

JOURNAL OF
THE
MUSICAL BOX
SOCIETY OF
GREAT BRITAIN

THE MUSIC BOX

a magazine of mechanical music



Vol. 5 No. 3

GREAT BRITAIN'S PREMIER
MECHANICAL MUSIC SPECIALIST

GRAHAM WEBB

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THE MUSIC BOX

THE JOURNAL OF THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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SUNDAY VISIT

by Graham Webb

Introducing a new series of articles describing places which are of interest to lovers of mechanical music.

We start this series with the organ museum at St. Albans because it springs readily to mind as being well placed for a visit from the point of view of a great many members. Situated as it is at St. Albans, some 22 miles from London, it is simple to get to from all directions. Later in the series we shall discuss places of interest which are in more remote parts of Britain although, of course, still well within a day's run for some.

1. St. ALBANS ORGAN MUSEUM

The St. Albans museum, although having a good selection of other types of instruments, is best known for its Belgian dance organs, of which there are no less than six on display. These organs, all using card book music, use a variety of effects as well as the normal organ pipes. Saxophones, accordions, xylophones, glockenspiels, chinese blocks, drums, cymbals and many more instruments are included. All are played pneumatically. The effect is as much for the eye as the ear.

Exciting as the dance organs are, for the man whose interest lies in the mechanical-electrical there can be no more pleasant experience than to watch and listen to the Violano Virtuoso which is one of the attractions of the museum. Such is the rarity of this machine that it is doubted that there are more than six Violano Virtuosos in the whole of Britain which are in working order. Coin operated (one old penny), the machine, which was made in Chicago, plays a violin and a 44 note piano. A perforated paper roll is used on which there are normally up to five tunes. When the last tune has been played the roll is automatically rewind.

For those members whose interests lie in the direction of reproducing pianos there is a choice between the Steinway Duo Art and the Rogers Ampico. Both of these are electric and in excellent order. There is also an Aeolian Orchestrelle which has been fitted with a centrifugal blower to obviate the necessity for working the foot pedals.

The musical box, both cylinder and disc, is represented at the museum; not, of course, to the

degree that most of our members would like, but we can't have everything. There are also some organettes and a singing bird, but this is modern.

A piece which at first glance would appear to be entirely out of place in an organ museum is the E.M.G. Gramophone. This, however, is well worth a place in any exhibition since it is considered to have the finest reproduction of any non-amplified gramophone ever. It is worth listening to in order to hear what can be done in sound without any electrical help except to drive the motor.

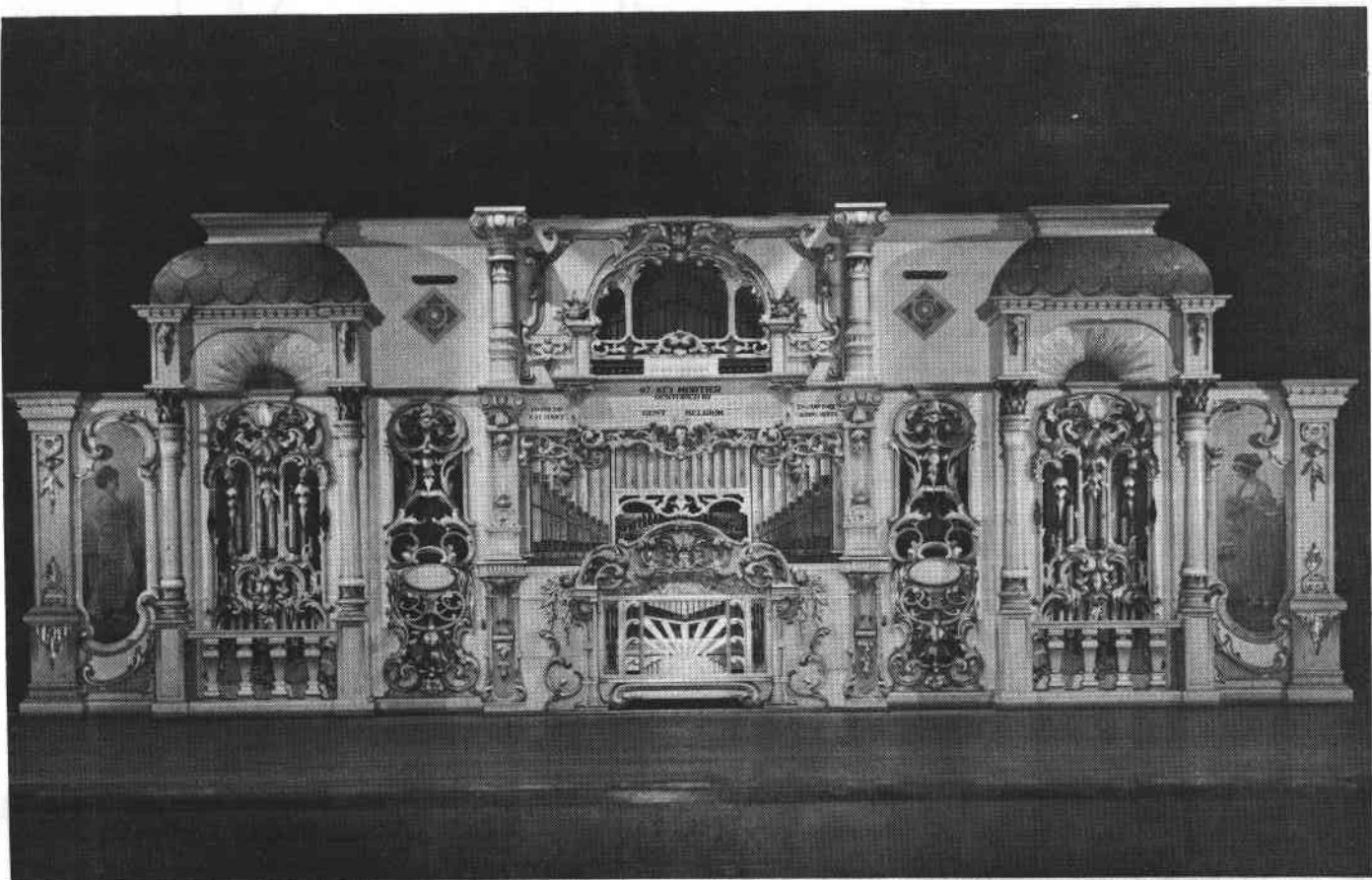
Mention must be made of the Wurlitzer organ which was obtained from the Granada Theatre, Edmonton, London. This organ, which has three manuals and ten ranks of pipes, was rescued by the museum before the theatre was demolished. While waiting to rebuild the organ, for which larger premises are required, the museum is showing the console and some of the pipes.

Facts about the Museum

Owner: The museum is privately owned by Mr. C.H. Hart. A good friend to both Mr. Hart and the museum is Mr. Eric V. Cockayne, author of the recent book on fair organs.

Address: St. Albans Organ Museum, 326 Camp Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire. Telephone St. Albans 51557.

Opening times: September to June: every Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. Parties of more than ten should make special arrangements. If possible it is preferred that large parties choose another time to



visit so that full justice can be done to the exhibits.

During July and August the museum is closed but some of the exhibits are transferred to a large marquee at the children's fun fair in Verulamium Park, St. Albans. Here they can be heard, weather permitting, each day from about 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

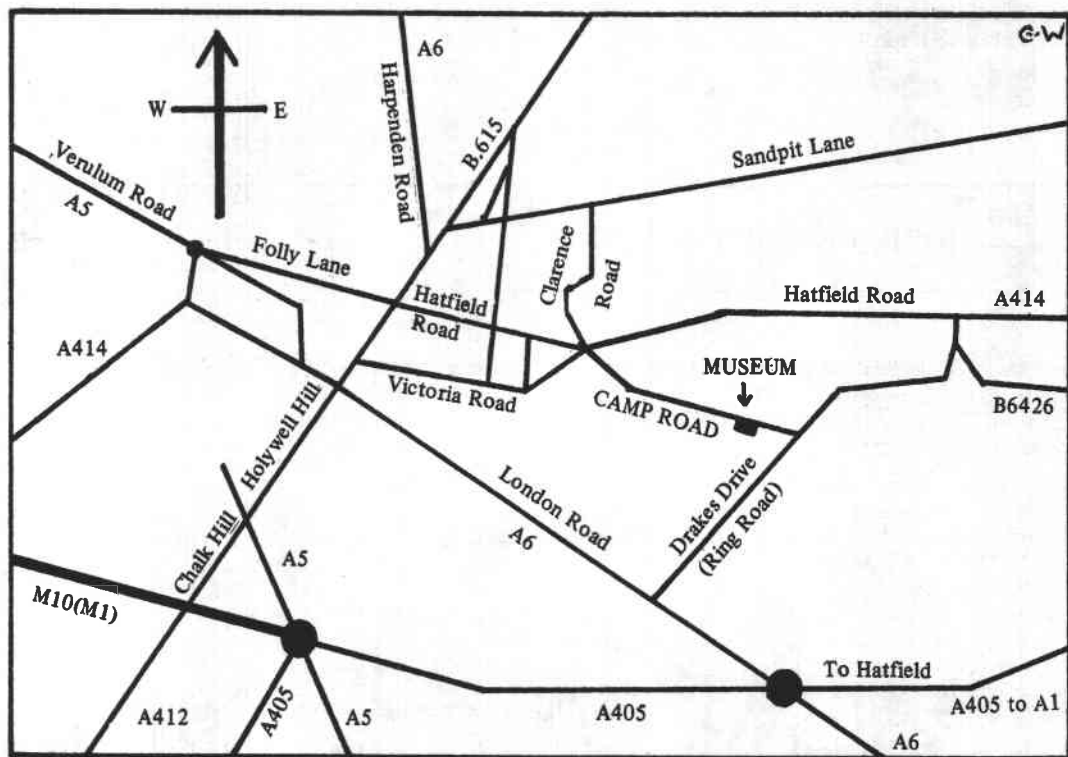
Admission: There is no charge for either the museum or the fun fair, but there are collection boxes provided for those who wish to contribute to running costs and new books of music for the organs. All visitors are requested to sign a visitors book.

Programme: Normally as many instruments as possible

are played and a commentary is given. Recorded music is played during intervals. Recordings of some of the organs are on sale at the museum.

How to get there: See the map for the exact location of the museum in the town. St. Albans is situated at a junction of the A5 and A6, 22 miles N.N.W. of London. From the North the M1 can be taken to Harpenden and then the A5, or the A1(M) to Hatfield and then the A414. From the East the A12 to Chelmsford and thereafter the A414. From the West the A41 to Hemel Hempstead and then the A414, or the A4 to Slough, the A412 to Bricket Wood and then the A405.

LOCATION OF THE MUSEUM



The photograph on Page 131 is of a fine 97 key Mortier organ to be seen at the Museum.

On Page 133 the photograph is of Mr. Hart, owner of the Museum, holding a book of music. In the background can be seen a dance organ.



LUBRICATION OF MAINSPRINGS

by Dr. Robert Burnett

IT has been my custom for about five years to lubricate the main springs of clocks and musical boxes with a light grease containing molybdenum disulphide. The reasoning behind this is that the low melting point of the grease makes it easy to apply – in the way described below – and if, or when, it becomes squeezed out from between the turns of the spring, some of the particles of solid molybdenum disulphide will remain and continue to provide lubrication. Molybdenum disulphide is a fine black powder with lubricating properties similar to, or better than those of graphite.

A recent incident demonstrated strikingly the efficacy of this lubricant and prompted me to write an account of my procedure, for the benefit of other members.

The lubricant

I use a very light grease which melts readily at about 40°C. The molybdenum disulphide is mixed with the grease roughly in the proportions of about one part by volume of disulphide powder to two parts of grease. Stirring the two together for a minute or so is sufficient to give adequate mixing. I regret that, as both the grease and the molybdenum disulphide were given to me several years ago without any specification, I cannot pass on a specification for either. I would recommend, however, that the melting point of the grease should be checked before any of the mixture is made up, as modern greases are sometimes thickened in a way that results in their not melting under any circumstances.

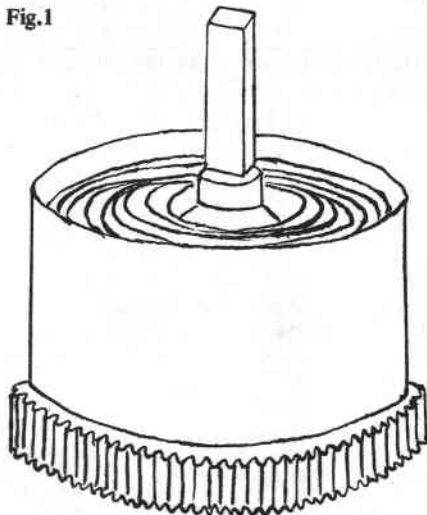
Applying the lubricant

The spring barrel must, of course, be removed from the remainder of the mechanism and it is best to remove the stop-work at this stage. The cover of the spring barrel is also removed (Fig.1). The barrel is then gripped by the toothed part in a vice, not directly but by means of a piece of wood about $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick of the shape shown in Fig.2. The rounded portion of the piece of wood should be a reasonably good fit for the toothed part of the spring barrel and when the vice is tightened to grip the piece of wood at A-A the teeth sink slightly into the wood and the barrel is held firmly without risk of damage to the teeth. Removal of the stop-work will, presumably, have left an open

hole in the end of the spring barrel where the screw retaining the Maltese cross part of the stop-work was secured. This hole should be blocked with a small piece of wax or similar material before the spring is held in the vice, otherwise the solvent to be used for cleaning the spring will run out of the barrel.

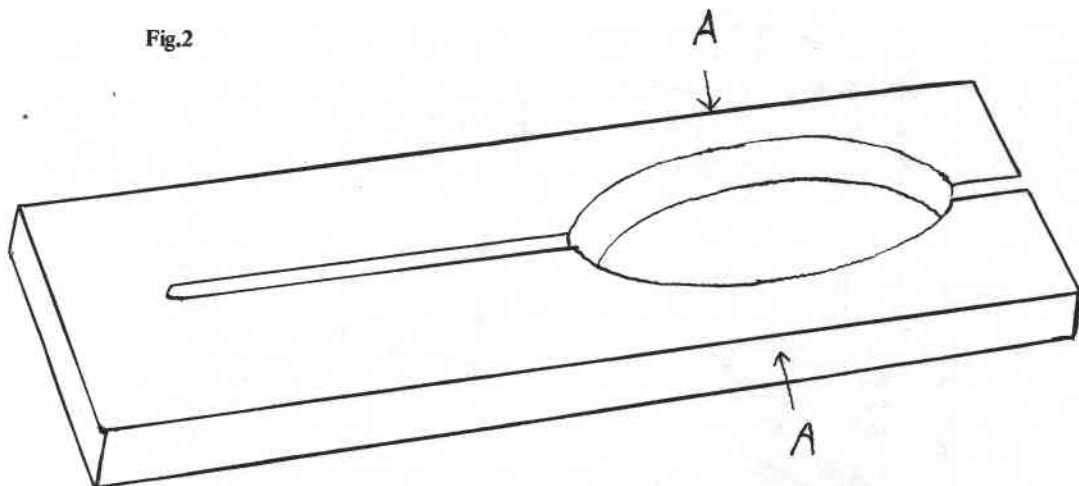


Fig.1



With the spring barrel gripped as described, the winding square will be pointing upwards and a well-fitting key should be put onto the square. The key should have a large enough handle to enable one to hold it easily, first with one hand and then with the other, when winding or letting down the spring. If the key is not large enough or is a poor fit on the square, it is very easy to let it fly when changing grip from one hand to the other, especially when letting the spring down, and a nasty injury to the fingers can result.

