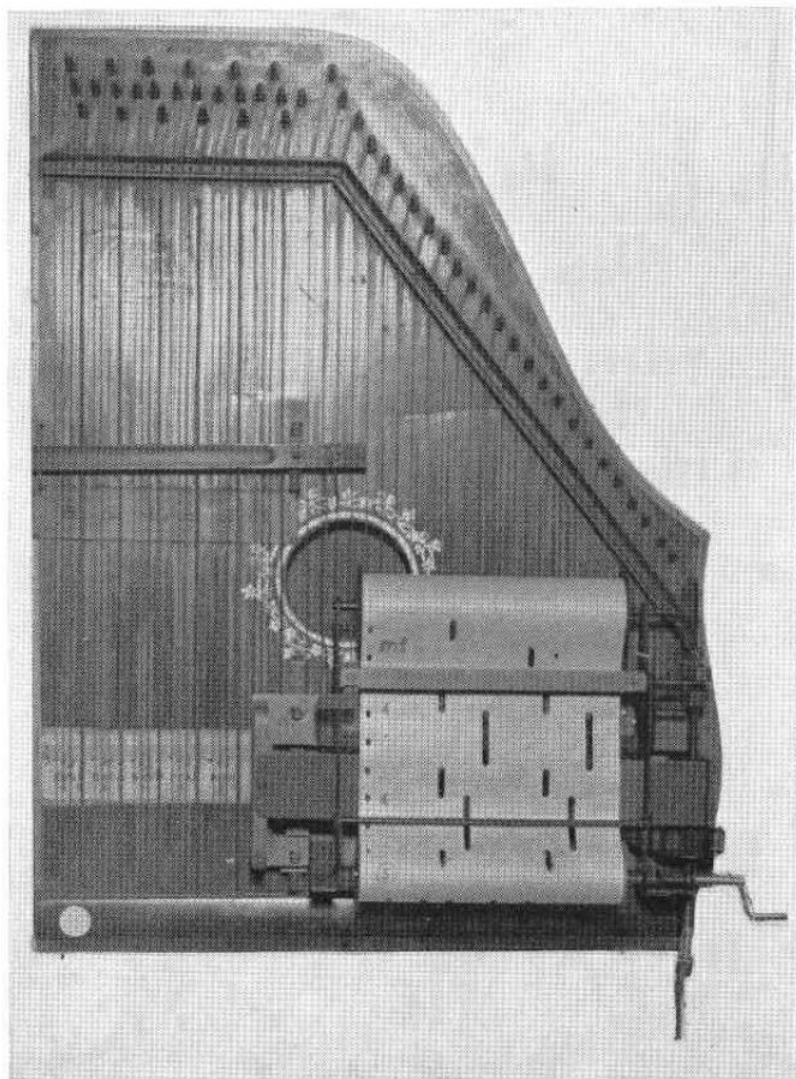
The strings of a zither are plucked as distinct from being struck (as in a piano) or scraped (as with the violin) and the plucking is imparted by a cleverly thought out transverse plectrum. This comprises a frame supported over the strings by two strips of spring steel and arranged to move from side to side on these springs by a trefoil cam turned by a handle - in itself a clever piece of design. This frame carries 25 hinged plectrum blocks, one for each note, which are freely pivoted to move up or down. The underside of each block carries a short coil spring which is adjustable for length. This spring is the plucking media. Each of these plectrum blocks is controlled by a lever assembly hinged behind the plectrum frame. One end of the lever seeks a slot in the paper music and, when presented with one, rises up through it. The other end falls, allowing the plectrum block in question to drop to a position where, as it reciprocates with the frame, it plucks the string. The linkage between the rod and the plectrum is a piece of waxed thread as a flexible tension piece.

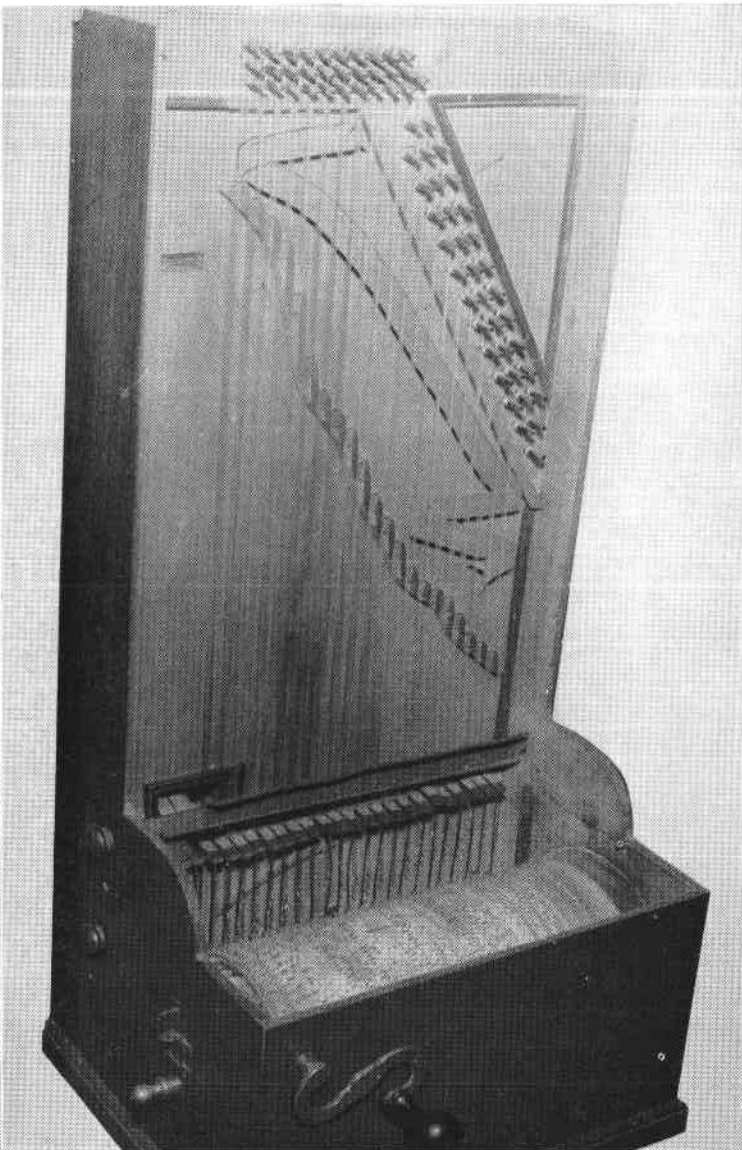
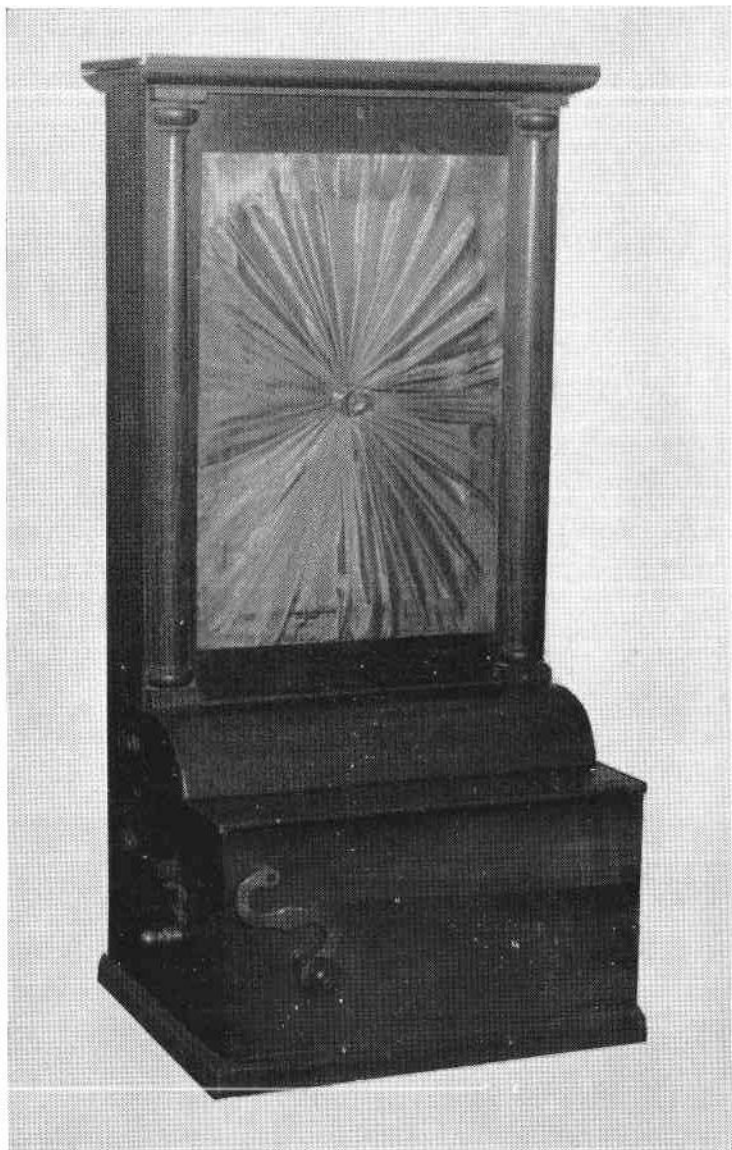
The return of the plectrum to the normal position in the frame is achieved directly by the pull of the lever on the cord whilst the descent of the plectrum when released by the lever to play the note is by gravity. The amount by which the plectrums drop is controlled by a transverse bar which acts as a damper by restricting the fall of the plectrums. This effectively controls 'loud' and 'soft' playing and is brought into use by a pivoted finger bar attached for convenience of playing the chord accompaniment over the left hand chord strings.

In playing, the music roll is placed in a carrier at the front of the instrument and threaded under a pressure bar which serves to keep the paper closely on to the protruding ends of the levers. The paper is then fed on to a take-up spool at the back of the player part of the instrument. The pressure bar is lowered on to the paper, this also serving to engage the mechanical drive to the take-up spool. The handle is then turned, the action being the combined rotation of the take-up spool and the reciprocation of the plectrum frame. The performer places his left hand on the pivoted finger bar which is moved to the relevant position to play soft or loud. Indications of expression are printed on the edge of the paper roll along with numbers which represent the correct supplemental chords to be played manually with the left thumb and forefinger.

When adjusted properly, the Triola is quite an effective instrument the staccato plucking of the strings being reminiscent of the balalaika although, naturally, the tone is essentially zither-like. The rate of plucking is three cycles per turn of the handle giving six plucks. No manufacturers name appears other than the name 'Triola'. The rolls bear a stamp (reproduced) over which is affixed a duty stamp.







The history of the barrel piano has already been outlined in the pages of recent issues of THE MUSIC BOX. The types of piano hitherto described, however, have been the larger kind and no reference has so far been made to the smaller mechanical pianos produced during the latter part of the nineteenth century until the decline of this type of instrument during the mid-Victorian era.

Often the accoutrement of the tinker or organ grinder, these instruments were usually carried by a leather strap on the back and stood on a portable base or pole. It might be added here that many an organette or portable instrument has received the anachronistic addition of a strap or

19th CENTURY PORTABLE PIANOS

by ARTHUR ORD-HUME

strap cleat in an endeavour to 'cash in' on the popular romance

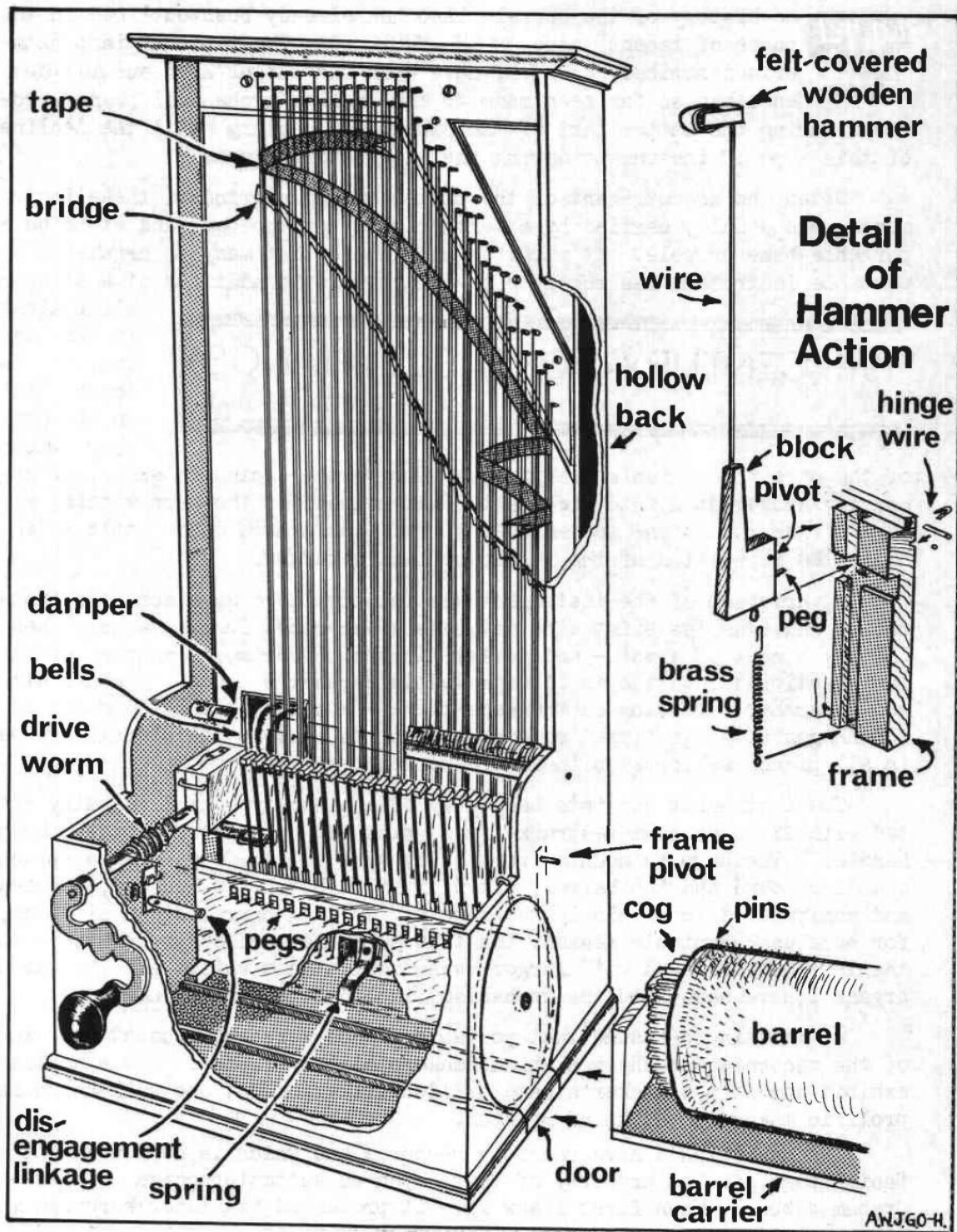
of the street musician's trappings. The portable piano's music, of necessity abbreviated into the small tonal compass of the harp within, was part of the town scene in past years and could have done little to enhance the reputation of the mendicant handle-turner.

A variation of the instrument was intended more as a domestic instrument and examples exist with delicately decorated fronts - sometimes bearing a coat of arms! - and toilet mirrors. One such example of the last-mentioned mutation is illustrated in Buchner's book together with yet a further variation on the same theme - a mechanical lyre made in Copenhagen although 'lyre' refers only to its shape - the strings are as in all pianos wallopped with little wooden hammers.

The instrument consists basically of a piano-type harp, usually fitted with 22 notes hammer-struck from pins set on a barrel turned by a handle. The harp is mounted vertically on a wooden frame with a spruce sounding board and the barrel, often of solid beech, is mounted, carried and manipulated in precisely the same way as in a barrel organ although, for some unaccountable reason, the tune selection mechanism is always on the left hand side as with larger mechanical pianos whilst all the barrel organs I have seen have the mechanism fixed on the right-hand side.

It is fair to assume that portable pianos were the product of many of the recognised mechanical piano makers already listed. Few examples exhibit any form of maker's name or identification but one well-known and prolific maker was Hicks of Bristol.

The one which I have recently restored and which is depicted on the facing page, is the property of that doyen of automatophonica - Member Graham Webb. When first I saw it, it presented its inner workings in



an embarrassing state of revelation due to missing silk. When played, it revealed an alarming dissonance reminiscent of some of the works of an impressionist modern 'twelve-toner' contrived during a drunken orgy with a bar piano. The fact that it played unrecognisable and the cause of this later proved to be remarkably simple and a basic appreciation of this will, I feel sure, aid Members who own similar instruments.

The instrument is all wood with the exception of iron string pegs, barrel fitments and so on. The harp comprises 23 notes each arranged with 3 strings equally tuned as on a conventional piano. 2 bells are also incorporated - happily with a device for switching them off. A 'damper' is also embodied with which to mute the strings. The hammer action is very simple indeed and each leather-faced wooden hammer head is mounted on a stiff wire link to a pivotted block which is operated by the barrel pins against a return spring of this brass wire. The noise produced by this arrangement is surprisingly loud and the volume of sound produced behoves a much larger instrument.

The hammers are all mounted in a wooden action board which is arranged to move back and forth from a linkage at the tune change mechanism to lift the pins clear of the hammers whilst the tune is being changed.

In restoration, I began by stripping out all the hammer mechanisms and in so doing discovered several broken and cracked hammer blocks and, very important, tired return springs. In playing, I had noticed that many hammers performed sluggishly, striking the strings at varying forces, thereby producing widely diversified volumes of sound. In renewing these brass springs, I brought all the hammers under the same spring tension. By adjusting the hammer heads so that, when at rest, they just cleared the strings, I immediately succeeded in producing even volume and, as the hammers struck with the same tension, the musical timing was right. Where previously had been an unrecognisable jumble of discords, there now came music! Tuning the harp was the next job and required a little experiment to obtain decent results. The use of a proper piano-tuners' lever key is essential here to get the correct fine adjustment. Being possessed with two fairly well-voiced ears as an excuse for not owning a tuning fork, the rest was straightforward.

The tuning scale on this piano, from left to right, is as follows:- D, A, G[♯], D, E, F[♯], G, G[♯], A, B, C[♯], D, E, F[♯], G, G[♯], A, B, C[♯], D, E, F[♯]

The instrument plays ten tunes, only four of which I can recognise and but two of which I can name - one being the 'Sailors Hornpipe'. On the back of the case are the remains of the original - and authentic - carrying strap! The two bells, by the way, are tuned to the same pitch which bears no relationship to any other notes on the harp and were no doubt inflicted on captive audiences to induce them to open their purses! ●

the self-acting piano

by the editor

When I was a very small boy (and that's a good cue to start yawning, I know!), there was a beautiful old mansion near at hand set in a huge garden which was landscaped with lovely trees, shrubs and a glorious lawn. From the gates, you could see this expanse of silky green grass - as smooth as the shoulders of De Milo. In the summer, flowery women in floppy hats and moustached men in pith helmets used to play that game where you put a ball under a big wire staple and try to clout it with a large wooden mallet - a game I found fascinating at the time mainly because I couldn't fathom what the dickens it was all about. However....

The house was a house of music and, on a hot August afternoon, the French windows would be opened wide and the sound of virtuoso piano playing would float out on the butterfly-laden fragrant air. Chopin, Bach, opera - it was all there and faultlessly played hour after hour. How I admired the technical skill of the performer!

Two small children lived at the house and ultimately we became pals since we both infested the same school. These two children (twin brothers six months younger than my mature nine years) told me, in answer to my repeated interrogation about the pianist, that nobody in the house played the piano. "It plays by itself" added the spottier of the two. The music at least equalled the excellence of that which I had been taken to hear at the Queens Hall and, to a rationally-minded, albeit grubby school-boy tending more towards the sceptic than the agnostic, these tales of a non-existent pianist didn't wash. My dearest wish thus became to see this marvel - if such a marvel really did exist outside what I already knew to be the wild imaginations of the two lads. Their father, however, did not encourage the entry of characteristically dirty schoolboys treading his carpet (no doubt not without justification) and I never did get the chance to see the thing.

One December night, after I had gone to bed, the alarm was sounded and I awoke and quickly dressed to find that the mansion was in flames. Despite the gallant efforts of the local brigade and countless volunteers with buckets of water from the lake behind the ivy-covered house, all was to no avail and the fine old mansion was completely destroyed. The legendary piano, too, was no more. I was terribly upset by the whole affair but more so because the mysterious music maker had perished in the fire.

During the war when things hotted up rather, my Mother and I sought respite from the blitz for a week on my maiden aunt's farm in Devon and the first night we were there she announced that she would keep us amused whilst she prepared dinner by playing the piano. This I couldn't figure but suddenly the mysterious self-acting piano was recalled to my mind.

Yes, she had a player piano and that was the first one I ever knowingly saw.

The player-piano is now once more in vogue after a period of grovelling in the very abyss of public popularity. The B.B.C. recently broadcast a series of programmes of music rolls entitled "The Late Romantic Piano". Thus entitled, only the avid reader of 'Radio Times' small print could be expected to have adduced that here was something worth while listening in to.

The programme set out to illustrate graphically by means of Ampico rolls performed on a Grotian-Steinweg Ampico reproducing piano the difference in styles of presentation of piano music over the years. The reproducing piano, for those who are not acquainted with it, is to all intents and purposes a normal player-piano, but the tone, timbre and volume of the music is controlled mechanically by ingenious devices which provide pedal effects and variations in weight of touch just as the live performer would make. The rolls for these special instruments are actual recorded performances by the original pianist - all such rolls give the name of the recording artist in the same way as the artist on a gramophone record.

Thanks to the ingenuity of the reproducing piano, we are thus able to hear today the exact same interpretation given to a musical score as was recorded on the roll maybe forty years earlier by a named pianist. Gramophone records of the period are, of course, not only technically inferior, but performers had to 'tailor' the length of their pieces to the fixed allowable time of the record. Not so the pianola roll which could be any length and was thus able to present music at the correct tempi.

The difference in styles of performance thus accurately assessed by music rolls of the time is noticeable indeed. If only the pianola could reproduce the performances of Liszt and Chopin, we would certainly be in for a surprise for it is now accepted that these composers performed their own works far more lyrically than the average modern performer. One is tempted to generalise, having listened carefully to this series of broadcasts, that the pianist of forty and more years ago was, perhaps, more of a showman and yet possibly more of a virtuoso than his counterpart today. This is, of course, thin ice upon which to skate, but these broadcasts tended, certainly, to show 'a tone, touch and a sense of poetry as well as sheer technique' seldom found today in live performances.

In Australia where the pianola has, for some obscure environmental reason, always found a very sizeable market and a lasting appreciation, new rolls are still being made today including music from such shows as "The Sound of Music" (still currently running in London), "Oklahoma" and "My Fair Lady" along with pot-pourries of present-day pop pieces. Monthly additions are published to the 2,000-odd roll catalogue.