Fig.2



The old grease is now dissolved by squirting solvent into the spring barrel as the spring is wound up and let down with the key. It is not necessary to wind the spring fully. Once the outer turn comes away from the wall of the barrel, it seems to me that little advantage is gained by winding further. The solvent I normally use is lighter fuel which is very easy to apply from the small cans with a nozzle, in which it supplied. It is quite easy to see when the spring is clean and, once it is, the barrel is released from the vice and the solvent tipped away. If the grease is very old and has gone hard, it may be necessary to use a more powerful solvent and either carbon tetrachloride or better trichloroethylene which is less toxic, can be used. I have never tried it, but I should imagine that one of the solvent mixtures sold for removing old paint from brushes would be very effective.

A little time is allowed for the solvent to drain from the spring and the barrel is then warmed till it is rather too hot to hold. I have a reading lamp with a conical metal shade and find that, if this is turned upwards and the spring barrel is allowed to rest between the shade and the bulb, this forms a convenient way to warm the barrel. It has the advantage that if one forgets all about it, the barrel does not get hot

enough to do any damage.

The warm spring barrel is gripped again in the vice and the spring is wound and let down, as before, while some of the grease is applied to the upper edges of the spring. It melts at once and runs in between the turns of the spring. Replacement of the cover of the spring barrel and of the stop-work completes the job.

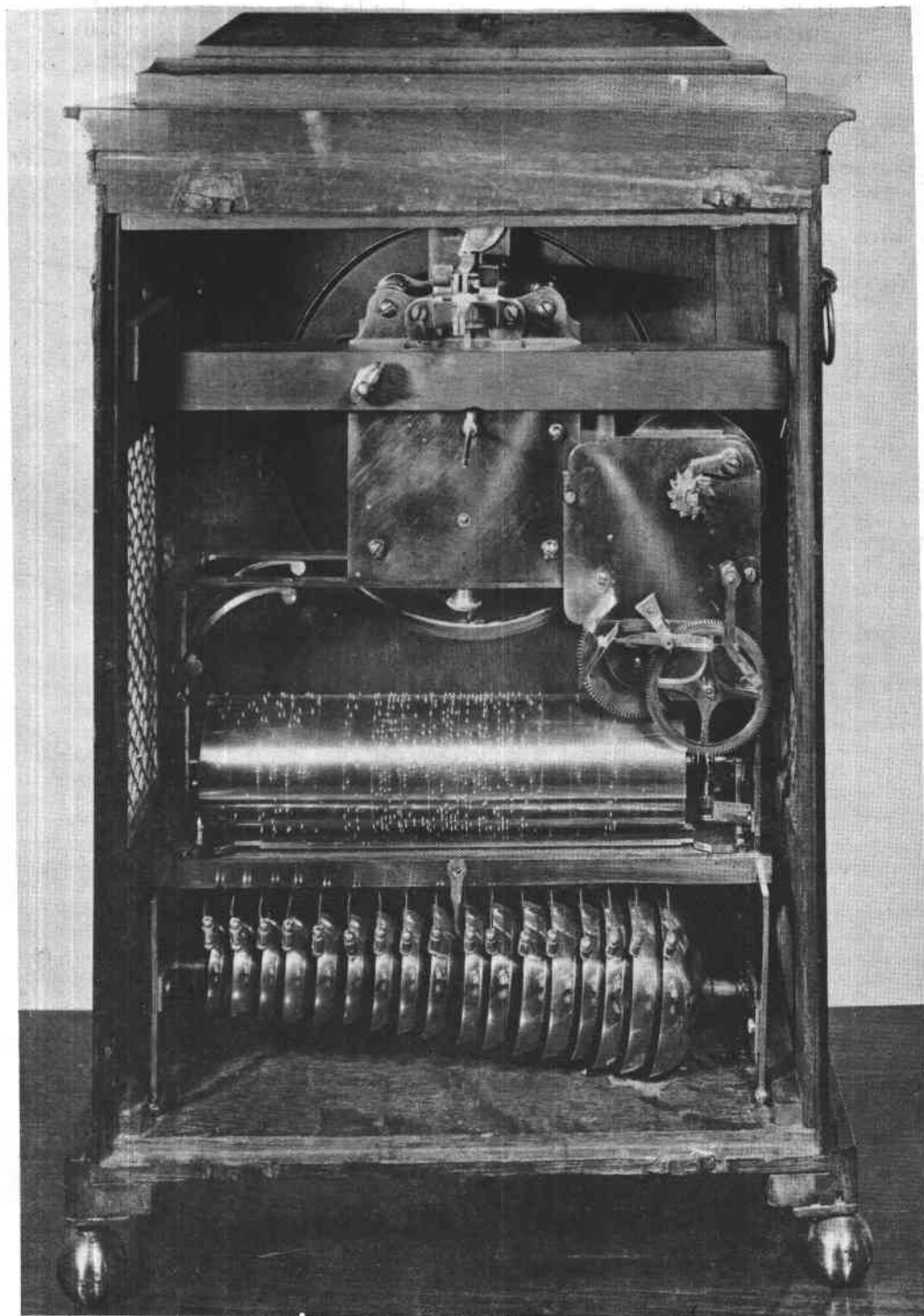
Proof of the lubricant's efficacy

I recently had occasion to fit a new spring to a singing bird box. Being short of time, I put the spring in lubricated with a light oil, as supplied, which I thought should be adequate. The bird box was a Swiss one with a fusee which should ensure that the force from the spring is constant until the mechanism is run down. In fact, I found that the box ran well for the first song, but for the second and third at one winding, it stopped just before the bird went down and the lid closed. This is point at which the load on the spring is at its highest. I then lubricated the spring in the way outlined above and I was surprised and delighted to find that the box now ran slightly faster than before and there was never any hesitation at the end of the song when the mechanism to lower the bird and close the lid was released.

MUSICAL CLOCK AT AUCTION

The two photographs shown are of a rare musical bracket clock with 17 bells. It dates from the early 19th Century. The clock was sold at auction recently by Messrs. King and Chasemore of Pulborough, Sussex. These pictures are published by their kind permission.

The case of the clock is seen to be of an elegant design very much in keeping with the style of the period. The wood is beautiful flame mahogany with brass inlay, the clock movement and the musical movement are separate and for this reason the clock movement is considerably smaller than would normally be found in an earlier, 18th Century musical bracket clock. The musical movement is allowed to be much larger than would have been possible in the earlier integral movement.





LIGNES AND POUCES

In this article, Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume reveals the true meaning of those mysterious units of dimension which appear on many musical box tune-sheets. These units, which pre-dated the introduction of the Metric system, remained in use well into the 1880s and 1890s.

COLLECTORS of cylinder musical boxes will be aware of the somewhat perplexing system which was in use on instruments up to the latter years of the last century whereby the mechanism was specified in *pouces* (literally translated as *thumbs* or *inches*) and *lignes* (*lines* or *rows*). There have been various guesses as to what all this stood for and it is generally taken as referring to the length of the cylinder in inches and the number of teeth in the comb. This is not so. The two dimensions provided refer to the length of the cylinder in *pouces* and the diameter of the cylinder in *lignes* (see Vol.2, page 190, reference '16 p24 l').

The system which this is based upon is the very early French unit of length. In truth, its presence on a musical box is an anachronism since the system of which it was part went out of use when the metric system we know today came into operation by law on November 2nd, 1801.

The method of determining length prior to that date was attributed to the emperor Charlemagne, Charles 1st of Germany (born about 742; died 814). It did, however, suffer from three serious shortcomings. First, there was no standard for the measurement and it was possible for errors by fluctuation to creep in. Secondly, the interpretation of the system varied from province to province and from one part of Europe to another. Thirdly, it was confusing in its use. As an example of this, dimensions were measured in *toises*, but it was practice to measure cloth, for instance, in *aunes* or *ells*. Whilst *aunes* and *ells* could also be used for calibrating distances on land, it was more usual to calculate in *perches*.

The *perche* was considered in Paris to be 18 *pieds*, but the country areas measured sea and forest distances at 22 *pieds* to the *perche*. The unusual part about the whole business was that the *pied* (French for foot) was the *pied de roi* (the King's foot) taken from Charlemagne. This foot measures 0.324 metres as compared with our standard Imperial foot which is exactly 0.3048 metres.

Tabulated, the units of measurement were:

One toise	=	6 <i>pieds</i>
One pied	=	12 <i>pouces</i>
One pouce	=	12 <i>lignes</i>
One ligne	=	12 <i>points</i>

The *toise* equalled six *pieds* or 1.949 metres. The *pouce* measured the twelfth part of the *pied*, namely 0.027 metres (27 millimetres). The *ligne* measured the twelfth part of the *pouce*, namely 2.256 millimetres. To set them out in understandable form, then, we have:

One ligne	=	2.256 mm (0.0895 inches)
One pouce	=	27.072 mm (1.065 inches) = 12 <i>lignes</i>
One pied	=	324.864 mm (12.7899 inches) = 12 <i>pouces</i>
One toise	=	1.9492 metres (6 feet 4.7323 inches) = 6 <i>pieds</i>

What happened after that? After the French Revolution, on May 8th, 1790 to be precise, the constituent assembly charged the Academy of Sciences with the organisation of a better system. The committee set up for this purpose by the Academy included such contemporary notable persons as Berthollet, Borda (the mathematician and astronomer), Delambre (another famed astronomer), the mathematician Lagrange, another famous mathematician and astronomer, the Marquis de Laplace, along with his cohort Pierre Mechain, and the engineer and man of letters Marie Riche de Prony. The two senior astronomers Delambre and Mechain were given the task of measuring an arc of the meridian between Dunkirk and Barcelona and from their calculations the *metre* (which was to equal one ten-millionth part of the distance between the Poles and the equator) was made the unit of length and the basis of the system by law on April 7th, 1795. The committee finished its work in 1799 and the system was decreed by law to be the only legal one on November 2nd, 1801. In response to pleas from industry and commerce, it was further decreed on the February 12th following that the

old system could be used with the new system for a further period to facilitate the changeover. On July 4th, 1837, the order was issued that as from January 1st, 1840, the metric and decimal system in all its primitive simplicity should be used in all business transactions to the exclusion of all other systems.

Having completed the introduction of metrication and established its use, the accuracy of the measurements entrusted to Delambre and Mechain was questioned. Subsequent checking established that the unit metre was slightly less than the one ten-millionth part intended. However, it was obviously too late to consider yet another set of figures, so the metre stood at 39.37 inches exactly as it does today.

Where did the cylinder musical box fit into all this? The mystique of *pouces* and *lignes* remained in use in the Swiss cantons long after it had officially been superseded in the halls of commerce. And a check on the majority of early musical boxes confirms that the unit of dimension used in their construction is not the millimetre but the *ligne*.

Charlemagne's feet were certainly of greater antiquity than the yard of Edward III who proclaimed "one weight, measure, and yard" throughout the kingdom in 1353. It remains interesting to consider that the Celestina and subsequent British-

built mechanical musical instruments might all have been metric in their dimensions, for the move towards metrication today is not new but purely a recalcrescence of an aged recommendation. It was the eminent politician Sir John Wrottesley who first preached the advantages of the metric system to an unconvinced Parliament in London on February 25th, 1824. Fourteen years later a commission of enquiry was appointed; five years later another commission reported strongly in favour of Britain going metric. Gladstone, in 1854, thought its introduction "premature". On July 26th, 1871, a bill for the compulsory introduction of the metric system was thrown out by the Commons.

A hundred years later, we are only a little bit closer. Nevertheless in a century from now when we are fully metricated, there will at least be ample reference material to satisfy the student and the curious as to what were feet and inches. Put the *pieds*, *pouces* and *lignes* belong to an age which did not take quite such pains at recording contemporary things. Nor, indeed, had it the facilities which we have today for preserving and transmitting knowledge and the story of our times. It is because of just this plus the fact that the spread of learning is something of comparatively recent existence, that so much of the relatively recent past, and this includes musical box technology, is unforgettably lost.



MANDOLINE PICCOLO

Part of a tune sheet from a Paillard box owned by the Editor showing the legend '12 Pouches'.

Footnote: Confusion exists in the minds of some people between *metrication* and *decimalisation*. The two are, of course, quite different. The author of this article, although in his work he has been involved in the use of metric units for almost twenty years and is accustomed to them, dreads the day when he must face everyday life with kilogrammes and metres particularly in view of the fact that he still has no idea how our decimal currency works. It is, he maintains, all part of an unsettling process secretly introduced by a strong underground Anti-British element to encourage emigration.

SLAVE CHILDREN

by Graham Webb

IF you are the happy owner of a miniature street barrel piano, or perhaps a small street barrel organ, when next you play your proud possession, surrounded as it is by the comforts of your home, spare a thought for what might have been its early history. There is a good chance that at some time in its life it contributed to the agony of a homesick, hungry and ill-used Italian child.

Throughout the ages it has always been profitable to exploit children. Almost every country has been guilty, at one part of its history or another, of using children to make money. In Italy, however, the wholesale buying and transporting of children to other countries for work at various itinerant trades continued for so long and at such a rate that it was, one feels, unequalled, at least in the Western world.

Records indicate that Venice and Milan were the centres of the trade in the Middle Ages, from where it spread to an area between Parma and Genoa. It was particularly prevalent in the secluded villages of the Apennines and also passed into Southern Italy, taking a firm hold in the Province of Calabria.

Throughout the centuries children were bought in these areas and taken abroad to be used in various 'trades' many of them as street musicians who in the 19th Century, are likely to have been 'organ grinders'. Many of the old laws of the Provinces of Italy show attempts to stamp out the trade but, as one area became difficult to work in the 'traders' would simply move to another, a simple matter in the welter of separate states which was Italy at this time.