As for me, I shall always associate the player piano with flowery ladies trying to staple balls to a lawn with a sledge-hammer

A RARE FIND

Member Ron Bayford of 10, Oakley Road, Wimborne, Dorset, has found a specimen of the Polyphon catalogue of about 1895-97. Because this is of such interest and because it must of necessity be a rare item, it is reproduced in full as the centre sixteen pages of this issue. The details of the enormous Polyphon factory are in themselves of interest - note the horse and cart despatch bay in the central courtyard by the foundry, the railway loading yard and the attempt at softening the workhouse appearance of the place by planting little trees around its stark walls. Largely destroyed by fire on June 6th, 1899, the factory gave employment to almost 1,000 persons at the height of Polyphon production. Within the catalogue we see such fascinating items as wrought iron disc storage racks, musical automata and huge self-changing clock-bearing movements. The cost of reproducing this catalogue is met entirely from the proceeds of a musical box raffle arranged between Gerry Planus and Graham Webb and staged at Graham's flat in March when £17 was raised for Society funds.

RON BAYFORD writes:-

Recently I acquired a 24½" Polyphon "Mikado" model, properly termed "Polyphon Musical Automaton No. 54". With it came an original Nicole Freres catalogue showing the model and various other Polyphons, some with musical clocks and one priced at a hundred pounds playing 24½" discs! Fancy listening to Wagner Military March No. 4008 every hour through the night! Another model that interested me was the Polyphon Savoyand musical automaton playing 15½" discs with figure in life-like colours. Whatever happened to those, I wonder? At the end of the catalogue is the Grand Overture Box with four springs playing for three hours.....

With the catalogue, I also have a 15-page list of 24½" Polyphon tunes in French, English, German, American, Argentine, Belgian, Danish, Bohemian Slavic, Italian, Polish, Russian, Norsk, Spanish, Hungarian &c with subsections in waltzes, marches, operas, hymns and so on. Another list 4001 to 4240 and an instruction list in old German print with page of illustrated spares all for the 24½" Mikado completes this treasure trove.

My machine has taken me weeks of work to bring it back to standard. Many new brakes had to be soldered on after the removal of much filth on the combs and dampers - mostly dog hair and bird seed, the owner having kept a hairy dog and racing pigeons! Luckily he greased the machine well too well, I should say. The tone with the 159 notes and four combs is quite nice now.

Extra copies of the Polyphon catalogue are available as a separate booklet price 5/- post free from The Secretary, all proceeds being devoted to the future publication of similar material of this type.



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International Inventions Exhibition,
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21, ELY PLACE.

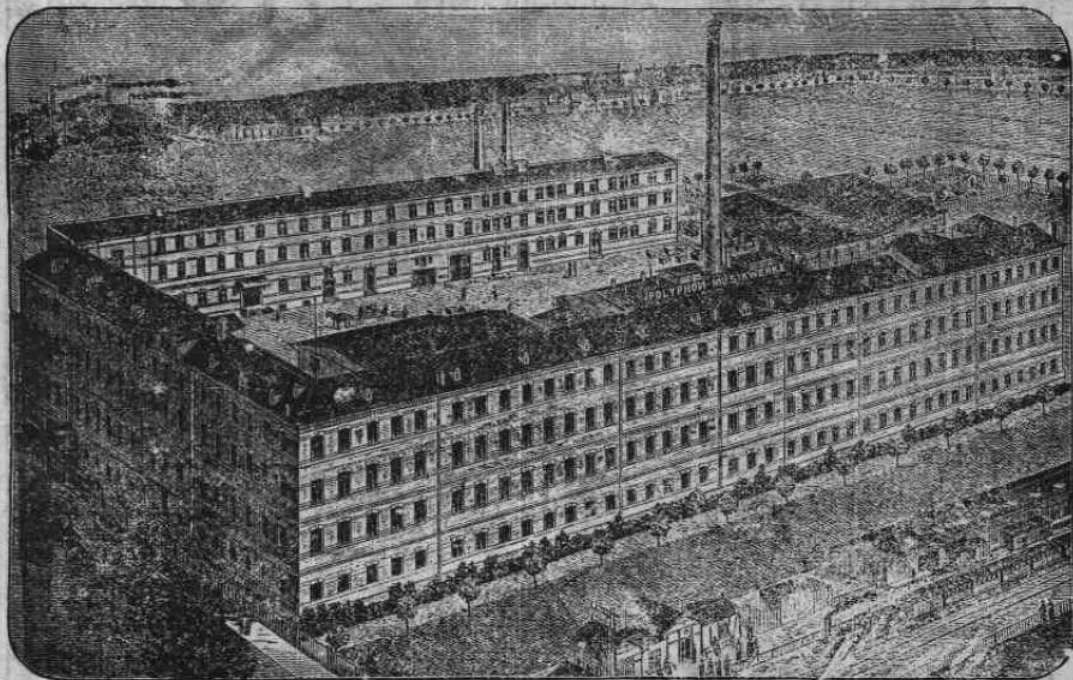
MANUFACTORY:

17, Rue Kleberg, Geneva.



"POLYPHON"

Musical Box Manufactory.



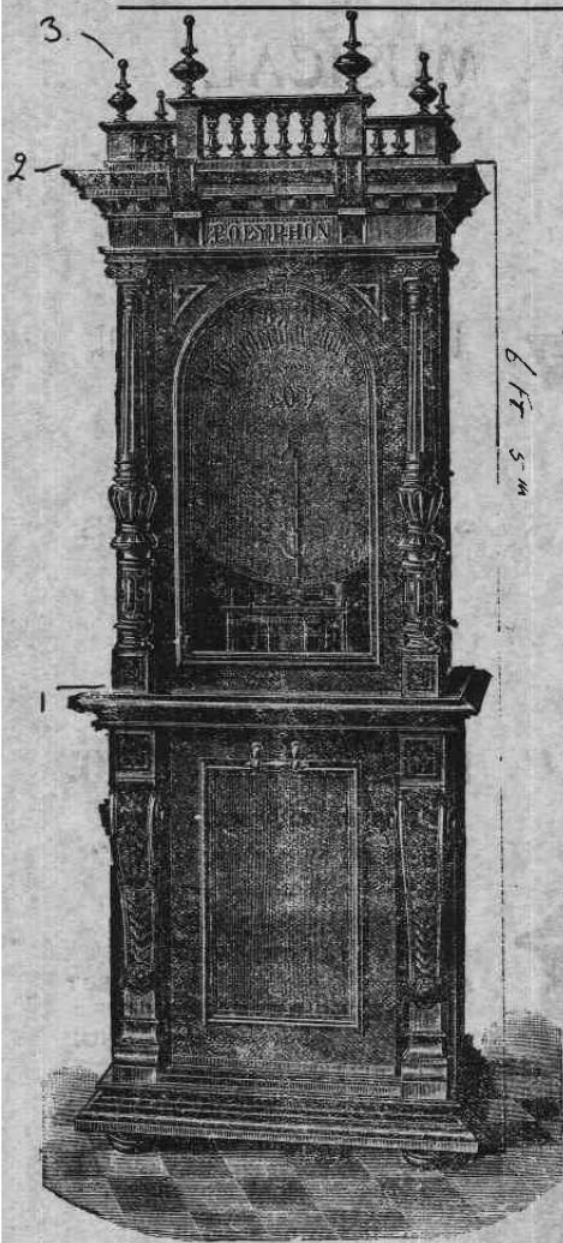
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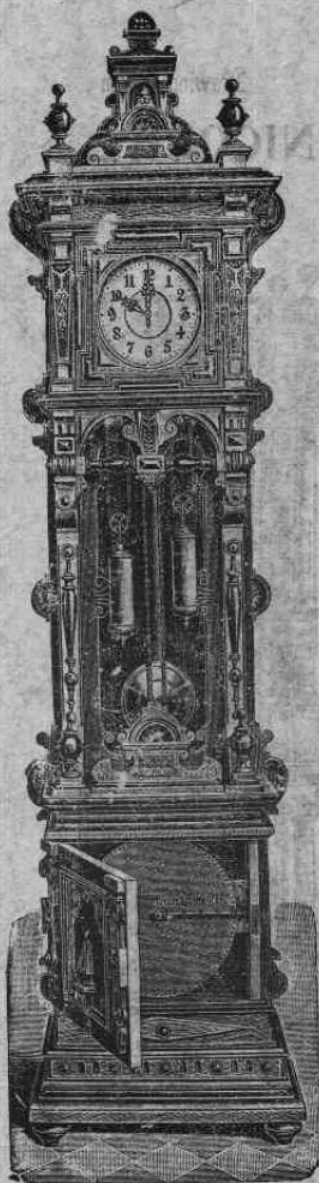
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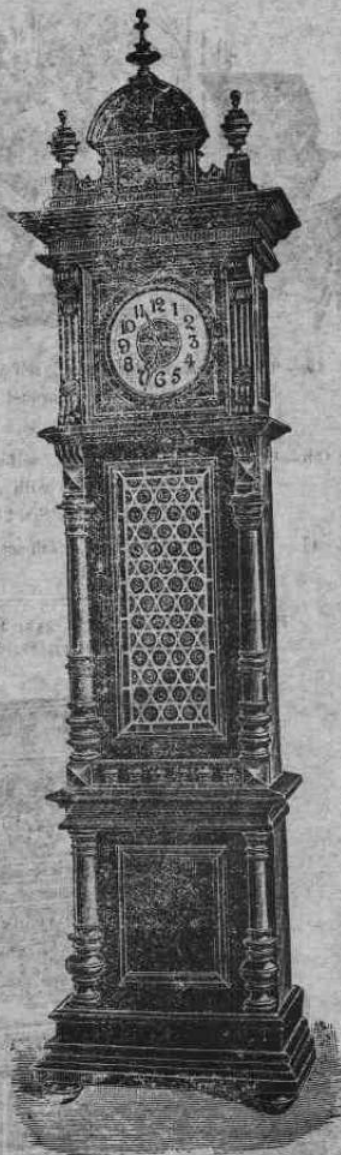
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Highly finished Carved Walnut or Oak Case.

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5



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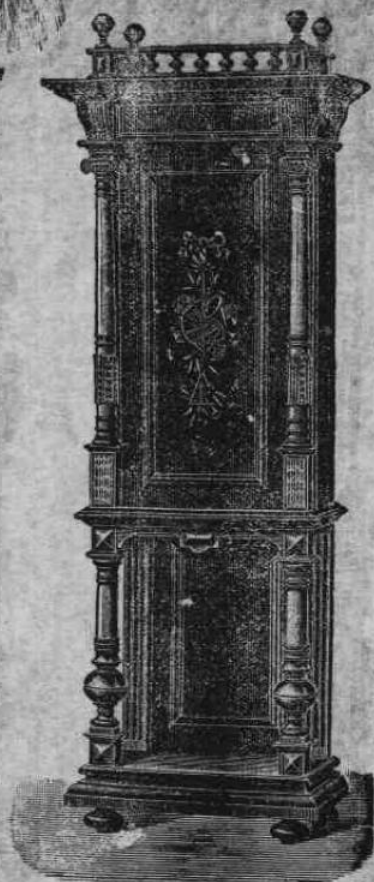
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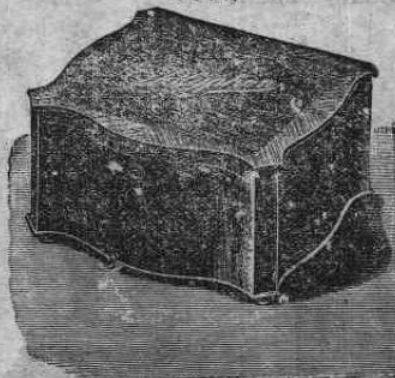
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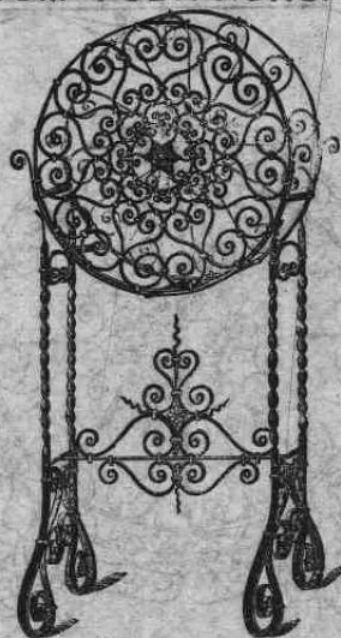
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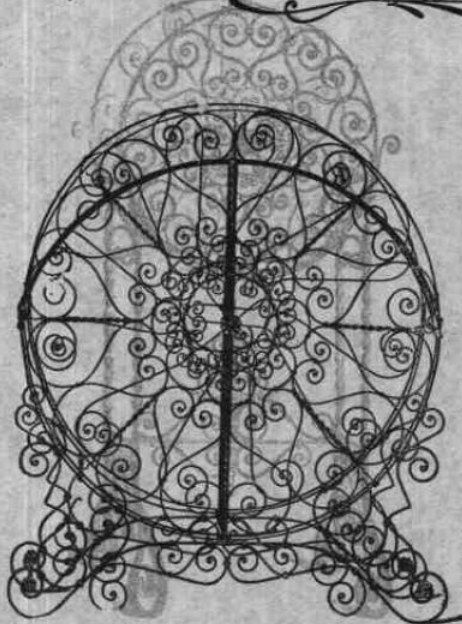
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No. 41s.	"THE Kieberg POLYPHON," self-acting 41 notes, in walnut or rose wood case.	Size: 10 1/2 by 9 by 6 1/2	3	0	0
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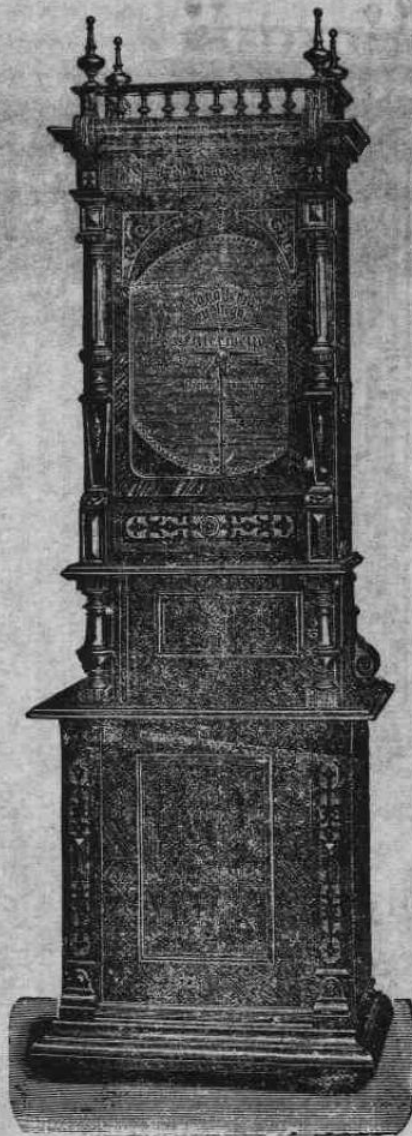
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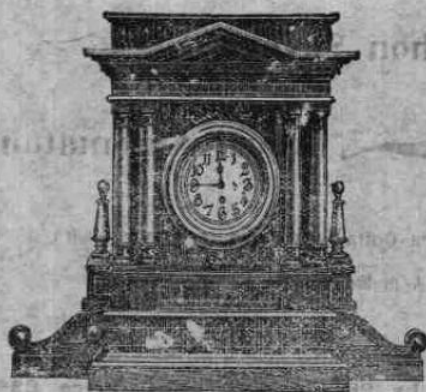
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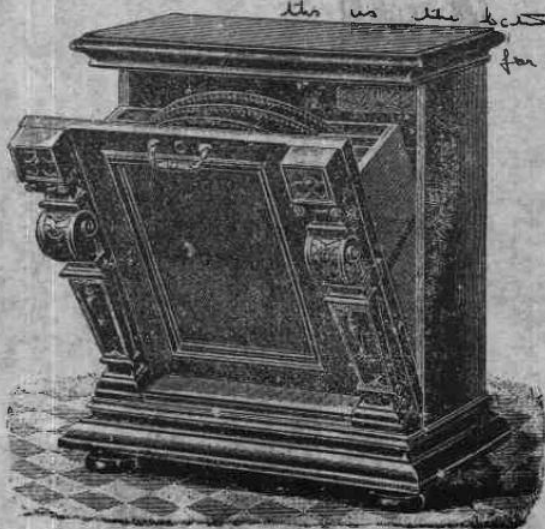
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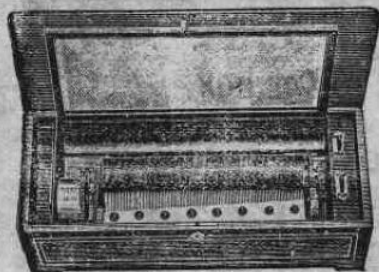
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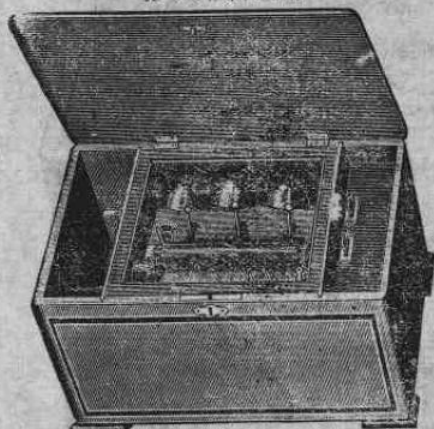
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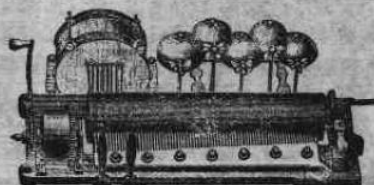
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4	10 Airs	6	17 by 8 by 5	33	2	8	0
5	10 Airs	8	20 by 8 by 5	46	3	10	0
6	12 Airs	9	21 by 8 by 5	43	3	17	0
7	12 Airs	11	24 by 9 by 6	52	4	5	0
7A	12 Airs	15	25 by 9 by 6	62	5	2	0
7B	20 Airs	9	23 by 10 by 8	40	5	2	0
7C	24 Airs	9	26 by 11 by 7	43	5	17	6
8	8 Airs, 3 Bells	6	17 by 11 by 8	34	2	9	0
10	10 Airs, 2 Bells	6	19 by 11 by 8	33	2	16	0
12	12 Airs, 6 Bells	9	23 by 13 by 9	58	5	2	0
13	12 Airs, 6 Bells	11	24 by 13 by 10	52	6	2	6
14	12 Airs, 6 Bells	13	26 by 14 by 10	62	6	12	6
15	8 Airs, 5 Drums, Bells	6	19 by 11 by 8	41	3	8	0
16	10 Airs, 6 Drums, Bells	9	23 by 13 by 9	53	6	12	6
17	10 Airs, 6 Drums, Bells	11	24 by 13 by 10	62	7	4	6
18	12 Airs, 6 Drums, Bells	13	26 by 14 by 10	62	7	13	0
19	8 Airs, 6 Drums, 5 Bells, 6 Castanettes	9	23 by 13 by 9	65	6	11	0
20	10 Airs, 6 Drums, 5 Bells, 6 Castanettes	11	24 by 13 by 10	62	8	1	6
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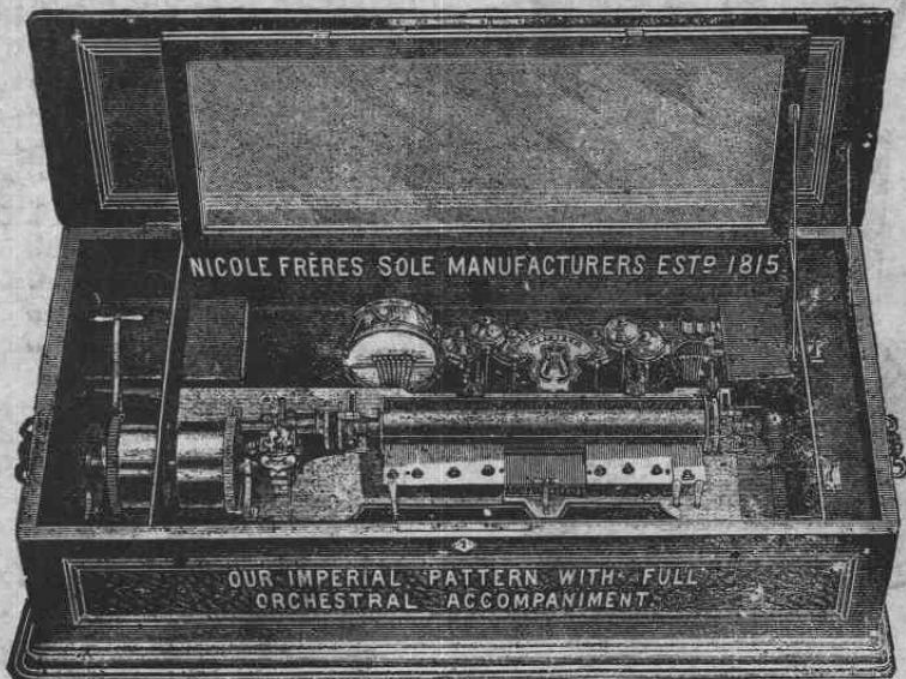


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Record Review

Coming, as it were, hot foot on the release last year of gramophone discs of Polyphon and fair organ music (review - Page 18,

Volume 1, No. 7), the Decca company has just issued two more 12" L.P.'s of fair organ music, this time the magnificent 98-key Marenghi made in Paris in 1905 and now owned by Mr. Cushing of Thursford, Norfolk. Perhaps indicative of the success which their Gavioli organ disc met, these two new records present a nicely-chosen, varied selection of music.

The first one, LK.4671, comprises those melodies of the pre-swing era including "Happy Days are Here Again", "Tip-Toe Through the Tulips" and "California, Here I Come!" whilst the second, LK.4672, presents one side devoted to marches and the other to overtures. The strident tones of Sousa at his flamboyant best are well illustrated in "King Cotton" and "Stars and Stripes Forever" along with that seldom heard march "El Abanico" by Javaloyes and four others. The overtures are the ever-popular "Poet and Peasant" and "The Barber of Seville" along with "Raymond" by Thomas.

Originally deriving its wind from a donkey-engined bellows, the instrument now runs on D.C. electricity. Rescued from a derelict state in Belfast, the Marenghi performs with a cunning and precision no longer the requisite of popular music. The glissade of voice and instrument, the sporadic jab at an indeterminate vibrato on the electronic organ now provide mass pleasure where once did syncopation and an appreciation of rhythm and tempo. To listen to this fair organ faultlessly performing "Valencia" or "Way Down in New Orleans" is to be carried back to younger days when the fairs actually did have organs and things driven by steam which were as much fun to watch as to listen to.

Whilst some may argue that the percussion instruments tend to drown the more subtle tones it should be remembered that the dominant percussive beat was essentially a feature of this type of music - drum and triangle were often united on one striker. Once again the expertise of the recording engineers has successfully overcome the intrinsic difficulties of recording faithfully so difficult a device as the fair organ.