Over a long period an organization grew which covered in particular France, Britain and America. This syndicate was not unlike the popular idea of the Mafia in that it had its members everywhere, each receiving a share in the profits. The whole set-up was run by a central board whose president was chosen each year. Members included captains and owners of ships, policemen, informers and any likely to be of assistance in making things run smoothly. Each major city had its 'chapter' whose main task seems to have been the recapture of runaway children, a job which must have kept them busy since in spite of this it is estimated that about 30 per cent of all children bought escaped and merged into the background of

the country which held them.

In the 19th Century, with the increasing accent on street mechanical music, the trade in children flourished and grew. The buyer would do the rounds of the villages and purchase children just as he might lemons or macaroni. The price of a child would vary between 75 and 200 Francs, a deciding factor in the price being the appeal he or she might have. There would be a contract with the parents and the local priest would give his blessing to the transaction. The children were then placed in groups and transported to whichever country was their destination.

The parents of the unfortunate children could hardly be blamed for their part in the business. Living in absolute poverty they could only believe that what they were doing was the best for the child. At least it held out some hope that he would make a better living than if he stayed. To give an idea of the conditions in which the business thrived, in Basilicata child mortality in 1864 was 64 per cent and illiteracy was 91 per cent. In such circumstances it must have seemed to many that they were being paid for giving their child a chance and getting rid of a mouth to feed.

One piece of effective legislation to prevent traffic in children was brought about, oddly enough, by an Englishman. Thomas Ward went to Italy as a groom in the stables on the Duke of Lucca and eventually became Prime Minister under the Duke of Parma, the son of his previous master. The decree of 1852 promised severe penalties for anyone attempting to export children from the Duchy.

The exact opposite to what was required was achieved by legislation passed by the Bourbons of Naples. They made it necessary for a number of set rules to be followed and legal contracts to be made and signed before a child could change hands. This of course made the situation worse, since it made the business absolutely legal and gave it the blessings of the government. All the buyer had to do was to observe the formalities and present the correct documents. Once the child was out of the country there was no possible way the employment could be controlled by the authorities.

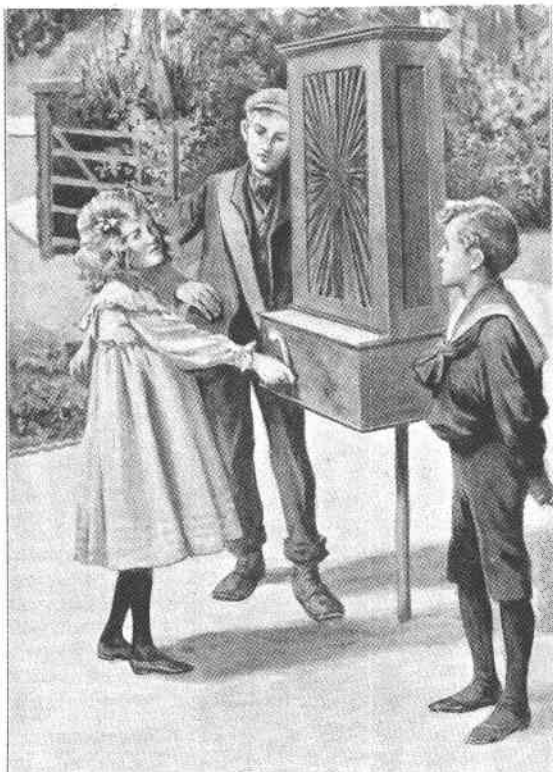
Upon reaching the city in which they were to work

the children were entirely at the mercy of their *Padrone*, who was rarely more than just and often less than kind. He would teach them the little they were required to know to carry out their various jobs, often with a kick to ram each lesson home, and so would start a life which at best would see the child still alive in adulthood. The chances of survival were slight since it is reckoned that 50 per cent of all children used in this way died before the end of their contracted time. Of the other 50 per cent, 30 per cent escaped and succeeded in eluding capture and only 20 per cent ever saw Italy again.

The children were housed in filthy hovels, several to a pile of rags for a bed, boys and girls alike. In most cases a pitiful breakfast was supplied before they were sent out and that was all the food they could expect unless they begged more during the day. In the evening they would return to their lodgings to hand over the money taken during the day, and woe to any who did not earn the sum expected. It is not surprising that many of the young girls were forced by their owners into prostitution and so made the business truly a "white slave trade"

The huge proportions of the trade can be seen when in Paris, in 1867, a law was made rendering it illegal to employ children under ten years old in any migratory profession. After this law was passed no less than 1,544 Italian children were taken up by the police from the streets in the first year.

By 1873 the now united Italian republic had at last seen the need for drastic action. The cause had been urged for a long time by a deputy, Giovanni Guerzoni, and now his battle was finally won. An act was passed which made it illegal to enter into contract for employment of children under sixteen years old in vagrant occupations. Legally then the business was at an end but not, of course, for those who chose to be outside the law. Gradually, however, the other countries involved brought the law into play against those who attempted to continue. The public gradually became aware of what had been happening and was urged by various societies not to contribute to the problem by giving money to the children. This must really have finished the remaining few *Padrones* and made them realise that it was all over.



The illustration is reproduced from the book 'Christies Old Organ' loaned by Member Dick Baines.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE MUSICAL BOX

We are indebted to Mr. Ronald Pearsall, the well known author and expert on 19th. Century social history, for the following article which he wrote expressly for the Journal, although he is not a member of the Society. As an author in demand he has little time for other things, witness his *'Worm in the Bud'*, which recently came out for Penguin books after a successful run as a hardback, and his *'The Table Rappers'* a book on Victorian spiritualism, soon to be published.

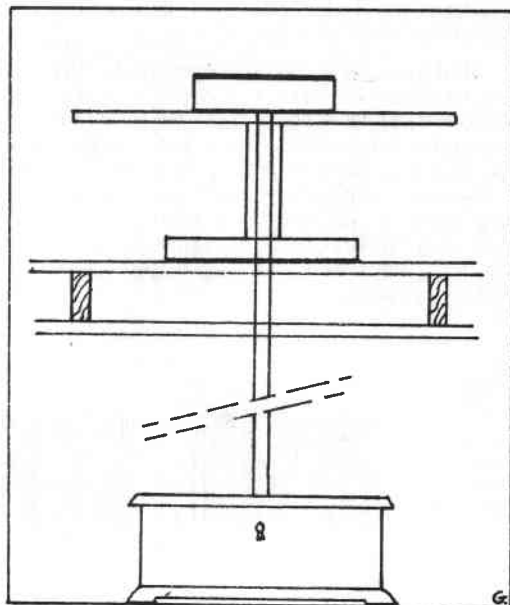
IT might be supposed that the connection between spiritualism and the musical-box is extremely tenuous, but in fact the musical-box played a considerable part in nineteenth century seances, both as a provider of background music and as a vital property in the performance. The professional mediums did not wait for supernatural things to happen of their own accord; they put on a show in which everything was gauged, from the amount of light from the gas brackets to the level of sound.

As a background, the music from a musical-box was ideal, being appropriately otherworldly and etherial, not too loud to distract, but sufficient in volume to cover up necessary preparation for spiritualistic tricks. The need to wind the instrument up was not a chore, but a welcome means of diverting the audience's attention; this was done by a confederate rather than the medium, and this could be an excuse for arranging some apparatus or removing surreptitiously some piece of equipment that had played its part in persuading the audience that spirits were present.

Tricks with musical-boxes played a big part in the seances of fraudulent mediums. The simplest one was the musical-box which played and stopped at the request of the medium. A musical-box was placed in the centre of the table, usually covered by another box so that it was impossible for the medium or a confederate to get direct access to it. When the medium said "Play!" the musical-box would play, and when he said "Stop!" the musical-box would obediently cease playing.

This effect was produced by the aid of a *second* musical-box, attached by an elastic band to the leg of the medium just above the bend of the knee within the trouser. When not in use, the box rested beneath the knee, but when the time came for the trick it was brought round to the front of the leg, above the knee. The box was arranged so that pressure upon a stud set the spring in motion. When the pressure was removed, the musical-box would stop.

Naturally these boxes would be quite small, of a kind that was used in an even more ingenious spiritualistic trick. This concerned the "self-playing" guitar. The guitar was a key property in the fraudulent seance, for the sound hole proved a convenient place to hide various odds and ends - cheesecloth for "ectoplasm", rubber gloves for "spirit hands", and



Sound transferred from box below floor

pieces of muslin for almost any purpose, not to mention veils, moustaches, beards, etc. The self-playing guitar merely had a small musical-box fixed inside it, operated by means of a stud. Presumably the performance was short-lived, for it would be risky having a too-obvious winding mechanism, though it would be easy enough drilling a small hole in the bottom of the guitar and inserting a key when the musical-box needed to be wound up.

Surely, it may be argued, an audience would know where a sound was coming from? Surely a musical-box on the table that was not playing could not be confused with a musical-box tied to a medium's knee? The answer, quite briefly, is no. Mediums soon found that in a darkened room, the audience in a heightened state of expectancy, few could locate a sound source.

The above is not mere speculation. The celebrated medium "Dr." Monck when arrested as a "rogue and a vagabond" was found to have such musical-boxes in his possession. The odd thing is that after being so conclusively exposed, the musical-box trick should

have been so successful time and time again. The reason for this is that the believers in spiritualism were wilfully blind to the frauds being practiced upon them, and even after Dr. Monck's conviction there were many thousands who would not hear a word against him. He had been, they claimed, framed by the sceptics.

Much ingenuity was involved in the evolution for the fake medium of self-playing musical instruments, perhaps the most interesting being the self-playing accordeon constructed by Wheatstone. It would be fascinating to encounter this today. So far as is known, it was a "one off". The famous self-playing accordeon of the great spiritualist medium D.D. Home was an ordinary instrument. It is, by the way, in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research, and was an exhibit last year in an important exhibition *Death and the Victorians* in Brighton.

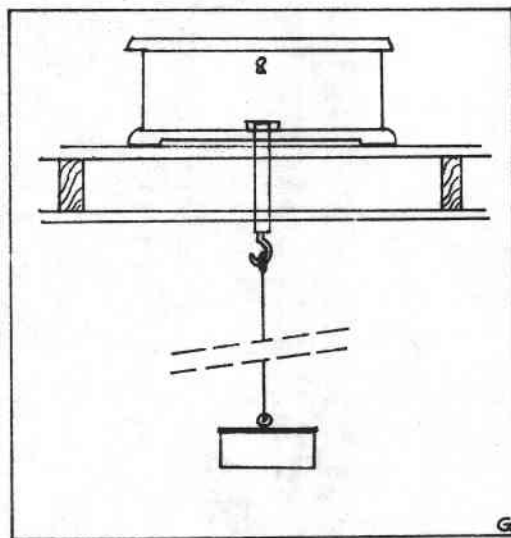
The only difficulty, of course, regarding "self-playing" musical instruments, was starting and stopping them. Some instruments could be activated by powerful electro-magnets, though these would be inoperative against a powerful spring of the kind that drives all but toy musical-boxes. In fact, genuine self-playing musical-boxes were not on. How was this to be overcome in the case of large musical-boxes? Even the most mentally-retarded seance-sitter could not mistake the tinkling sounds of a small musical-box strapped to a medium's knee for the resonance of a large musical-box in the centre of a table – and unquestionably the medium would have to play the large musical-box before the seance to convince the sitters that there was no hocus-pocus going on.

Interested readers may care to speculate on possible methods of starting and stopping a musical-box by remote control, but the favoured method was an elaboration of that used with small musical-boxes. The musical-box that was playing was not really playing at all; a further musical-box was in another room, connected with the musical-box in the seance room by a rod which would transmit the sound. This was a development from a music-hall conjuring act that used a quartet of Erard harps that seemingly miraculously played the roles of piano, cello, violin, and clarinet. Four upright rods were attached to the sounding-board of the piano, the belly of the violin, the belly of the cello, and the mouth of the clarinet.

Of course, for the music-hall act it was necessary to interrupt this connection between harps and instruments below, and the rods were cut right through an inch above the stage. This did not prevent the ends of the rods from resting one upon the other, so that the sound could be transmitted. By turning the harps round on their own axes the rods were completely disconnected, so it would seem that the rods had a possible screw connection.

In the dim light of a seance room, rods connecting two musical-boxes could be placed and taken away at

will. If the on/off mechanism of the hidden musical-box was used to start and stop the music it would be clear to the listeners that the music was restarting at precisely the same place as where it stopped. If the rods were disconnected for a few minutes the tune would start up at a different place, and add to the effect.