These two discs make excellent listening to not only for the inured fair organ enthusiast, but also for those who enjoy the tunes of not so long ago performed in a most agreeably vintage - if noisesome - manner.

Decca's awakening to the increasing interest being shown everywhere in mechanical music is encouraging. Perhaps one of the recording companies will soon take the logical step and publish a disc of the choicest delicacies to be found amongst musical boxes.

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THE OBSERVER,
MAY 16, 1965

Pop from Victoriana

by a Staff Reporter

"UNTIL we got together, we all thought we were lonely cranks," said the man with 200 musical boxes when addicts of the tinkling *divertissements* of Victorian drawing-rooms met at a London hotel yesterday.

The 150 members of the three-year-old Musical Box Society of Great Britain don't like talking about value. But one conceded: "It would cost £500 to make a good box today.

"Once it was like pop records: you could buy a 2s. disc of 'The Belle of New York' wrapped in grease-proof paper almost as soon as the show hit town."

Now one man who copies the thin steel discs to fit one type charges £10 each.

CUM GRANO SALIS —
REQUIESCAT IN PACE...

HAS ANY MEMBER a copy of Polyphon disc "The Angel Song" No.50304 on 19½" or 40305 on 24½" they would be willing to lend me for a few weeks for copying purposes by Graham Webb? Also want "Good King Wenceslas" No.40037 or 50037 for same purpose. Arthur Coombs, 210, Barry Rd., London, S.E.22

OUR OWN REPRESENTATIVE
WESTMINSTER, Tuesday.

LORD STRANGE, inn-keeper, writer, artist and inventor, told the House of Lords this evening that he was also a crank.

"I have been a hobby inventor since childhood," he said. "My family have not been able to cure me, and now in old age [he is 65] I think it is incurable.

"I have to admit that inventors are cranks. They have a different way of looking at life from the rest of us. I have

Invention That Misfired

LORD STRANGE, who told the Upper House last evening that he was a life-long inventor, did not reveal what his inventions were. But he did mention to me one which did not go quite as planned.

It was a musical fountain with pipes, valves and flashing lights which he installed in the garden of his Scottish home.

Unfortunately, the plumber connected to a drainage pipe instead of the water main. When Lord Strange turned it on before an expectant audience, it emptied the garden.

WHAT THE
PAPERS
SAY...

carvers, 12s. LEE 4718. including
● Round brown leather library chair, mahogany occasional table, 52 each; brown

for use in a round brown leather library, perhaps.....

AMERICAN LADY COLLECTOR
with large luxury home wishes to purchase anything old, interesting or unusual. Write London

...such
as old
American
ladies...

LAST WORD

"DOUBLE-BREADED, with big scooped pockets. Within the lining is a road-map of England, for ready reference." — Women's coat advertisement.

"Why have you stopped the car in this clearing, Mr. Scopsby?" "We are lost, Miss Wilkinson. Take your coat off."

My first introduction to a musical box was 35 years ago when I received my wedding present from my husband. He made me a grandfather's clock with a beautiful brass face he had acquired and to add to its rarity and interest, a built-in musical box which he took from its original case and fixed so that it played a tune after the striking of each hour. I was charmed with it and it fitted well into our little stone-built Cotswold cottage. It played four tunes but the only one we recognised was 'Il Bacio' and I never tired of them.

It played its hourly tunes all through the years until the war came and then it would strike up its tune just as we were straining our ears for that first vital bit of news so that reluctantly we decided to silence it. Silent it remained until recently when it was taken out and restored to its original box where it now takes a worthy place among the rest of the collection.

Learning to live with Musical Boxes

by
Betty Lawrence

Little did I know when I first listened to its dulcet tones that it was the forerunner of our now vast collection of all sorts and sizes. Talking of sizes, that is the problem of a small house. We have musical boxes everywhere, but everywhere! Upstairs and downstairs and (I like the old nursery rhyme) in my lady's chamber. I have visions that one day the house will be full of musical monsters and we shall have to camp out on the lawn.

As each new treasure has been acquired, the first question has been "where shall we put it?"

On one occasion I remember after proudly displaying his latest prize my husband came up with the inevitable question and I said somewhat tersely "Oh, put it where you like". Some time later he reappeared without the box and I thought no more about it. Next day whilst Hoovering vigorously in our bedroom, I pushed the Hoover smartly under the bed and, instead of the erstwhile 'clang' I was surprised to hear a dull thud, to be followed instantly by the strains of "Annie Laurie" - and the mystery was solved. As I couldn't think of anywhere else for it at the time, I left it there.

That night as my beloved was about to climb into bed, he let out a howl of pain and I sat cruelly laughing as he sat on the side of the bed nursing a bent big toe to the strains of "Land of my Fathers" which unfortunately were not loud enough to drown the expletives emitted by his Lordship.

He moved the box next day to the 'space on the landing' where it has since been joined by two others and a large empty box of beautiful wood which unfortunately reminds me forcibly of my last resting place. No, perhaps it's not quite as big as that - it only seems like it.....

I remember one box that caused us a lot of amusement which lived on this landing for some time. It was a pipe organ box and one of the oldest we ever owned. It sounded terrible - for all the world like a set of defunct bagpipes. It was hand operated and the only tune I remember was "God Save the King" (it must have been George III!)

Our boys could never resist turning the handle when they passed it and the strains of the National Anthem wheezing out first thing in the morning did nothing to brighten my day. About this time we had a French boy to stay with us and they used to play it outside his door in the mornings to get him up. It was most effective! He would emerge looking like a doormouse waking from his winter hibernation and, with a look of mock horror on his face and with hands over his ears, pleading "Ah, no!"

Although it was valuable, I was not sorry when, during one of our 'hard up' periods, we had to sell it. Other than its antiquity it had nothing to recommend it.

We have musical boxes in the garage and an orchestrion in someone else's garage. We just ran out of space for that so, on Sunday mornings, we see passers-by standing in the back lane listening to 'The Mikado' issuing from the garage across the way as Henry tries it out. I live in fear and trepidation lest one day we find ourselves the owners of a barrel organ, giant Polyphon or fair organ.

Other than my wedding present box I suppose the one I love best is a little hand-operated box dated about 1830. It plays two tunes and is in a plain natural wood box rendered beautiful with years of polishing. The reason I am so fond of it is that it reminds me of a time of despair and its passing. Our second son, when three years old, contracted some childish illness that rapidly developed until in a few days the Doctor was calling twice a day and a specialist was called in. Within a week he had shrunk from a bonny little boy to a poor frail little creature who looked as though a puff of wind would blow him away. Our days and nights were haunted by the fear of losing him and I prayed as I've never prayed before. I remember little of that time except the awful hopeless feeling of being unable to do anything. Every day no change, a little weaker, and despair taking over until one morning a flicker of hope, he smiled, and began to know us again.

Weeks were to go by before he was his bonny self again but during those weeks his dearest toy was 'daddy's musical box'. At first only a

few notes - he was too tired and weak for more, but gradually his strength returned and I would go happily about my work as he wound it vigorously getting stronger and stronger and playing it longer each day. Even to this day I cannot hear it without a feeling of thankfulness.

Mind you, it's not only boxes we have to find room for but innumerable spares from empty boxes, odd lids, combs, spare rolls and various other mechanical parts, all tucked away in odd corners. I never know where I may unearth them. Only last week when turning out the chest in our bedroom I found several musical box spares tucked away behind the socks and handkerchiefs in Henry's drawer and a spare roll in a cardboard box in the airing cupboard. I think it happens thus: Henry brings home some spares and leaves them lying around until I get exasperated and issue awful threats. He then looks around for any drawer or cupboard with an empty space and in they go. Out of sight, out of mind! At least until I find them again.

It is strange what the words 'musical box' conjure up in the minds of our friends and acquaintances from those who say "Oh yes, I had an old aunt who had one of those things" to those who think only in terms of the modern variety, some of which are quite nice, but the majority of which are dreadful. We have from time to time received presents from well-meaning friends - a Christmas card playing "White Christmas" - ugh! Or a powder bowl playing "The Blue Danube" and our worst - a musical toilet roll holder which I am happy to say got accidentally broken beyond repair within a week. I can't remember what tune it played but it couldn't possibly have been appropriate - or could it?

I suppose I must be thankful that the collecting bug hasn't inspired us to collect even bigger things. Last summer on a weekend visit to my sister and her husband in Gloucestershire we were at breakfast one morning when we heard the sound of a slow and heavy vehicle passing on the road outside. My sister looked up and said to her husband "Bill's got his traction engine out" and instantly he was up from the table saying "Come on Henry!" and they both dashed out of the house without waiting to put on coats or change their slippers for shoes. They just jumped into the car and disappeared in a cloud of dust in hot pursuit of the engine. That was the last we saw of them until lunch time when they came home full of excitement to tell us about this wonderful monster, how they had driven slowly behind it just to savour the smell of hot oil (like a couple of Bisto kids) and spent the morning admiring and playing with it in the local brickworks yard.

A look I well recognise came over my husband's face and he said "You know, someone ought to start collecting those engines before they are all gone". In the words of our French friend, "Ah, no!"

DAMPERS

by
CYRIL DE VERE GREEN

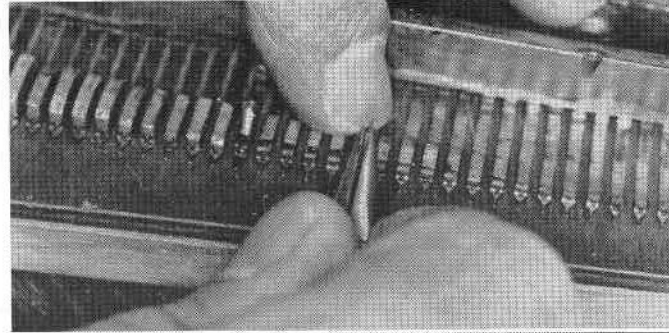
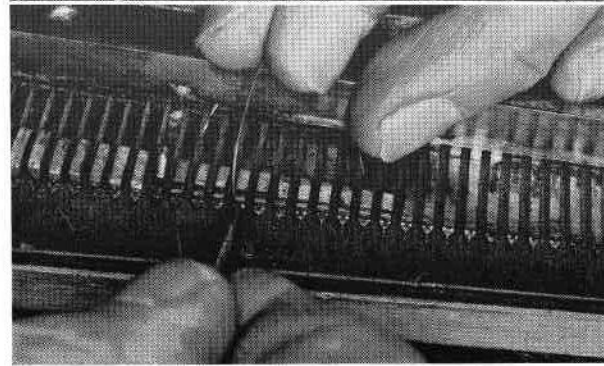
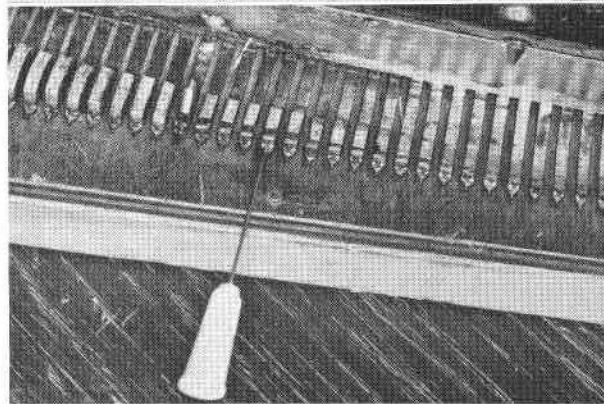
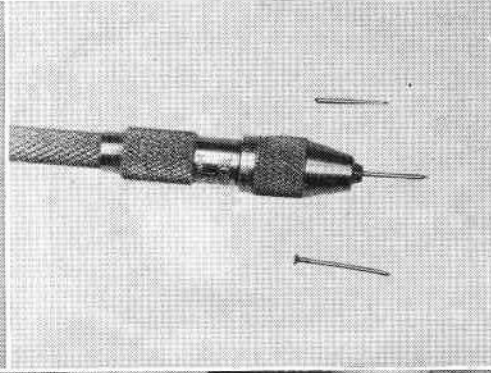
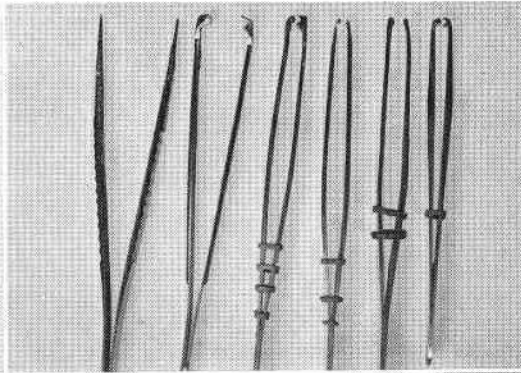
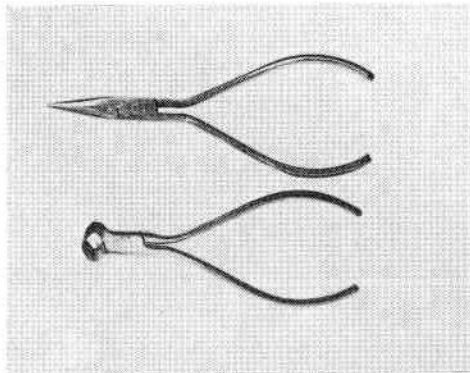
There can be no argument that correctly adjusted dampers beneath the teeth of a musical box comb make a tremendous difference to its playing qualities.