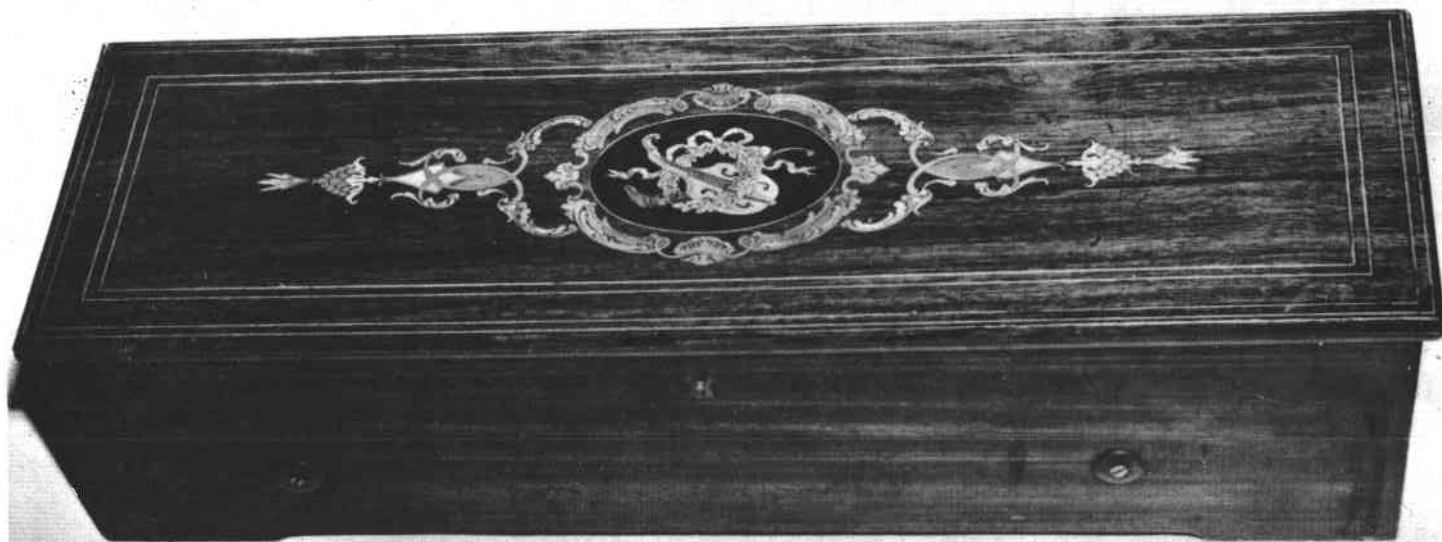


Sound transferred from box above ceiling

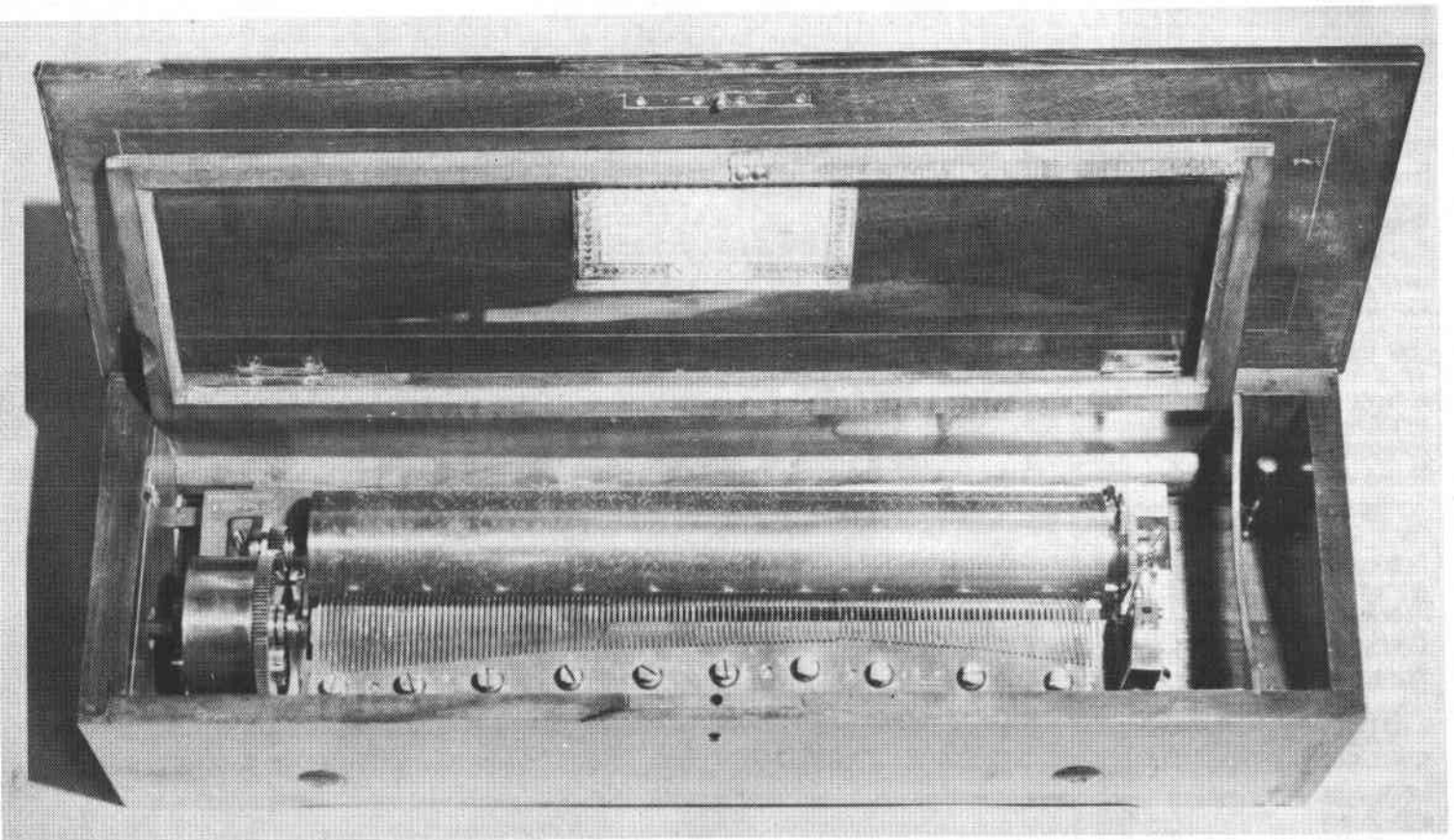
What other ways were there of starting and stopping a "self-playing" musical-box? Perhaps by connecting the on/off lever to lengths of cotton operated by a confederate, or, maybe, scrubbing out a tune or part of a tune by removing some of the cylinder pins, though this operation would need a carefully prepared programme on the part of the medium plus arrangements to cover up the whirring of the mechanism.

Anything unexpected would gratify an audience, and there is one amusing instance of awed sitters being impressed by the fact that a self-playing musical-box was playing the treble and not the bass of an air. Some readers, no doubt, will have had this experience, and not by design either.

The role of the musical-box as an accessory to parlour trickery is perhaps not widely known, but it illustrates once more the versatility of the cylinder box. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened had the Polyphon been utilised for spiritualist seances. No doubt it would have scared the spirits half to death (if that is not a contradiction in terms). However, by the time the Polyphon arrived on the scene, Victorian spiritualism was fading. There was a new generation of sitters not to be taken in by a mysterious musical-box that went on and off as it by magic.



From the collection of Member R.C. Corbett of Hants, comes this fine Nicole Freres 6 air, key-wind, Piano Forte box. The serial number is interesting in that it is 39,825, rather higher than is normally found on a key-wind Nicole. The programme shows a catholic choice of airs including: God Save The Queen; Home Sweet Home, and an aria from Bellini's *Somnambula*. Note the glass lid and the 'ratchet-key'.



AN INTERESTING NECESSAIRE

by Frank Metzger

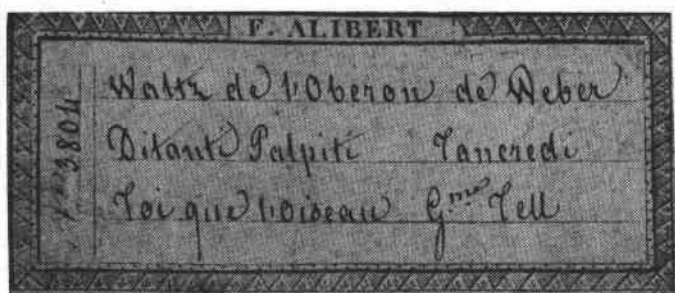
Some years ago when I first started to collect musical boxes I had occasion to be in Montreal and to visit some antique shops there. In one of these shops I asked for musical boxes and received the usual reply, "Why, we have nothing like that here". When I left the shop, however, the saleslady came after me and said that she did have an old "work box" which she thought contained a musical movement which was not in working order. To make a long story short, I took a look at the "work box" and with little hesitation decided to buy it. It was only when I got it home and had a chance to examine it more closely that I realized how unusual a piece this really was! After some time spent restoring the finish and cleaning the musical works, it has turned out to be one of my favourites and something of an oddity as well.

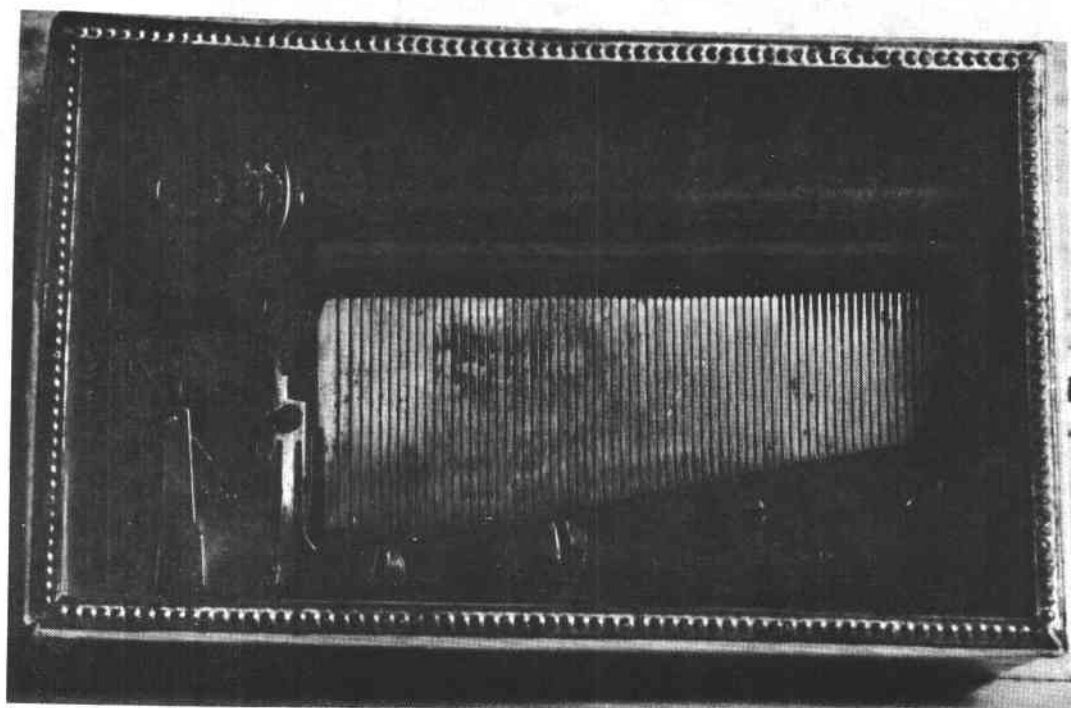
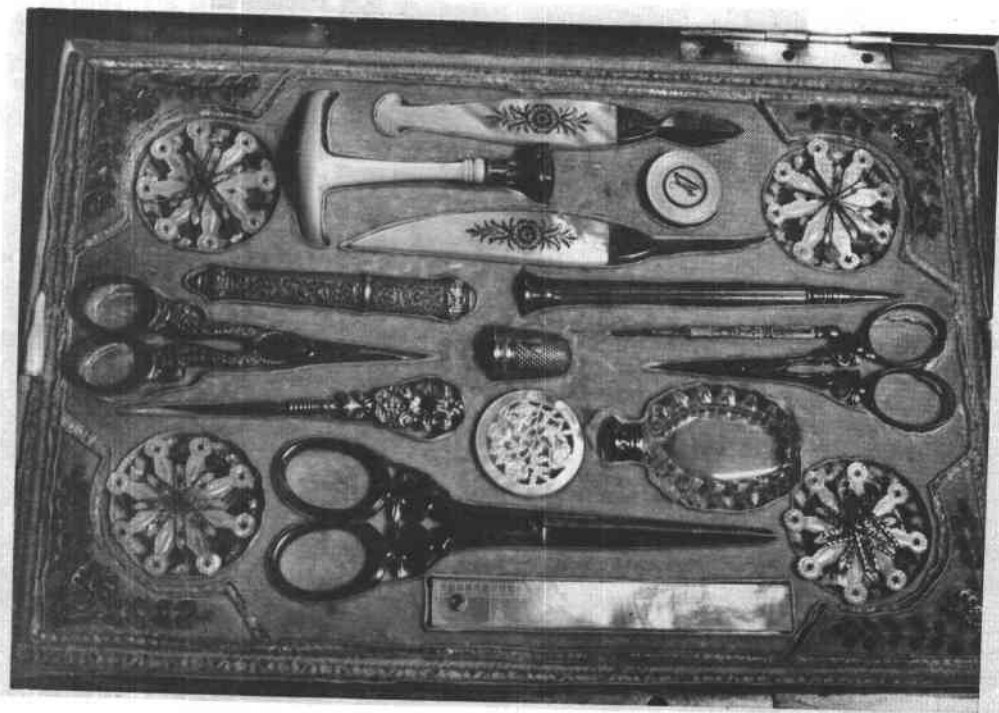


To begin with the shape and execution of the case is unusual and quite unlike most of the Necessaires illustrated in the books available to me, or those being offered for sale by any of the dealers I know, or available in recent auctions. (1) The cabinet work of the box itself is of a much higher order than the usual Necessaire and there is an engraved gilded plaque on the front with the name of the (I presume) original owner – Clarissa Emma Racey. In one picture can be seen further evidence of the fine cabinet work and exterior fittings, as well as the beautifully executed inner lining of the

lid in which, by the way, both the silk and the gilded buttons have been particularly well preserved.

Equally unusual is the large number of fittings (19) in the Necessaire itself and the quality of these fittings. There are all sorts of tools and devices not commonly found in the ordinary Necessaire. There is, for instance, a gold-mounted table seal which, when used, impresses a dove with the message, "Repondez Vite". There is a little mother-of-pearl spool of wax used, I would imagine, to wax the thread used in those days. There is a beautifully





executed mother-of-pearl sachet box, or vinaigrette, which still contains some fragments of dried rose petals. The perfume bottle is of gold-mounted crystal rather than the usual pressed glass. Perhaps most interesting of all, the box contains a tape measure of seven sections, which measures in the French unit called Pouces, which is the equivalent of about $1 \frac{1}{8}$ ". The measure, which is beautifully jointed, is 22 Pouces long and entirely made of mother-of-pearl.

When looking at all of this and thinking about it one day, I was struck by the fact that in such an elaborate box, with all of the fittings so obviously original (with the exception of the little awl – between the two pairs of scissors), there should be such a diversity of design. Two pairs of scissors belong together; another pair of scissors belongs with the needle case and the elastic threader; the two seam rippers go together; the table seal is a completely different design, and so on. Yet it seems obvious that these were all assembled at one time and fitted into the box. One of the seam rippers is shown somewhat enlarged. On one side can be seen what appears to be a label, perhaps from the original store which sold it – Garnesson, Palais Royal No. 155 (Paris). Based on this label, I have come up with the following theory (please feel to come up with alternative theories).

I assume that this *Necessaire* was originally meant as a gift and that the donor went to Garnesson and purchased a variety of items suitable for a *Necessaire*, choosing those items which pleased him or her rather than only those which necessarily were of the same design. I assume that with these items purchased, he either commissioned Garnesson or went to a cabinet maker and had him design a box to hold the implements, in that form and design which, again, pleased him. I also assume that at this time the donor purchased a musical movement to be installed in the case upon its completion.

- (1) These as you know are typically shaped as miniature grand pianos or, somewhat more rarely, as decorated rectangular boxes.
- (2) I have a snuff box containing an Alibert movement of precisely the same construction with a comb stamped Bordier.

Editors note: for more about the French measurement 'pouces' see the article by Arthur Ord-Hume in this issue.