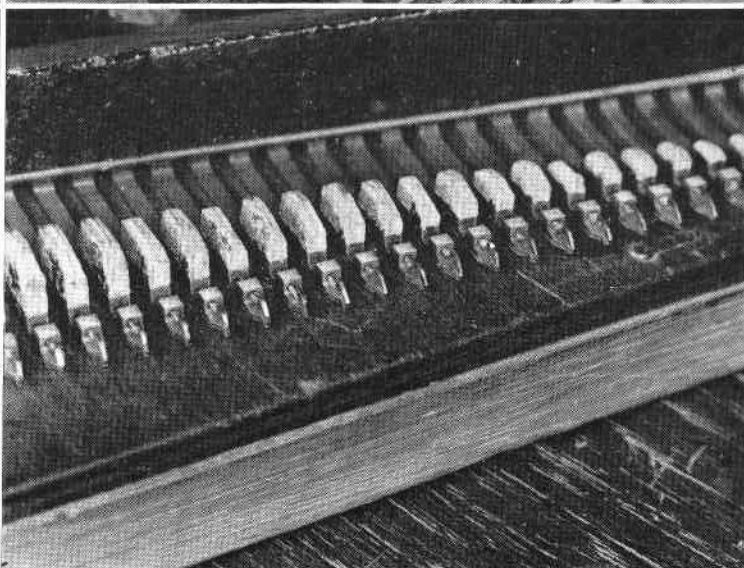
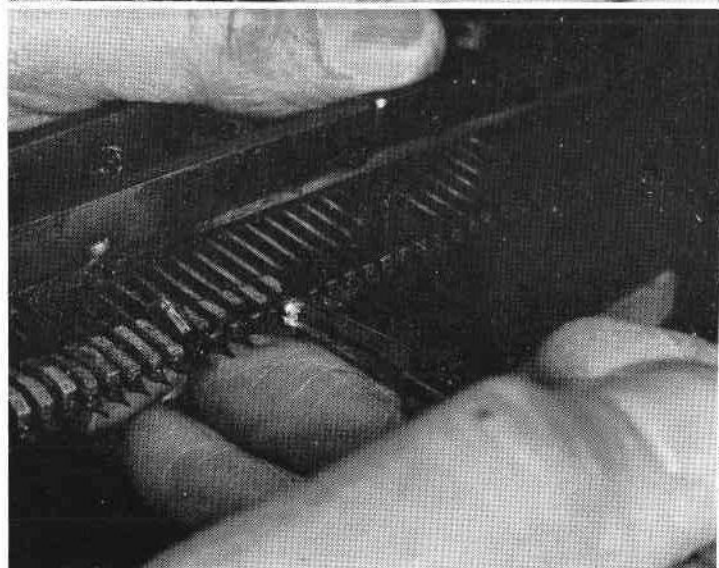
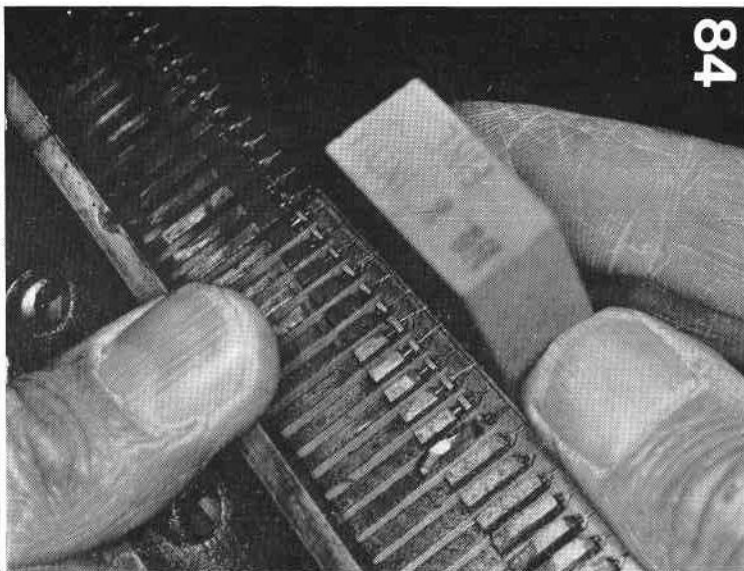
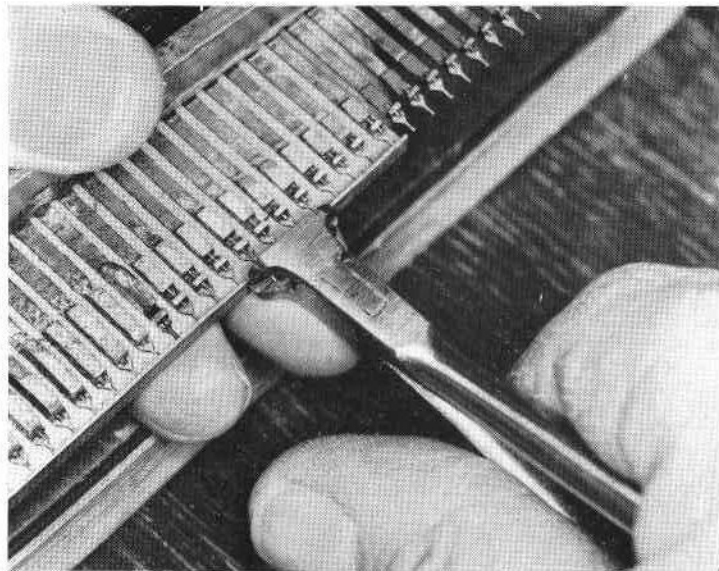
There is nothing very difficult in their making - merely to have the right equipment - and patience. I have discovered, through experience, the importance of even trivialities such as to have a table and chair of a height that will allow elbow support without fatigue. A lamp such as an anglepoise which will light the work without glare is of great help. I myself like to have the comb for some procedures on a board raised $\frac{3}{4}$ " at its front edge and the working surface of the table covered with a thick white card.

The other implements used are quite simple - a toothbrush, a thin card and pair of thin pointed pliers, a pair of cutters, a jig for trimming the ends of the damper wires and a few special tweezers, not forgetting a watchmaker's eyeglass.

I would suggest one or two preliminaries. It is helpful to clean the comb thoroughly with the toothbrush and paraffin especially around the old damper wires and taper pins: greasy dust and fluff seems to collect here in every comb which I have examined. Next, I would suggest an inspection of the lead resonators to make sure that they have not been bent or clogged with dirt or grease and that they are quite clear from their neighbours. The only other preparation I would suggest is to make a supply of taper pins. I myself always seem to lose or bend a few and it is annoying to have to stop a routine in order to construct one. I make these by holding a brass pin in a pin vise and spinning it against a fine cut file - cutting it off when tapered and then squaring the cut end with the file.

To remove the taper pins, I place the comb on the inclined board and grip the pin with a pair of fine-nosed jewellers pliers. A slight twist will usually free it. I find that it is essential to support the tooth being worked on by applying a strong downward pressure on it against the board with the index finger of the left hand. There are times when the pin will not budge and, if possible, a little leverage with a fine screwdriver behind the pin will do the trick. The most difficult pins I have found to remove are those inserted into the lead resonators. If these will not withdraw, an attempt can be made to drill them out but I have found this almost impossible and they break off as a rule flush with the lead. In these cases I have no hesitation in drilling a new hole in the lead - taking care to make the hole deep enough for the new taper pin.





In many cases, the pin will adhere to the pliers as it is so very light and it should be left in them so that, should there be a 'flat' on it, it will always re-locate itself when pressed back into its hole.

The removal of the old damper wire used to take me quite a time but I suggest using a No.12 hypodermic needle which is both strong and sharp and the old wire can easily be bent by the needle if need be. The selection of the gauge of damper wire is, of course, of extreme importance and I have found that there is a tendency to use wire which is much too heavy and I have a personal choice for .01 mm or .008 mm. It will be noticed that most of the older boxes - particularly the fine toothed overtone boxes - have had very light damper wire used. The next step is to insert an end of the wire through the small hole and to adjust its position centrally and laterally by lining up the wire with the tooth using the left hand. When it is correctly aligned, push home the taper pin. The tooth can now be supported again with the left hand and the pin pressed firmly home with the pliers closed. Now test the damper wire for alignment and firmness. A light tap using a 2" nail which has been flattened along $\frac{1}{2}$ " of its length will do the trick if there is some movement when you test for security.

Cut off the damper wire leaving an excess of about 2 mm - the wire need not be a uniform length at this stage. Repeat the procedure with every tooth to be dampered.

Now the jig is used to adjust the length of the dampers. This jig consists of a brass plate about 2" to 3" wide and about 6" long. This has a lip of 2 mm high and about $\frac{1}{2}$ mm thick. The comb is placed flat on the top surface of the comb and the protruding damper wires are then trimmed with the cutters hard against the .5 mm lip. A cut with cutters, however, produces a 'V' shaped end on the wire which is far from desirable. I would therefore suggest that the end of the damper wire be 'honed' with a fine oil stone as shown in the illustration. Following this procedure one is left with damper wires with square ends and of uniform length.

Using two pairs of specially prefabricated tweezers, one is readily able to curve the damper wire to its recognised correct shape. These tweezers are best made by soldering a rod at right-angles to the pliers. This short piece of rod should fit into a half-round piece of tube also soldered at right angles to the other limb of the tweezers. I prefer to have two pairs of tweezers - one with the rod .5 mm in diameter and a half round piece of tube of equal internal diameter and the other of 1 mm diameter with a corresponding half round piece of tube. These materials can readily be obtained from a dental supply depot.

A pair of tweezers ground or filed to a very small right angled projection of, say, .25 mm are also extremely useful for making adjustments.