The musical movement which is of primary interest to us, is incredibly good in tone, literally like silver bells, and is of the finest quality. It is signed by F. Alibert, the comb being stamped *Martinet et Benoit*. I feel it is another example of collaboration between Alibert and a number of other first-class manufacturers (2) and, further, I believe it is an original Alibert movement rather than just one of his repairs. I base my theory on the fact that the *Necessaire* contained what appears to be an original tune sheet of F. Alibert, marked with the identifying number 3804, which number is also stamped on the movement base and engraved in microscopically small numbers underneath the Alibert signature on the endless screw bracket. This is contrary to the theory proposed in David Tallis' book in which he theorizes that movements merely signed by Alibert rather than stamped with his name are repairs rather than originals.

Insofar as the movement itself is concerned, the construction is not unusual although particularly well executed. There are 72 teeth in the comb. Most of the teeth have steel dampers of such incredible fineness that I have been unable to repair the one or two that are missing with any materials I have on hand, and have had to use feather dampers instead. The comb itself is one piece, with the base fully $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick and an integral part of the comb. It is this particular type of construction which I believe gives this little movement its unusually sweet and clear tone and which is best indicative of the quality of this movement.

As yet, I have not attempted to determine the genealogy of the original owner, Clarissa Emma Racey nor, for that matter, have I even had the chance to investigate the existence of a shop called Garnesson in Paris, and whether or not their records are still available.

Perhaps one of the readers of this little article might be able to shed some light on this matter.



EARLY MECHANICAL ORGANS IN LONDON

by Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume

MECHANICAL ORGANS gained a high degree of popularity in Europe during the 16th century and the most famous of these instruments was undoubtedly that in the gardens of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli near Rome. Powered by water which was used to compress air for the musical pipes, this is supposed to have been built in 1549 and it was depicted by Athanasius Kircher (born 1601; died 1680) in his book *Musurgia Universalis* published in Rome in 1650. Kircher's drawings and description were subsequently copied by Caspar Schott (born 1608; died 1666) in his work *Technica Curiosa* published in Nurnberg in 1664. The original appearance of this organ must, even so, remain doubtful since it is known that Kircher himself copied his sketch from a much earlier drawing attributed to the Neapolitan physician, Giovanni Battista della Porta (born about 1550; died 1615) who published a work called *Magia Naturalis*.

These water-powered organs were immensely popular and included the famed instrument in the grounds of the house of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini near Frascati. They functioned by having water spill continuously on to a water wheel "with great force" as related by the French essayist, Michael de Montaigne (born 1533; died 1592) in his *Journal de Voyage* published in 1580-81. As this wheel turned, connecting rods from a crank pumped air using goat-skin bellows and at the same time rotated a pinned barrel assembly through gears and latern-pinions.

Only one such water organ survives today and that is the one in the famous mechanical theatre at Hellbrunn, five miles from Salzburg.

At least one water organ, and possibly two, existed in London and its environs. The original summer home of the actress Eleanor Gwyn (born 1650; died 1687) who was better known as Nell Gwynne, mistress of Charles II, was Bagnigge Vale in North London. This was decorated and laid out in sumptuous style no doubt upon the instructions of the King himself. It is possible that the King may have visited Tivoli or one of the other famed water gardens of Europe and from them gained an appreciation and love of waterworks. What is certain is that when the Royal associations with Bagnigge Vale ceased, the place was opened up as a pleasure garden as Bagnigge House. The discovery of two springs of mineral water in the grounds during 1760 promptly called for the re-naming of the place Bagnigge Wells which name stuck for the duration of its existence. Within the grounds there existed a water-organ. This would have provided subtle background music to the strolling couples in the leafy walks betwixt the fountains and falls. During the week, regular musical concerts were given on a conventional organ in the Long Room. As the nineteenth century progressed, the tone of the clientele lowered and finally the management went

bankrupt. A sale catalogue in the British Museum mentions both the water organ and the "excellent fine-toned organ" in the Long Room. The gardens re-opened under new management shortly afterwards but the final evening was March 26th, 1841 after which Bagnigge Wells, one of the most romantic of all the London gardens, ceased to exist. A tavern existed on the site in 1850, as well as the Phoenix Brewery. In the 1860s the site was completely obliterated by the building of Kings Cross railway terminus.

Winstanley's Water Theatre

Henry Winstanley, artist, engraver and self-taught engineer, was born in 1644 and lived at Littlebury near Saffron Walden in Essex. His name will forever be connected with the illfated first lighthouse to be built on the infamous Eddystone Rock. The lack of an engineering training did not prevent this somewhat eccentric gentleman from undertaking so perilous a task. His labours began on July 14th, 1696 in the reign of William III and he spent the first summer boring twelve holes in the solid rock into which he fixed iron rods to secure the building he was to erect. He experienced many hindrances and unusual adventures, including being taken prisoner one foggy night by thirty armed Frenchmen, England and France at that time being at war.

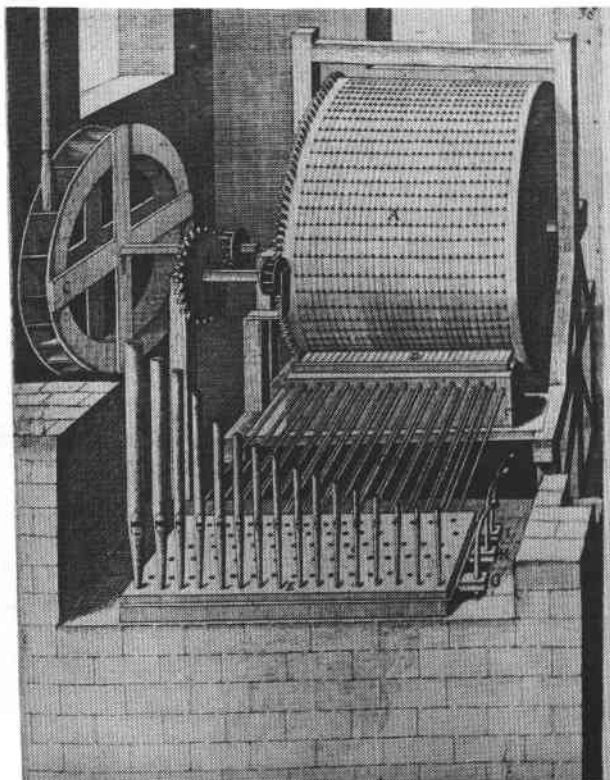
At last the strange building was finished and on the night of November 14th, 1698, it was lighted up with tallow candles. The timber building stood 80 feet high and was of quite extraordinary appearance. All around it were all manner of strange ornaments, cranes for hauling provisions, balconies and decorative ironwork, the whole being surmounted by an elaborate weather-vane. Winstanley was a proud man and at the end of the first winter returned to his lighthouse to see how it had withstood the elements. He was told that the waves had frequently

swept over the top of the lantern, obscuring the light. He promptly decided to make the building 40 feet taller and in spite of warnings that it would be made unstable, this he did. Ignoring prophecies of disaster, Winstanley set off from Plymouth on November 26th, 1703, to spend the night at his lighthouse. That night the fiercest storm that England had ever known struck and Winstanley and his lighthouse was completely carried away into oblivion.

Whether or not Winstanley was acquainted with either Tivoli or Nell Gwynne's house is not known. However, Winstanley was fascinated by waterworks and at his home near London built a water theatre. One of the very few descriptions of this is recorded in the *Travels in London in 1710* by the German writer, bibliophile and statesman Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (born 1683; died 1734). An English edition of this was published by Faber in London in 1934. In this book Uffenbach mentions a visit to Winstanley's Water Theatre and refers to listening to the sounds of the organ from above. Although there is no direct reference to this as being a mechanical organ, there is much evidence to support the sup-

position that this was indeed a water organ. A bill quoted in Malcolm's *Customs of London* and dated April 25th, 1709, refers to "Henry Winstanley's Water Theatre. Shown for the benefit of his widow".

In conclusion and in order to set matters right, Winstanley has been denigrated over the years about the affair of the Eddystone Lighthouse. It is incontrovertibly on record that the storm which carried the building and its inventor to destruction was no ordinary storm. It caused immense devastation across England and earned for itself the appellation *the Great Storm*. The loss sustained in London alone was put at £2m and the lives lost by flooding in the Thames and the Severn and on the coast of Holland and in ships which were never seen again is put at 8,000. Twelve men-o'-war with more than 1,800 men on board were lost within sight of their own shore and 17,000 trees were torn up from their roots in Kent alone. The Bishop of Bath and Wells and his lady were killed in bed in their palace in Somerset and losses to livestock were staggering. There were other and more rugged things than the Eddystone Light pulverised that night.



Robert Fludd, alias Fluctibus, produced this somewhat schematic diagram showing a mechanical organ driven by a water-wheel. The pinning on the barrel appears to be designed to play dissonant chords!



From the collection of Member Grace Thompson comes this interesting table Symphonion which plays centre driven discs of 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. This is a table version of the 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch model, since the discs are the same except for the peripheral drive on those of the larger machine.

FELLOW MEMBER

by Graham Webb

INTRODUCING a new series about members of our Society which is designed to help us to get to know each other. In future these articles will be arranged and written by Dick Baines. What better start to the series than to get to know Dick first of all?

Dick Baines, the subject of our first article in the 'Fellow Member' series, is already quite well known to those of us who manage to attend meetings of the Society in London. He has twice, most successfully, presented lectures, complete with the magic lantern and slides which are his secondary hobby, on 'Christie's Old Organ'. Dick's Dickensian (excuse me) appearance and method of lecturing have played a good part in the undoubted success of his talks.

It is not surprising that Dick is a good lecturer, it is how he earns his living. He is in charge of the faculty of Historical Studies in the Design Department of the London College of Fashion. It must be said, however, that both at heart and in reality Dick is an artist first and foremost. I have no less than five of his pictures in my home and since only two of these were gifts it can be seen that I admire his work a great deal. In this I am not alone by any means, Dick has exhibited work in many of the London Galleries, and has been honoured by his home town of Hastings with a one man exhibition at the Museum and Art Gallery. This exhibition was rounded off by the town buying four of his paintings. Of the work Dick showed on this occasion one discerning art critic said: 'His paintings and drawings are crisp and incisive, his command of colour and form exceptional and his juxtaposition of tones subtle and assured.' Now I have studied this statement most carefully and I have come to the conclusion that it means that he is a good painter.

An active member of the M.B.S., Dick lives in Chiswick, London, in a former laundry converted to his own design to include a studio. The studio was meant for work of course, it now holds an Aeolian Orchestrelle. This will strike a familiar chord with many of us. He also owns the best miniature street piano I have ever heard, this made by Francesco Getto of Ivrea, Italy, and the only machine by this maker that I know of in this country. Among other choice pieces Dick owns a fine chamber barrel organ by Lincoln.



Dick Baines

One of Dick's other loves is vintage cars – a full life this – and he is currently to be seen driving around London in a 1933 Austin Ten Tourer which is in absolutely mint condition.

The education of this all round man started at Hastings Grammar School from where he moved to Eastbourne College. In 1957 he went to Regent Street Polytechnic where he studied art until 1961. During this period he won medals for drawing and engraving and obtained the National Diploma in Design in Painting at special level. In 1963 he obtained the Art Teacher's Diploma at Goldsmith's College.

I have tried to give an unprejudiced view of a friend, a difficult thing to do at best. The truth lies with those who know him in the Society and I have found no argument with my view that here is a man worth knowing.

The Autumn meeting of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain was held on Saturday, October 9th 1971 at the Great Western Royal Hotel, Paddington, London.

Attendance at the meeting, although, quite naturally down from the record numbers of the Annual General Meeting held in May, was well up to normal at over a hundred members and guests. Of particular interest was the large number of new faces to be seen among those of the older members.

The registration table was managed by Mrs. Waylett and Mrs. Tallis in their usual business-like manner, and the sale of raffle tickets, for a miniature 4-air musical box with a wooden case, was conducted by Jo Webb in her inimitable style. On this occasion she managed to extract the useful sum of £38.25p from members and guests. The profits from the raffle go towards defraying the cost of the meeting.

The morning lecture was given by our Hon. Secretary Mr. Reg Waylett who, using slides of photographs taken by himself and members of the M.B.S.I., gave us a glimpse of the route taken by the U.S. party when they left England to continue their European trip. Mr. Waylett joined the Americans for this part of their journey and brought back enough pictures, of both countryside and collections, to at the very least whet our appetites and cause several members to decide, there and then, that a visit to these places was a must.

The display of members' boxes was a little disappointing in numbers but during the luncheon interval it was well attended. Particular interest was taken by members in a showing by Mike Gilbert of the equipment he uses for replacing tooth tips. The tools included a jig for holding the drill set, which



Messrs. Horngacher, Montgomery and Dinsmore listen.

Mike uses with a carborundum wheel for slotting, with a platform above to take the comb being repaired. Outstanding among the boxes was a Variations box by Nicole Freres playing Home Sweet Home and Carnival of Venice, both on two revolutions of the cylinder. This four air box is the same size as the classic Nicole four overture box. It was owned by Chris Thompson (where does he find them all?). Roger Booty also had an interesting machine on show, a Herophon. This is the organette which has a square 'disc' which remains stationary while the mechanism revolves as the handle is turned. We have an article by Roger in this issue on the Atlas organette and we can look forward to some words on the Herophon from him at a later date.

The afternoon proceedings were opened by the President, Mr. Cyril de Vere Green, who read a letter from the President of the Musical Box Society International wishing us a good meeting. He then introduced various overseas members of our Society who were attending the meeting. Among foreign members present were: Mrs. J. Blakiston-Thorn of Western Australia; Mr. Horngacher from Switzerland; Mr. Moltzer of Holland and two couples from the United States, Mr and Mrs Ralph Heintz and Mr and Mrs Sidney Malitz.

The President then paid tribute to Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, retired Hon. Editor of this journal. Members were shown in book form three of the four volumes, each containing eight journals, for which Arthur was responsible. The sight of these three books, each thicker than the last, brought home to those present the vast amount which has been accomplished by our ex-Editor. The President asked for, and got, a standing ovation for Arthur. Not the last to join in was your new Editor who is in an excellent position to know just what Arthur W.J.G.



Austin Oliver expounds, Jack Donovan listens.



Keith Harding expounds.

Ord-Hume achieved.

The first lecture of the afternoon was presented by Keith Harding under the title Musical Box Technology. All praise to Keith for undertaking such a formidably wide field as a topic. The talk, which could have been a little heavy, was saved from this by Keith's humour, and very good participation from the floor, illustrating by question and discussion the extremely wide range of interests there are in the Society. I think, above all, along with Diatonic Scale, Mean Tone and Equal Temperament, we shall remember



Marcella and Ralph Heintz from California.

Mr. W.K. Harding, self confessed ex-choir boy, singing a scale.

The second speaker of the afternoon was Mr. Eric V. Cockayne, author of the book 'The Fair-ground Organ'. Mr. Cockayne, an expert on Fair organs, gave us a lecture on these instruments which, in content and presentation, could almost be called a masterpiece. Getting straight into his subject by discussing different types of organ pipes and the instruments they are meant to imitate, Eric guided us deftly through a series of facts and details about a subject which to most of us is a closed book. The slides which illustrated part of his talk were exceptionally good pictures, and the finale, of a recording of a test book of music on a Gavioli, brought to an end a really fine, entertaining and informative lecture.



Eric Cockayne listens.

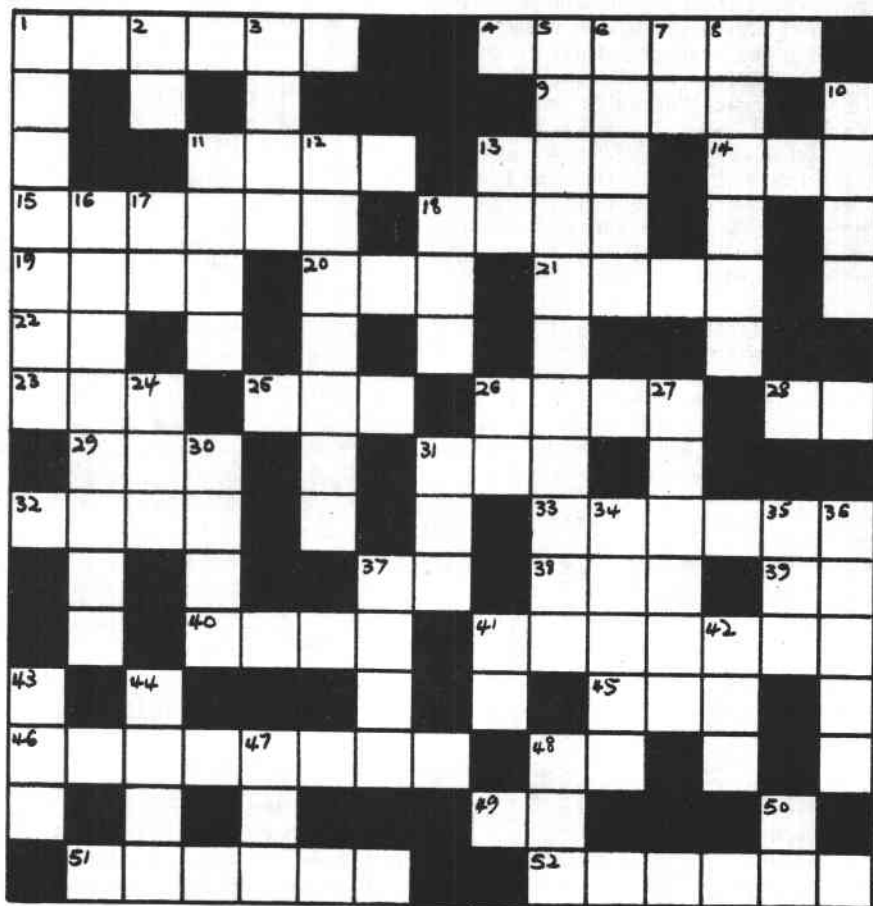
After tea had been taken a panel of five, chaired by Arthur Ord-Hume, with Cyril de Vere Green; Keith Harding; Eric Cockayne and Graham Webb, answered questions on the general subject of mechanical music, in particular their care and repair. The questions and suggestions came thick and fast and for this reason this part of the day was a success also.

During his final words to the meeting the Hon. Secretary delivered a bomb-shell which made the audience gasp. The management of the Great Western Royal Hotel, where we have held so many enjoyable meetings, had doubled the charges for the room for the next meeting. This can only mean that the Society will have to find a new venue for the Spring. Our new Vice President Mr. David Tallis has undertaken this uneviable task. We wish him good hunting!

GRAND CROSSWORD

Compiled by Graham Webb

(The solution is on page 181.)



ACROSS

1. Take your choice, early maker or a friend of Clark
4. Austrian early starter in composition
9. Could be an alternative name for a butterfly wing
11. Goes well with the ladies and melody
13. *The end of a dress
14. Ticklish writer for a damper
15. A disc organ
18. At least once in Tara's Halls
19. Part of a chocolate coloured disc title?
20. Two for this, but not on your box we're sure

21. *A lake in Erin's Isle
22. *Part of that is where he's —
23. *An early song
25. *Run around for the ashes
26. A well known street organ, in Eastern Holland?
28. Part of a French tonic?
29. *Would you have it in a cup you won at golf?
31. *And have done this at the same time?
32. Is this a record?
33. A box may occasionally play something from this
37. *Oh dear! That part again

38. Not quite in tune
39. *The French have the word for it
40. Not a good shape for a cylinder
41. Dismantling takes this sort of care
45. Do more for a new box than cast this over it
46. This must rank as a stop on a barrel organ
48. *Alternative to French gold?
49. *Is it Latin?
51. Sounds as if this holiday place has a French spring
52. The wetter the better?

DOWN

1. Music et/al for a good sound
2. Drink part of the tonic?
3. More than just a run, I added
5. Is the box making approaches? 8.3
6. Opening with a Z it might be on 5 down
7. *Sounds like a girl's name but is indefinite before a vowel
8. It seems they've been given the wire
10. Later on? Look at some early tune sheets
11. *Will not do but is also as usual
12. Not sharp of course

13. *Front half of a harp?
16. 14 Across may help you to score musically with this
17. From Opposite
18. The actor makes a pig of himself
24. Do you like mechanical music?
26. *Half of that is right
27. A house for part of a bell box
30. Piano-forte boxes are sometimes said to have this
31. Musical box repairs could be called a form of it
34. *It's later than before
35. A case could be made of it
36. Your etouffoirs are beneath some of them
37. Higher than treble
41. *Former
42. *Take a short saint away from hard metal and you'll get a slippery customer
43. Do this to a resonator to lower a note
44. Unusually underdone, this box
47. *Best part of sago for the past
48. *Not even normal
50. *A personal note

(*Answer is not musical)

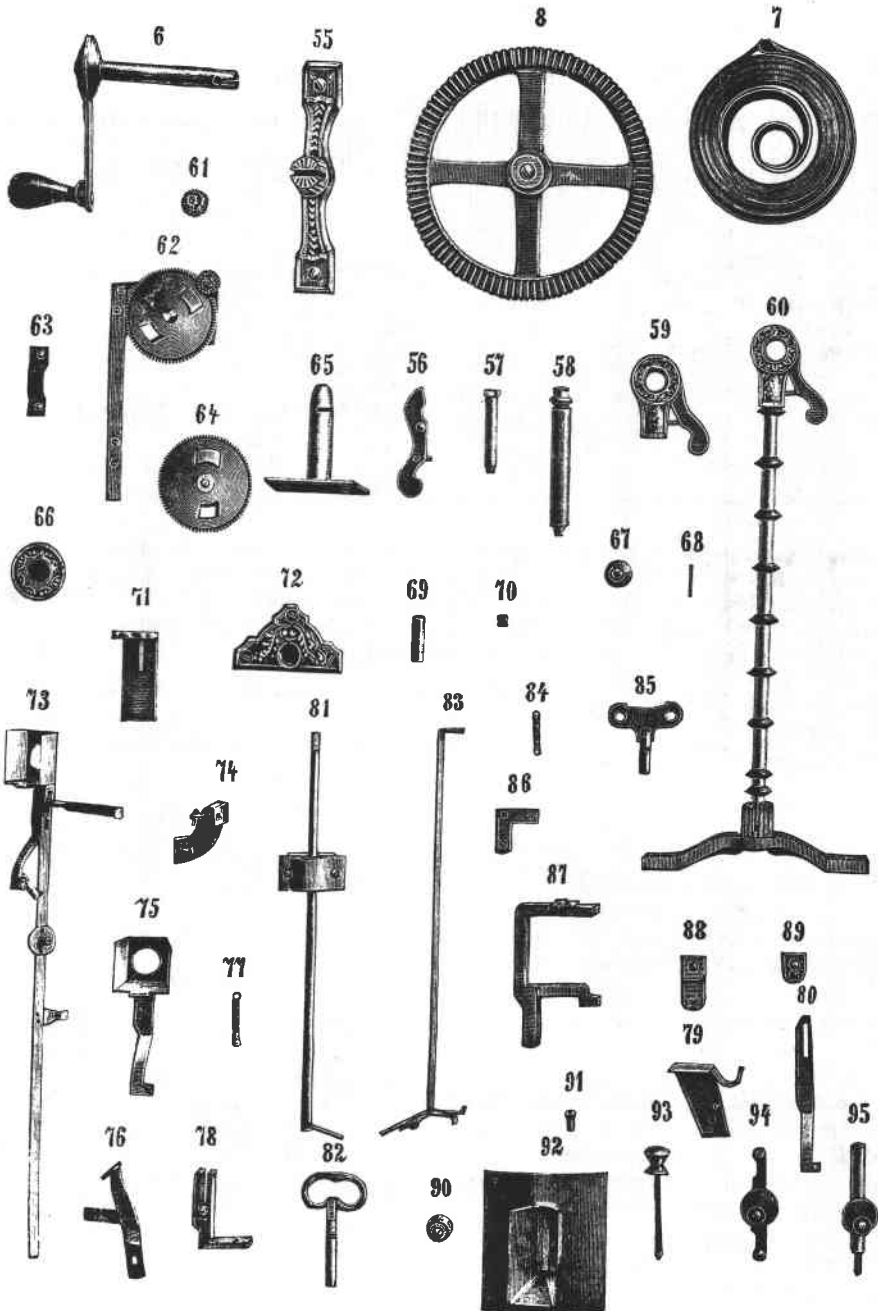
Page 167 shows a photograph of a 27 inch Symphonion with bells. The lady standing beside the machine gives an indication of just how tall it is. The Symphonion is owned by Member Ronnie Willock of Ashton-Under Lyne. It has an interesting history. Ronnie tells us that it was bought new in about 1900 and was kept in the 314 year old Dragon Inn until the inn was demolished in 1961, an interesting point about the discs of the machine is that they have dimples at the periphery instead of the more normal drive holes.

A Riddle me ree. by Grace Thompson

*My first is in Komet, but not Carousel,
My second is Orchestrion and Orchestrelle.
My third if you read Graham Webb you will see;
My fourth when he gives you that "nice cup of tea".
To make the fifth easy, it's in fanblade and screw,
Please don't give up yet, there is still more to do.
My sixth is in bird box and Dr. Burnett,
My seventh to be found in an old organette,
There's two there in fact, so that helps you along
To the eighth, which appears in the Minstrel Boy song.
The ninth is in endless, if loose it will wreck
The movement where tenth lies, a fine Rzebitschek.
My eleventh will be found in just half a tick
In Overture box, with it's cylinder thick.
My twelfth and hte last, I'm sure you have won,
Is found in excelsior, the conundrum is done.
My whole is a trio, that's all I shall say,
For to help any more would just give it away!*

POLYPHON PARTS

The two centre pages contain a reproduction of an engraving showing the parts of a 24½ inch Polyphon movement. The engraving forms part of an interesting instruction sheet in four languages which is owned by Member Arthur Ord-Hume. It is thought that there might be an interest in a large sheet of this reproduction for Members to hang in their workrooms. Your Editor would be pleased to know what is thought of this idea. Please send in your views on this or any other project.





NEWS FROM CHRISTIE'S



CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS
8 KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S, LONDON, S.W.1.
JOHN HERBERT, MRS. SUSAN ROSE 01-839 9060
(Night Numbers: 01-748 3693 and 01-444 0084 respectively)

NEW YORK OFFICE,
867 MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK 10021, N.Y.
Rhineland 4-4017

We feel you may be interested to hear that we shall be holding another sale of Musical Boxes, Automata, Toys and Fans on Wednesday 23rd February, 1972 at 11a.m. The catalogue will be available from mid January and may be ordered from the Catalogue Dpt., Christie's, 8, King St., London S.W.1. for 20p. including postage (75p. including postage to America).

The musical boxes include a rare six cylinder revolver box mandoline, expression by George Baker and Co. no. 13513 with nickel plated cylinders 13in. wide each playing six tunes, the case veneered in walnut, 29in. wide;

tunesheet, and 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. cylinder playing 8 airs; another, no. 5023 by Du Commun Girod with 13in. cylinder playing 8 airs by classical composers, the tunesheet behind a painted glass mount, 22in. wide; another, by George Baker no. 15281, with 13in. nickel plated cylinder playing ten airs; another, by Lecoultrre Freres no. 35200 with 13in. cylinder playing 8 operatic airs; an early cartel musical box no. 5861 with early replacement tunesheet stamped V. L. G., with 8in. cylinder playing 4 operatic airs, 3 by Rossini, the comb in groups of 5 teeth, in mahogany box, 12in. wide; a fine key-wound musical box by Nicole Freres no. 22254 with 8in. cylinder playing four dance tunes, in inlaid wood case, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide; and four other good Nicole Freres musical boxes; a large cylinder crank-wound musical box with double combe and four springs, the 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. cylinder playing for two and a half hours; a crank-wound musical box no. 2293 with four interchangeable nickel-plated cylinders; a musical box no. 13284 with four (ex ten) interchangeable cylinders, drum, bell, castanet and organ accompaniment; a Geneva musical box no. 9252 probably by Bremond or Greiner, with 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. cylinder playing 8 airs; a musical box no. 18481 with twin barrels and the combe with alternating tips, with 13in. cylinder playing 12 tunes; a table model Polyphon with fourteen 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. discs; a musical chair; and at least 9 other musical boxes.

The sale also includes eight pieces of musical automata among them a bisque headed doll dressed as a fashionable woman who fans herself and glides along as the music plays; a mid-19th century view of Ramsgate; a bisque-headed violinist and a clown playing a mandolin.

7th December, 1971.

TUNING MUSICAL BOX COMBS

by D.A.R. Tallis.

Before starting to tune a music box comb it is as well to realise that the kind of note that the teeth in the comb play is governed by three basic principles:—

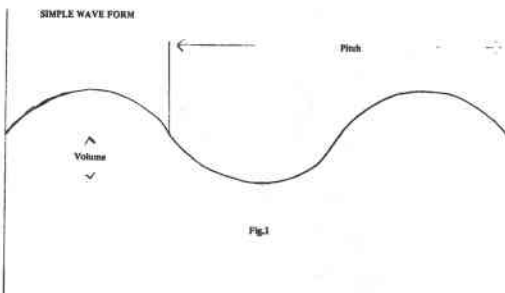
PITCH OR NOTE This is controlled by the speed at which the teeth vibrate, or in other words their frequency.

VOLUME This is controlled by the size or amplitude of vibration.