The damper wire can now be formed to its correct shape by using these three pairs of tweezers. I prefer to be able to identify these different tools by touch rather than by sight as I do not like to take my eye off the work in hand. A different number of notches or rubber bands will allow one to select one's choice by feel alone.

Adjust all the damper wires so that they stand approximately .25 mm from the end of the tooth tip and the thickness of a piece of writing paper above the undersurface of the tooth point.

Assemble the comb and let the box play. It will probably sound worse than it did before you started re-dampering! Let it play several times and then remove the comb. You will notice that many dampers have now been misaligned. Don't despair! Adjust them all again and replay. This time only about 50% will not work. After the third or fourth adjustment, you will probably find only a few not working correctly. This is the moment to observe as well as listen to the dampers working. Mark the teeth on the top surface of the comb which are causing discordant sounds and then adjust these individual dampers. When every damper is working to your satisfaction, I suggest putting the merest trace of lubricant such as one of the graphite ones just where the wire touches the point. It seems to reduce the occasional harshness.

I said at the beginning of this article that patience was required, and it is in the adjustment of the correctly formed dampers it is really appreciated that amongst the other virtues you may possess, patience is one of the cardinal virtues.

If you don't believe me - "Come up and see me sometime.....!" ●

THE ILLUSTRATIONS on Pages 83 and 84 show the steps in the procedures described in the foregoing article. All pictures by Mr. C. de Vere Green. Page 83 (Top) Left: Fine-nosed pliers are used for manipulating the taper pins &c. Cutters are used for cutting wires to length. Centre: Different shapes of damper-forming tweezers. Right: New damper taper pins are made by cutting the head off a small brass brad, holding it in a pin vise and rotating it against a smooth file. The finished pin, ready to be cut to length, is shown at the top. (Centre) Left: A hypodermic needle is used to remove old broken damper wire. Right: The brass taper pin is held in the pliers. (Bottom) Left: New wire inserted, taper pin being pushed home. Right: Wire cut approximately to length. Page 84 (Top) Left: Using jig, wires are cut to final length. Right: A fine oil stone hones square the ends of the wires. (Bottom) Left: The dampers are formed using the specially formed tweezers. Right: The completed comb with new dampers.



The Latest and Best Automatic Musical Instrument of the Day, THAT PLAYS MUSIC WITH METAL ROLLS, IS THE **MUSICAL DOLCINE**



THE construction of this excellent little instrument, as will be seen from the drawing below, is quite a new departure from the old style of Instruments that produce Music with PAPER SHEETS or ROLLS. The Music of the DOLCINE will be found much superior to all other instruments of this class at the price, and our well-known reputation for supplying only Instruments of Real Musical Merit is a guarantee that the DOLCINE will give satisfaction to the purchaser. Although it has only been in the market a short time, the sale has been very large on the Continent and America. We will send the DOLCINE carefully packed in Wood Box, with Six Tunes, carriage paid, at the merely nominal price of 25s., with following Coupon.

The New Patent Automatic **DOLCINE**

Produces Music with
Metal Bands.

The DOLCINE has a nicely-polished Case with fine mouldings on top; It has Broad Reeds, and music is produced by Endless Metal Bands.

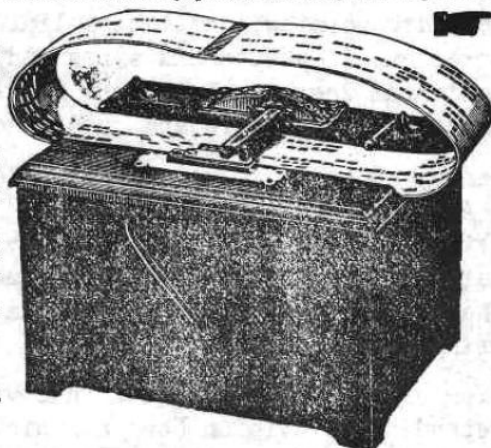
The Dolcine, for rapid Music, Waltzes, Quadrilles, Polkas, and all other similar compositions, has no superior.

We have prepared for an enormous demand.

Extra Tunes, Metal, 9d each.

2,000 TUNES NOW READY.

A CHILD CAN PLAY IT.



"DOLCINE" TESTIMONIALS

8 Compasses Row, Broomfield Rd.,
Chesham, Bucks, 1894.

Dear Sir—I received the "Dolcine" quite safe, and I am very well pleased with it. The tone is charming. It makes a beautiful present, which I have made of it to a friend.

Yours truly, W. HEARD.

Farm Hall Mill, Kilmirey,
near Oswestry, 1894.

Dear Sir,—I received the two "Dolcines" quite safe, and they have given me the greatest satisfaction. They are beautifully-finished instruments, and have a splendid tone. All my friends are delighted with them, and hope to send you up a few orders shortly.

Yours truly, THOMAS JOSEPH.

18 John St., Barrowford, 1894.
Dear Sir,—The "Dolcine" came duly to hand. I am greatly pleased with it, and consider it a charming instrument, the tone being pure and sweet.—Yours truly,
WILLIAM ROBERTS.

Cut this Out

£1 5s. | CAMPBELL'S MUSICAL "DOLCINE" COUPON. | £1 5s.

Entitles the holder to receive one Musical Dolcine, with Six Rolls of Music, carefully packed in Wood Box, and Carriage Paid to any address in Great Britain or Ireland, on receipt by us of Post Office Order for the sum of £1 5s., payable to Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL, at the General Post Office, Glasgow.

This Coupon is not available after 30th September, 1895.

Cut this Out

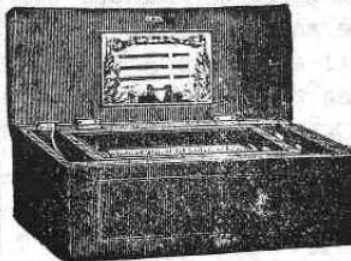
Beware of spurious and worthless imitations. The DOLCINE can only be bought from us or our Agents specially appointed. Every Instrument will bear our Name and Address—without which none are genuine.

Campbell's Superior Musical Boxes

Have a World-Wide Reputation for High-Class Workmanship and Durability.
In Handsome Carved Wood and Inlaid Cases, playing Superior Music, and fitted with Finest Clockwork Mechanism. LARGE MUSICAL BOX, as per drawing, plays 8 Popular Tunes, price only 50s.

Largest Stock in the Kingdom.
SPLENDID VALUE.
Musical Boxes, playing 2 Tunes, .. 13s.
Musical Boxes, playing 3 Tunes, .. 18s.
Musical Boxes, playing 4 Tunes, .. 21s.

Just Out—New Style Musical Box,
38s. | THE "WONDER." | 38s.
Special! Playing 12 Popular Tunes. [Coupon
Fitted with a 3½ in. Nickel-Plated Cylinder,
New Tune Indicator, and plays 2 Tunes with
each revolution of the cylinder. This Wonderful
Box should sell in thousands at the price.
Sent carefully packed and Carriage Paid
for £1 18s. Cut out this Coupon.



Largest Stock in the Kingdom.
SPLENDID VALUE.

Newest Styles in Presentation Musical
Albums, Quarto, playing 2 Tunes, 21s.
free.
Musical Albums, Large Quarto, playing
2 Tunes, 28s. free.
Musical Albums, Large Quarto, playing
3 Tunes, 38s. free.

Special Price List of Larger Boxes, Fitted on
Tables, on application.

EXTRA LARGE SIZE **MUSICAL BOXES** EXTRA LARGE SIZE.

These Boxes have Patent Lever Winders, and all the latest improvements, the various working parts being strongly made and finely finished.

Just Out—New Style Musical Box,
£3 10s. | THE "MARVEL." | £3 10s.
Special! Playing 12 Popular Tunes. [Coupon.
With NEW CRANK WINDER.

Fitted with a 7½ inch Nickel-Plated Cylinder, New Tune Indicator,
and Charming Zither Accompaniment. This Marvellous Box we send
carefully packed and Carriage Paid for £3 10s. At this give-away price
this beautiful Box should find its way into every Music-loving home
in the land. Cut out this Coupon when ordering.

No. 4.—Splendid Musical Box, extra large size, plays 12 Popular
Tunes, and has 6 beautifully engraved Bells. This is a handsome Box,
beautifully inlaid with various coloured woods, powerful yet sweet tone,
A very fine box indeed. Price reduced to only £7 7s.
No. 6.—Quite New Style—The Cabinet Musical Box, opens with
two doors in front. This is a very handsome Box, plays 8 Tunes, has
the Charming Zither Accompaniment, and finest quality of music.
Very fine inlaid case, extra large size. Price £10 10s.
No. 7.—Quite New Style—The Cabinet Musical Box, opens with
two doors in front. This is a very handsome Box, plays 10 Tunes, and
has visible Drum, 5 visible Bells, and visible Castnet accompaniment.
Very fine inlaid case, extra large size. Finest Box made. Price £12 12s.

SUMMER MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The Summer Meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain - and also our Annual General Meeting - was held at the Londoner Hotel, Welbeck Street, W.1 on Saturday, May 15th. The Londoner, venue for the past two meetings, provided the same large room as we have had previously and it soon became obvious that this was to be our biggest and most successful meeting yet.

By late morning, the tables lining the room were covered with musical boxes of all shapes and sizes and the display overflowed to the adjacent room where again it was not long before there was little or no space available. Members and guests totalled nearly 100.

We were all greatly honoured to be able to welcome two of our Associate Members from America - Mr. Fitch and Mr. Ryder from New Jersey together with Mrs. Fitch, Mrs. Ryder and the two Ryder boys. Adding more than just an international flavour to the day, we were more than pleased to learn that they had arranged their annual holidays expressly to coincide with our gathering.

B.B.C. Television cameramen, together with David Tindall, arrived early on as did Independent Television News and Richard Lindley. Also in attendance was Mr. Colin McGlashin of THE OBSERVER.

After morning coffee, the programme for the day began with a lecture by Mr. de Vere Green on Dampers. This talk, illustrated with particularly fine coloured slides, detailed Mr. de Vere Green's own particular method of repairing and renewing dampers. Judging by the enthusiastic reception Members accorded this talk, one might be led to suppose that the restitution of dampers - those mysterious squeak-preventers whispered about by novices and experts alike - is a subject of great concern to all. Presented in great detail and not without humour, this is the first time this intimate subject has been discussed in public and the abstract of Mr. de Vere Green's lecture is reproduced elsewhere in this issue.

During the lunch recess, the bright lights of the television camera teams illuminated the many choice items on show and your Editor was interviewed for B.B.C. television by David Tindall and also took part in the I.T.N. presentation. David Tindall then interviewed both Mr. Fitch and your Editor for the Monday morning editions of the radio programme - "Today".

Whilst it had been intended to describe every musical box present, as there were over seventy items ranging from tiny musical seals through the gamut of cylinder boxes, this is just not possible. However, a few of the interesting exhibits including an impressive display by our Secretary, Mr. de Vere Green, who displayed a "Beginner's Corner" featuring a

dozen or so boxes, each bearing a card with maker's name, points to note for recognition and identification and the probable date of manufacture. One of the items in this display was a Nicole Freres Mandarin Bell Box which has three pairs of bells struck by maces held by small brass figures.

A 27" Orchestral Regina contrasted with the 27" folding Regina table model. The oldest mechanical musical instruments present were probably a small street piano (featured elsewhere in this issue) of about 1780 and a snuff box with single-tooth laminated comb. Overture boxes included a very large 21" long cylinder box, key wound, with 4 airs, several of the early Nicole three and four air boxes and a part-overture snuff box.

Of particular interest were the results of two independent projects undertaken by Members David Tallis and Graham Webb. David Tallis showed a forte-piano which he had completely re-pinned himself. In performance, it proved to be absolutely perfect. Graham Webb displayed three brace of brand new Polyphon discs made on his machine. Looking almost too new and bright, these discs present an equally remarkable achievement in perseverance and skill.