TONE This is the quality of the sound and is controlled by the shape of the wave produced by the vibrating tooth. (Figure 1)

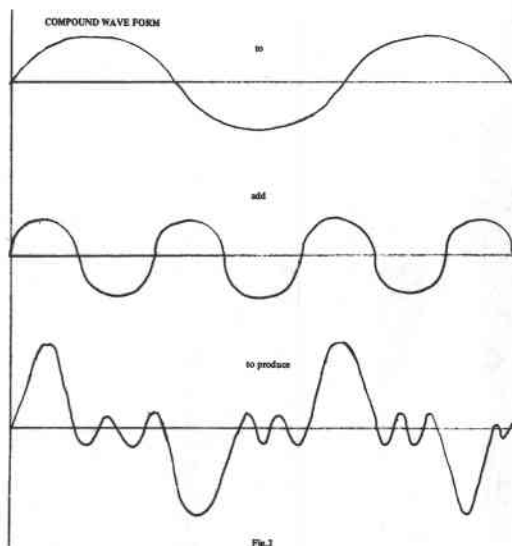
If you now look at the diagram you can see the three principles shown quantitatively. The wave shown is produced by attaching a needle to the end of a vibrating tuning fork and then drawing a strip of smoked glass along under the needle. The pin will draw a line of the shape shown on the smoked glass. The shape of the wave represents the tone of the tuning fork. Since the tooth of a musical box comb is very similar to a tuning fork, it will produce the same form of wave. The shape of the wave is often changed when a basic wave as shown in the diagram is superimposed by secondary waves such as the harmonics produced by the instrument being played. The result is then a compound wave produced by adding the different wave patterns together. Such a compound wave can be seen in the next diagram (Figure 2). The wave forms of some well known musical instruments are shown in Figure 3.

It must now be apparent that in order to tune a comb in practise we must change in some way the basic wave form, so we must return to the three basic principles.



PITCH The speed of the vibrating tooth can be altered by:

- (a) Altering the effective weight of the tooth by either removing or adding lead to the resonator



of a bass tooth or, if the tooth is at the treble end of the comb by grinding away the underside of the tooth at its tip or by adding a little solder there. Remember, the pitch is *lowered* by *increasing* the weight and raised by *decreasing* the weight of the tooth. What you are in effect doing is to alter the speed at which the tooth vibrates.

- (b) The second way in which to alter the speed of vibration and hence the pitch is to alter the effective vibrating length of the tooth. This is a good way to lower the pitch of treble teeth, and is done by thinning the underside of the tooth near to the back of it, which will bring the mean point of vibration nearer to the rear and thus increase the effective length which lowers the pitch of the tooth. Great care has to be exercised when the comb is tuned this way, since the effect is produced quickly and is hard to reverse. The tools used to carry out the above are few and simple. Resonators are reduced in size by snipping them and they can have weight added to them by adding solder with a soldering iron. Increase the weight of treble teeth with solder from an iron and reduce their weight either by careful use of a needle-file or by using a small dentist's grinding wheel attached to an electric motor or flexible drive. The grinding wheel is less likely to break a tooth than a file and is therefore to be preferred.

VOLUME The above corrections will affect the

volume of the tooth. Usually this will not be very noticeable, but if the box is a forte piano type, you may have to correct it by:

- (a) Increasing the weight and then correcting the pitch to increase the volume.
- (b) Reducing the weight and then correcting the pitch by thinning the back of the comb. This will reduce the volume.

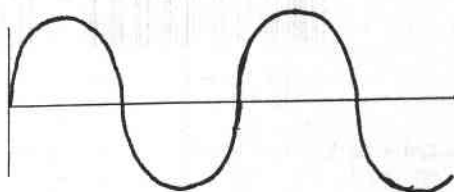
TONE Unless considered in terms of wave form as we have seen, tone is difficult to define. It is not hard to realise, however, that the wave form must be very closely related to the tooth shape, dimensions, steel temper and weight: length ratio. These are not very easy to control, and on a complete comb the problem does not arise, since all the teeth are the same in character anyway. However, on a comb where a tooth has been replaced, you will often have noticed that although the tooth is in tune, it sounds different to the rest because of a different tone. This can be avoided by choosing a tooth which is similar in shape to the rest before you put it in the comb. If a tooth of the right type is used it should match the others in sound. The tone of a Dawkins box is entirely different from that produced by an early F. Nicole overtune box, and you only have to compare the tooth shapes, especially in the treble, to see why. The treble teeth of the Nicole are really quite long considering they are pitched so high, but the treble teeth of Dawkins boxes can be quite short and stubby, with a tone which is much more crisp as a result.

We must now look at a few reasons for which we would have to tune a tooth or teeth in practise. There are many common reasons for a box sounding 'out of tune' and I shall try to suggest what the collector should do about it.

- (1) When a new tooth has to be put in the comb.
 - (a) Choose a tooth of the right shape in order to get the correct TONE.
 - (b) Correct the PITCH by one of the methods already described.
 - (c) Correct the VOLUME as described if this is needed.
- (2) When a resonator has to be replaced.
 - (a) The replacement should be slightly large in comparison with those on either side of it. Solder it on taking extreme care not to use too much heat, and then correct the PITCH by snipping the excess lead away.
 - (b) Do not in this case alter any of the other dimensions of the tooth, since TONE and VOLUME are correct.
- (3) Replacement of a damper.
 - (a) The use of the wrong size damper pin will make a tooth go out of tune. Make a new one the correct size to correct the PITCH.
 - (b) The other dimensions of the tooth should be left or you will affect the TONE and

VARIOUS WAVE FORMS OR TONE

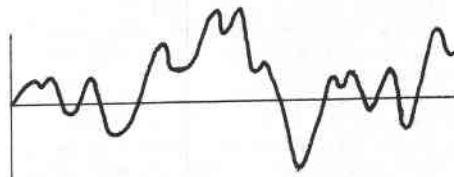
Tuning fork



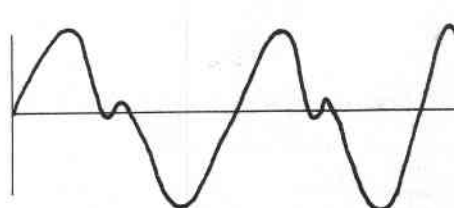
Tuning fork-clang tone



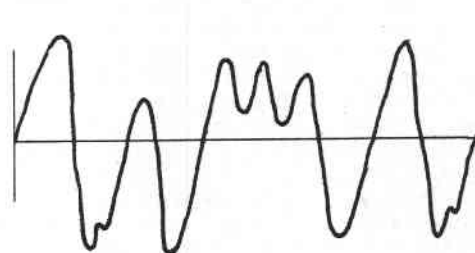
Piano



Flute



Oboe



VOLUME.

(4) Rusted comb.

- (a) Some times a comb has areas of light rust/on it, which have caused it to go out of tune. Usually it is only necessary to remove the rust to correct the PITCH. A good way to do this is to scrape away the heaviest layer of rust with the side of a razor blade and then to remove the rest with a glass fibre stick. Whatever you do make sure to remove the rust and not the metal. Always work the blade and stick in line with the teeth and not across them.

(5) Pitted comb.

If a comb has been rusted so badly that it is deeply pitted in places. It will have lost some of the quality of the steel upon which its TONE is dependent and will sound dead as well as out of tune. All your skill in tuning will never bring this comb back to its original condition and tone quality.

(6) Buffed comb.

- (a) Occasionally one sees a comb which has been cleaned and then buffed to improve its appearance. This action will almost certainly have caused it to have gone out of tune over its entire length. It is possible to retune completely. But it will take about five hours to undo what a misguided collector did in five minutes.

We have said many theoretical things about tuning above, but nothing has yet been mentioned about the actual business of finding the right note. This can be done in two main ways:

- (1) By comparison and sympathetic resonance.
- (2) By ear.

With (1), which is the best method unless you have a very good musical ear we can:

- (a) Tune a tooth to the same note as the tooth next to it if you are lucky enough for it to be 'Paired' in this way. If the two teeth are exactly in tune, when you cause one to vibrate the other will vibrate of its own accord due to sympathetic vibrations of the right frequency reaching it. If the tooth to be tuned is not twinned with the one next to it, you can do the same over an octave.
- (b) The original and possible best method of tuning was to compare your comb with a standard tuning comb, such as the Nicole tuning comb.
- (c) You can also find the right note on the piano and tune to your piano, but this will not be as accurate as the above two methods, since the modern piano is tuned to another pitch.

With (2), which is the way that many people use to tune individual teeth, which are slightly out of tune, you must listen carefully while the box plays a tune which you know well, and then pick out and mark with a pencil the tooth out of tune. Then watch it and listen to it while it plays and make the correction.

Finally, by study and practise of tuning music box combs it is one of the very best ways to increase your appreciation of the skill of the original craftsmen in Switzerland. Remember that they started with a sheet of steel, which was transformed into a musical instrument.

Obituary

Dr Benoit Albert Julien Roose, one of our best known European Members, died in hospital in Antwerp, Belgium on October 1st. 1971, at the age of 55 after a long illness due to a brain tumour. Among many distinctions Dr. Roose was curator of the Rockoxhuis Museum in Antwerp; founder of the Artist's Foundation under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth of Belgium; founder of the Artist's Mass in Antwerp; Member of the Belgian Order of the Crown; Holder of the Order of Leopold and Leopold II; Holder of the Mark of Gratitude of Pope Leo XIII; Holder of the Mark of Honour of Pope John XXIII and of the Papal Merito Insigni.

Dr. Roose was a connoisseur of fine art and was responsible for the valuation of many of the rare paintings to change hands during the last few years. His forte was, as could be expected, the Flemish School, with which his judgement was almost as exact as a science. As can be seen, Dr. Roose was a busy and important man. This did not prevent him from finding time for his hobby of collecting musical boxes. At the time of his death Dr. Roose's collection was such as to rival any in Europe.

We regret the passing of a fellow Member and a good friend and extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Nelly Roose and her two daughters.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE MUSICAL BOX

It is often supposed that the musical box was invented in eighteenth century Switzerland, and this unlikely theory has been promoted by a number of worthy men (including the Editor). By delving into the works of Shakespeare it has recently been discovered that the Bard not only took a keen interest in musical-boxes but appears to have tried his hand at mending them. And not only musical boxes. Singing-birds as well, as witness this quotation from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

Except I be by Silvia in the night,
There is no music in the nightingale. Act III Scene I

Obviously Shakespeare was not too sure about repairing singing-birds. Silvia had to help him. Mr. Silvia was probably some obscure clockmaker in Stratford-on-Avon.

It is difficult to say if this man Silvia (probably a corruption of Sill, V.A., as he would be listed in books on clockmakers) was referred to in connection with musical-boxes as per the same play:

He makes sweet music with th'enamell'd stones Act II Scene 7

We all know what has happened here. The jewel on the governor mechanism has disappeared, probably to pay one of Shakespeare's actors, and has been replaced by another, enamelled, stone. Shakespeare, of course, lacked a supply of safety razor blades.

An obscure passage in *Measure for Measure* only makes sense if read in a musical box context:
'Gainst the tooth of time,
And rasure of oblivion.

Clearly the Bard has had a run, and has lost a tune.

Sometimes Shakespeare is positively poetical about the musical box, as we see in *Love's Labours Lost*:

As sweet and musical,
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair; Act IV Scene 3

Readers may well have come across the lute mechanism on a musical box, though the Editor confesses his ignorance on this score. It was probably something on the lines of a mandoline refinement. Nor do we know who A. Pollo was, who invented the lute attachment, and researches in the Patent Office have unfortunately proved negative.

Shakespeare seems to have had a lot of trouble with his musical boxes. In that well-known passage from *Twelfth Night* beginning "If music be the food of love" there is an interesting phrase:
That strain again; it had a dying fall.

We all know what he means. Someone has put an untuned tooth in his musical box.

Musical boxes, singing-birds, is there no end to the references one can find in Shakespeare? Musical clocks, too.

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve
A Midsummer Night's Dream Act V Scene 1

Could it be that Shakespeare knew of a talking clock, not merely a musical clock? Have we been misled about the Elizabethan age, conned into believing it was all "prithie sire" and farthingales, when really it was an advanced technological epoch? The mind boggles. R.P.

SAROSOTA AND POINTS NORTH

Cyril de Vere Green is newly returned from the trip he and Mrs. de Vere Green made to the 1971 convention of The Musical Box Society International, held this year at Sarasota, Florida. He kindly shares with us the journey and some of the happenings at this yearly event.

What is not immediately apparent is why the de Vere Greens went to Florida by way of Canada, a round-about way, one might think. The truth is that because of their Canadian connections (Mrs. d.V.G. is Canadian, Mr. d.V.G. not only graduated from the University of Toronto but is President of the Canadian Universities Society of Great Britain), the couple went to the Mapleleaf Charity Ball. There they won a lucky number prize of two return tickets to Montreal.

So the mystery is solved. They sailed across the Atlantic on the Empress of Canada and Cyril was able to contact personally several Universities, and help the Canadian Universities Society, as indeed he helps our Society with his personal contacts in places like Sarasota.

The story starts with our first crossing of the Atlantic by sea since the middle 1930s which proved a most pleasant voyage in spite of catching the tail end of a hurricane. Off Newfoundland the magnificent spectacle of a very large iceberg glittering in the sun, a rather misty two day trip up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, a brief halt of some eighteen hours and a flight to Calgary. This journey was a prelude to a most delightful holiday during which we met so many friends. From Calgary to Banff at the foot of the Rockies where we had some fantastic scenic drives culminating in the journey by train to Vancouver. Two days later a 7.30 a.m. flight down to San Diego where awaiting us at the airport was our friend, a Member of this Society, Crawford Reynolds. We spent two days with him and his charming mother and had time to examine his extremely fine collection of beautiful musical boxes, his Ampico grand piano, an auto-change Regina, an automatic banjo and an automatic harp which are among some of the most memorable. Another early start, with Mrs. Reynolds insisting on rising at 5.30 a.m. to give us breakfast before departing from San Diego via Los Angeles to Tampa, Florida via New Orleans, a flight of some 2,000 miles and a loss of 4 hours by virtue of flying west to east.

We arrived at Tampa at 5.30 p.m. and were met by our good friends Howard and Helen Fitch who



Helen and Howard Fitch with minds on different things.

had driven some 50 miles from Sarasota to the Holiday Inn where the Musical Box Society International of America was holding its Annual Meeting in this large air-conditioned hotel immediately facing the Gulf of Mexico with a temperature of 94°F. and the temperature in the sea well over 80°F. Following dinner we adjourned to the conference room where we were welcomed by the many friends we have made on our previous trips to the Society's meetings and by friends who had made the European Tour.