An 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ " Stella looking as good as new was to be heard playing with that characteristic bell-like Stella tone and a novel although modern interpretation of musical box case engineering was represented by an eight air Thibouville-Lamy of circa 1870 mounted in a trim George V case featuring 'acoustic slots' to let the sound out when the glass lid is closed. The intricate mechanism of a very early singing bird box was covetously viewed by Members with the aid of magnifying glasses as were several very small, ornate gilt musical seals. Automata were represented by a musical display featuring a monkey artist performing on a 'canvas' with paint and brush. The City of London Phonograph Society displayed several early and rare phonographs.

The lunch recess was followed by the business meeting forming the Annual General Meeting. The principle items concerned the election of officers for the coming year, the discussion of the scheme to offer a musical box valuation committee for Members and a suggestion that we might stage our own auction for Members boxes at future meetings.

All Society officials constitutionally retired but, there being no fresh nominations for the position of President, Treasurer, Secretary and Editor, those four officers were invited to serve for another year. For the remaining two Committee positions, Mr. G. Webb was nominated and the two retiring officers, Mr. Planus and Mr. Angrave were re-nominated. On a private show of hands, Mr. Planus and Mr. Angrave were re-elected to serve for another year. Mrs. G. Gilchrist was nominated for the position of Vice President and was subsequently elected. Mr. Fitch and Mr. Ryder

both addressed the meeting, Mr. Ryder reading a message of greeting from the American Music Box Society International.

The suggestion that a valuation committee be established to advise novice collector Members on the possible value of boxes met with a very conflicting reception and, when put to the vote, achieved a majority in favour of 17 to 15, there being many abstentions. Due to the poor vote and slender majority, the scheme has been dropped.

It was suggested that at our next meeting an auction be held to enable Members to dispose of any surplus musical boxes. A brief discussion followed during which it was confirmed that this suggestion, if adopted, would enable Members only to participate. It was decided that, at our November meeting, such an auction would be held.

In the reports of our officers, our Secretary reported membership to be at that moment 146 (it rose to 149 by the end of the day!). Treasurer Frank Greenacre reported that, after a very bad financial period at the end of last year, our finances were now sound. Editor Arthur Ord-Hume reported on the progress of THE MUSIC BOX and stated that this was largely due to our new offset production method together with the gesture of Mr. J. Gilchrist in providing illustrations free of charge. Production costs were, in fact, now lower than when our production was by duplicator.

The scheduled events of the meeting terminated at 5.30 when Members and their guests were invited to Mr. & Mrs. de Vere Green's home for a cocktail party. This wonderful climax to the events of the day, now so much a part of our Society meetings, never ceases to be a revelation to novice and expert alike for, as the 'old timers' in our membership will accede, each time we go, we see about 200 boxes - but they all seem to be different on every occasion!

The de Vere Greens had organised their house into set display rooms. There was, for example, the Lecoultre Room, the Nicole Room, a display of Bremond, Thibouville-Lamy, Dawkins, P.V.F. - in fact just about everything Mr. de Vere Green, incredibly patient and relaxed amidst the rabble who appeared to be all arms, ears and stop-start fingers, entertained Members regally. His latest acquisition - a rare Regency barrel piano - was inspected very closely by many whilst the Aeolian Orchestrelle was the centre of a loving crowd of unrequitted latent organists who succeeded, by their musical demands, in reducing your Editor/organist to a perspiring, dehydrated mass. No 'keep fit' class, he asserts, should be without one...

The gathering finally dispersed, arms aching from hand-shaking, ears buzzing from mechanical music and, above all, we experienced that indescribable feeling of well-being stemming from meeting fellow enthusiasts. Our thanks, again, to Mr. & Mrs. de Vere Green for their wonderful hospitality.






Post Bag

Dr. Robert Burnett, P.O. Box 90, Kabale, Uganda, writes:

Many years ago, when I was a small boy in the 'twenties, my parents often took me to Folkestone. I was always glad to go because the place held many delights for me, most important of which were the open-air roller skating rink and the large number of penny-in-the-slot, or automatic machines. These last occurred in great variety and enabled one to play cricket, football or golf, or innumerable games of chance, in which balls were shot into small cups. One could also watch people being rescued from a fire, or rising from the dead as the graves in a church-yard opened. Finally, and most important of all from the present point of view there were two disc musical boxes. One was a large self-change machine, enabling one to choose which of six tunes one wanted to hear before putting in one's penny. The other was a smaller machine which, from memory, I would say that it was a 15½" Polyphon.

Although many of the features of these boxes have faded from my memory with the passage of the years, there is one thing which struck me at the time and which I remember quite clearly still. It is that the handle for winding the big self-change box was left in position so that members of the public could wind it if necessary. I thought at the time that this was a risky thing to do until I noticed that the handle was fitted with a friction clutch which slipped if one continued to wind after the machine was fully wound. I have never had the good fortune to own a self-change machine, but a number of Polyphons and Symphonions have passed through my hands and I have noticed that the winding handles of the larger ones have a central disc which looks as if it might once have been a friction clutch, although long since rusted solid. Attempts on my part to move them have not been successful but I should be very interested to know whether any other Members of the Society - who specialise in disc machines - have come across winding handles in which there is a friction clutch. 

Editor's Comment I am indebted to Dr. Burnett for explaining what is now such a painfully obvious explanation why my 19½" Poly crank slips! I have often puzzled over the shape of the Polyphon and Regina handles and wondered why there is no pinning between the handle and the brass discs each side. Although I have a number of Polyphons, only on one machine does the 'clutch' still function. It appears to be a feature of all machines from 15½" upwards but I have no experience of it with the Symphonion. Any Members care to comment??


THE BRACE OF MINIATURE MUSICAL BOXES shown here form part of the Lidell Collection and the pictures are reproduced by courtesy of Birmingham City Museum. Top Nicole Freres no 14604. Bottom A musical jewel box in mahogany by an unknown maker. Note tune change.

Mr. C. W. Cramp of 4, West Street, Horsham, Sussex, writes:

Further to the questions about 'National Musical Box' in Mr. Tallis's letter (issue No. 7) and Mr. Greenacre (Issue 1, Vol. 2), I have a National Musical Box with the Dawkins Sphinx-like trademark on the top of the endless cock with the rather long winding handle with its lathe-turned finger grip and its number, 33151, stamped on its right side. Missing are the well-known Dawkins brass rosettes as comb screw washers. However it seems to point that 'National Musical Box' distributed all classes of boxes and not always of the poorer types. Any further comments, please?

I have never read anywhere that the Polyphon Company stamped the dates on the springs of the larger penny-in-the-slot machines when these springs were fitted. My two machines (15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ ") both have a copper rivet which can easily be seen without moving anything. The date is stamped vertically, thus: 19

7

98 which reads 19.7.98. This is the date on my 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ " machine which is numbered 6581 stamped on the casting above the mainspring. If the main-springs are original, you have the date when it was made. A little research could be done here. If anyone with these Polyphons would let me know the date on the copper rivet and the number on the casting, I would be quite willing to keep a recording of these numbers and see what we can find. My 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Polyphon is dated 30.8.01 and the casting number is 4177. 

Editor's Comment To examine your copper rivet, look at the spring and, if the rivet is not in view, set the machine in motion until it comes round. Winding the motor is from the centre so this will not move the outside end of the spring which has the rivet! The name "Polyphon" is also stamped across the width of the springs though usually not very clearly. As a matter of interest, the date also appears on most Symphonions as a set of numbers stamped around the face of one of the drive wheels or, on smaller machines, on the solid brass spring barrel cog. From evidence on the National Musical Box, I think we can safely say that many were made by Dawkins. A Saturday morning in the Portobello Road recently revealed three of these boxes, all with the National Musical Box tune sheets and all bearing the Dawkins characteristics (sphinx on cock, winding lever, scalloped escutcheons, nice case proportions) and two of the boxes were complete with the Dawkins rosette comb washers.

WANTED TO PURCHASE from fellow Members: - Antique clocks and musical boxes
Distance no object. Please write giving full details to: E. Hitchcock,
18, Palace Street, Canterbury, Kent.



Member Bruce Angrave's B.B.C. broadcasts have become 'favourites' for many and no doubt serve, besides the news, as the only reason for preserving many a radio set in this era of blue-eyed Cyclops. June 5th heralded Bruce's latest piece - 'The Pipes of Pandemonium'. Comprising his sound recollections of last year's Steam Fair at White Waltham the 30-minute programme contained much fair organ music ranging from the grandiloquent Gavioli to the smaller, more effeminate organs for small roundabouts. The pleasing tones of Limonaire in full bloom contested with the charming and unusually warm vibrato of the Mortiere Dance Organ, some ranks of whose pipes produce mellow tones very much like the Northumbrian

bag-pipes. Interspersed with amusing - and true - anecdotes on orchestration-type music, this programme evidences the fact that Bruce, renowned cartoonist, sculptor in paper, writer and humourist, has added the use of a tape-recorder to his attributes. At all events, let's hope it won't be too long before we hear more of Bruce, his tape-recorded and his sense of humour.

Antique Mechanics

(G. PLANUS)



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 140 Miss L. Hodge, 52, Lower Stoane Square, London, S.W.1
 141* J.H. Dennard, 408, North Broadway, Tyler, Texas, U.S.A.
 142 B. K. Donovan, No. 1 Married Officers Quarters, Chaucer Barracks,
 Canterbury, Kent
 143 J. Thompson, District Bank Chambers, Kirkby Lonsdale, Carnforth
 144 Mrs. B. Challingworth, Elmleigh Station Road, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.
 145 J. H. Farr, Museum of Vintage & Veteran Cars, Clermiston Mains,
 Fox Covert Drive, Edinburgh, 12, Scotland
 146 The Rev. G. Brain, St. Leonards Vicarage, Woodgate, Leicester
 147 Hugh G. Richardson, 35, Kings Avenue, Muswell Hill, London, N.10
 148 Miss Margaret Sheldon, Monkams, Codsall Wood, Nr. Wolverhampton, Sta
 149 E. Carter, 252, Tithepithshaw Lane, Warlingham, Surrey
 150* Stephen H. Ryder, 208, Orange Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey, U.S.A.
 151 S. C. T. E. Neale, York House, Warren Park Road, Hertford, Herts.
 152 L. Ferrari, 41, Parkhill Road, Bexley, Kent
 153* Major Charles Bridges, 331, Clarence Street, Port Colborne, Ontario
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 154 R. V. Huddleston, 9, College Avenue, Melton Mowbray, Leicester
 155 W. K. Harding, 93, Hornsey Road, London, N.7
 156* P. Hill, 266-20th Street, Santa Monica, California, U.S.A.
 157* E. J. Mathewson, 141, Fourth Street, Toronto 14, Ontario, Canada

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- 98* Dr. A. Levon, c/o Lundbergsplan 3, Savaajo, Sweden
 22 R. A. Moss, Hill Farm House, Barton, Bedfordshire
 23 B. A. Moss, Hill Farm House, Barton, Bedfordshire

Our American Members will be interested to know that the Annual Meeting of the Musical Box Society International of America is to be held at Pine Oaks, Barnstable, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, U.S.A. - the home of Lloyd G. Kelly - on September 18th and 19th.

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THE MUSIC BOX is printed by Data Sift Limited, Fernshaw House, Fernshaw road, London, S.W.10 and published four times each year by The Musical Box Society of Great Britain at 11, Devonshire Place, Wimpole Street, London, W.1. Summer, 1965