The following day which was Friday, two coachloads left for Fort Myers to visit the winter home of the late Mr. Edison which was donated as a museum and which contains the many experiments and inventions with which Mr. Edison was connected. Apart from the gardens which contained a multitude of trees and plants from all over the world, perhaps one of the things which impressed most was a substitute for rubber which he had manufactured from that flowering weed known as Golden Rod. Friday evening, the Meeting at Sarasota was organised by Mr. Bellm and his wife, and that evening they invited members to visit their museum of musical instruments and vintage cars. This proved to be a most enjoyable evening, for the exhibition which is housed in an extremely large building ranges from musical boxes, disc machines of every make and



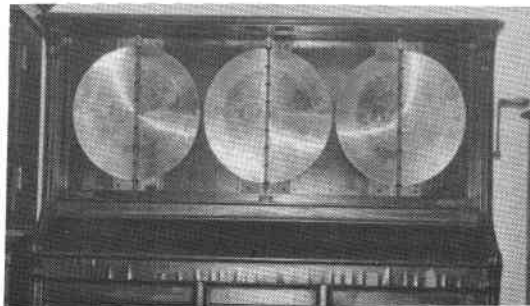
Well met at Sarasota: Alan Brehault, a Member from New Zealand.



An old friend, Hughes M. Ryder.

size, player pianos of every description to mechanical organs one which was of mammoth dimensions. The welcome given by Mr. and Mrs. Bellm and the hospitality received made this a most outstanding and memorable visit and some of us remained until long after midnight.

On the Saturday morning the Society held its business meeting during which certificates of merit for outstanding services to the Society were presented to Mr. Louis Hoone, Mrs. Fabel and to Howard and Helen Fitch. We were delighted to be present at a time when acknowledgement was paid to its members who had done and are still doing so much for the Society. The afternoon session opened with a description and demonstration by Mr. Bob Calland on the repair of small hand organs which provoked quite a lively discussion among the members. Mr. Hathaway was the next speaker on the restoration of a large Mortier organ illustrated with excellent colour slides. The third speaker in the afternoon was Mr. Harvey Roehl who gave a most profusely illustrated lecture on the Society's European Tour. One was able to imagine the pace of this trip for the number of collections and museums visited seemed legion and I can only believe that the whole party slept soundly whilst flying home. During the meeting there were on display some

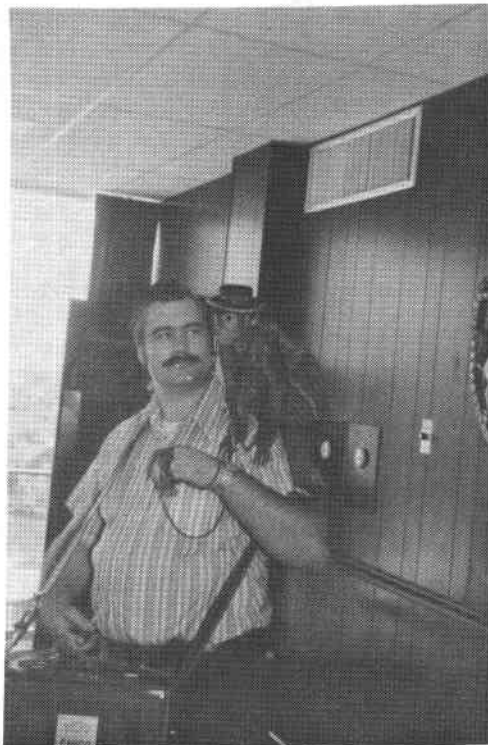


A triple-disc machine by Imperial Symphonion, using 17½ inch discs.

musical boxes and other items some for sale. This exhibition, I am glad to report was far far smaller than at our Meetings in London.

The hotel catered for the group which, incidentally numbered approximately 200, from breakfast to the banquet. Following the banquet I was privileged to address yet another Annual Meeting of this Society on some of my favourite items in our collection.

Incidentally, at breakfast I was introduced to a Southern dish called "gritz". In spite of exhortations to eat it with bacon, with eggs, butter or jam, I found myself shutting my eyes, pinching my nose



Lee Edwards with miniature organ and friend.

and gulping down a spoonful. This remark will I am certain bring forth shudders from some of the members and sympathy from others.

On the Sunday some members had kindly thrown open their homes and collections in that part of Florida but we alas were unable to participate, since our programme was arranged that we drove the three hundred odd miles across to the east coast of Florida and it meant that with many handshakes we again left the Annual Meeting of our paternal Society having renewed many old friendships, met many new friends and stored away in our minds the happiest of memories.

The Case of the Disintegrating Train, the Disconcerted Collector, and the Deceptive Discs

by Robin Timms

"There's 'n instruction in the tunnel!" Such was the news which astounded and bewildered passengers on Kent House station on the morning of Saturday May 22nd, the date, you will recall, of the Spring Meeting. "The train was going through," the porter explained, "and they heard a loud BANG at Sydenham and saw smoke coming out of the tunnel. The station manager and the inspector is just walking through to see what they can find. There's no trains up or down."

There was nothing for it but to pace up and down the platform for an indefinite period, meditating upon all the bargains which were, no doubt at that very time, being carried into the Great Western Hotel and placed beneath the gaze of the privileged collectors who had come up to London otherwise than on the Southern Region.

"The 09.30 Orpy and the 10.00 Orpy has gone up the loop!" Occasional cryptic news flashes, intelligible only to long-suffering patrons of the Southern, broke in upon one's thoughts; and when a train finally did arrive, it was like the usual Mon.-Fri. rush hour scramble for seats. The driver played it cool, and took no, but absolutely no chances in the tunnel!

Zeal unabated, yours truly arrived at the top of the stairs in the Great Western just in time to see Jocelyn Walker of Securicor wrapping several feet of chain round the door handles of the exhibition room. "There's masses of stuff in there," I was assured.

We were ushered into the lecture room for the first talk and, furtively glancing round, I felt sure from the expression of contentment and quiet repose on many faces that the hour for coolly snatching up bargains was over.

After the lecture I made my way to the exhibition room without delay, neatly avoiding the raffle-ticket-selling and registration-fee-collecting squad.

Having studied the Kalliope catalogue reproduced in the last edition of this journal, I was particularly interested to find on display two Kalliopes playing discs of about 13in., one with bells and one without. It appears that the bells are brought into play by means of the same disc projections as are responsible for the bass notes. This has the obvious advantage over

Polyphon that you do not need special discs (so hard to find) for the model with bells; but on the other hand, if the bells are operated in conjunction with the bass notes, this could restrict their scope and effectiveness as an independent part.

I had noticed that the Kalliope catalogue is somewhat similar to the 11in. Polyphon catalogue: a very large number of titles are common to both lists and frequently occur at similar points in the respective catalogues. For example, of the first 50 titles in the Kalliope list at least 38 were also done on the 11in. Polyphon. Then of the first 50 titles in the 11in. Polyphon list, 29 appear in the Kalliope list. Of these 29, 14 appear in the first 50 Kalliope titles, 22 in the first 100. Of the remaining seven common titles, four appear in close proximity much later in the Kalliope list. In its first 100 titles each list includes the same three hymns and the same two carols. A multiplicity of points of resemblance led me to wonder whether Kalliope had borrowed many of their ideas for titles from the Polyphon catalogue. I was therefore particularly interested to hear the two Kalliopes on show at the meeting.

The first thing I noticed was that they were both tuned in D flat, the same key as the majority of 11in. Polyphons. In point of fact the 13in. Kalliope has 61 notes to the 11in. Polyphon's 54; but the basic range and scale of the comb is the same. I discovered also that the actual arrangement of the tunes on Kalliope is quite similar to that on Polyphon, the resemblance often extending to gratuitous runs and embellishments of the melody. Kalliope sometimes has additional or varied ornamentation, but the basic arrangement is too consistently similar to Polyphon for it to be entirely a coincidence. It would be interesting to know if other collectors have detected apparent 'borrowings' of one company's disc settings by another.

I lingered long listening to many lovely boxes while most of the members were gorging themselves in the restaurant below; then I very naughtily slipped out just before the Solemn Assembly at 2.15 to eat a few sandwiches in Kensington Gardens. My wickedness was suitably rewarded by an unexpected shower of rain, but I was able to take refuge under a particularly leafy tree and got back to the hotel in time to enjoy Dick Baines' talk on Christie.

I was punished in another way for not attending the A.G.M. Had I been there I should have known that Graham Webb was now editor of the Journal, and had I known that I might not have made some incautious remark which prompted him to command, almost on pain of excommunication, that I should write something for the magazine.

Well, I've done my penance, and no doubt he'll think carefully before asking me again! See you at the next meeting!



A DAMPERING METHOD

by Dr. Peter Whitehead

The following is the method that I have found requiring least effort for me when replacing steel wire dampers and I feel that I should pass on this information hoping that it will be of benefit to someone as young and technically inexperienced as myself.

The equipment I use is as follows:—

Damper wire. A fair range of sizes would be a sensible initial intake and these can be obtained from Keith Harding Antiques of Homsey Road, London. Self retaining needle holder (surgical). (*Illus. 1*).

Plus Gas.

Soft wooden board — a 2' length of ordinary floor board would be ideal (provided of course it were no longer part of the floor).

Fine pointed forceps (*Illus. 2*). Points preferably no more than 1mm. wide when closed.

End ships — fine and coarse.

Small carborundum stone (kept oiled in tin foil paper).

Carbon tetrachloride and small stiff brush.

Steel gauge as described in Cylinder Musical Box Handbook by Graham Webb (*Illus. 3*).

Shaped forceps for curling dampers (*Illus. 4*).

"Expo" Minidrill and full set of high speed metal drills nos. 61/80.

Micrometer.

Angle-poise or similar beamed illumination.

Table and comfortable chair.

Absolute peace and quiet.

Technique

Ideally the pins in the cylinder should be straightened before work on replacing the dampers is even initiated. The comb is removed from the bed plate (I find this easier if the entire works are taken out of the box initially). The comb is then immediately screwed upside down on to the wooden board so that none of the teeth project over the edge of the board. I then brush carbon tetrachloride on to the comb — even on to resonators, brushing well round the tips and remains of old dampers.

Warning — Carbon tetrachloride, although non-inflammable, is toxic and should be used in a well ventilated atmosphere. Heat converts it to Phosgene, a toxic gas — even smoking a cigarette will add this gas to the nicotine and tar.

When the carbon tetrachloride is dry I place a drop of Plus Gas on the end of each tooth trying to place it on top of the anvil that holds the damper

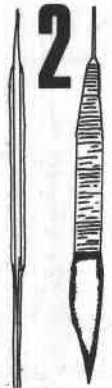
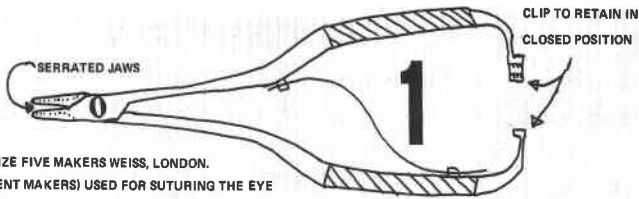
pin. I then leave it for a few hours to allow the Plus Gas to perform its magic. Using the needle holder I grip the first bass damper pin, clip the needle holder to the closed position and then very gently rotate it until the pin literally falls out still being held by the needle holder. I do this initially for every fifth or sixth damper pin. Using the fine pointed forceps I remove the portion of remaining old damper and measure its width (a fiddly job) in the micrometer, making a note of the size of the damper wire that is to be eventually fitted in the hole. A rather easier method of estimating the damper wire size is to fit the size that will allow the original pin to be inserted back into the anvil to the original depth with wire in situ.

Having now a fair idea of the size of damper wire to be used, I work from left to right removing the retaining pins, cleaning out the hole in the anvil and inserting new wire. I then use the needle holder to reinsert the pin underneath the wire, cutting the wire longer than is necessary, using coarse end snips so that the new wire projects about ½cm. proud of the tooth tip. It is important to get the new wire sticking out parallel to the line of the tooth (*Illus. 5*). The comb is now removed from the board and placed on top of the steel gauge (*Illus. 6*). This gauge I had milled out from a steel slab rather than making up a brass gauge as suggested by Graham Webb as I felt that a steel one would be less likely to bend or wear with continuous use. The comb tips are placed so that they are touching the lip of the gauge and then using the fine end snips the wires are cut flush with the outer side of the lip. With the comb still on the steel gauge I then gently pass the carborundum stone over the wire and end of the gauge very lightly in order to attempt a honing of the end of the wire. Having now finished with the gauge I blow off any remains of carborundum from the comb and re-set the comb on the wooden board so that the teeth slightly project over the edge of the board thus enabling greater freedom of movement with the shaped forceps used for curling the dampers. At this stage the damper wire still projects parallel to the direction of the teeth; the wire is then bent away from the tooth at a 45° angle (approx.) using any small eyebrow tweezers. The damper wire is then curled to shape (*Illus. 7*). The tip of the curled damper wire should certainly not be proud of the tip of the tooth when looking along the line of the tips and

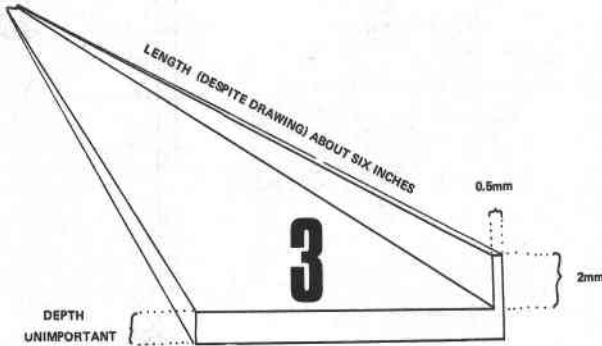


SIZE FIVE MAKERS WEISS, LONDON.

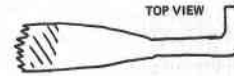
(SURGICAL INSTRUMENT MAKERS) USED FOR SUTURING THE EYE



SIDE VIEW FROM ABOVE



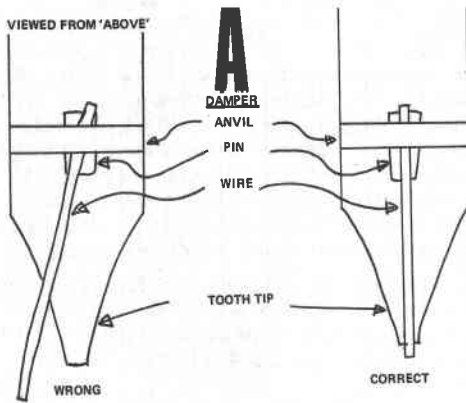
MADE FOR ME AT ENGINEERING WORKS FROM SINGLE PIECE OF STEEL - COST £1.50.



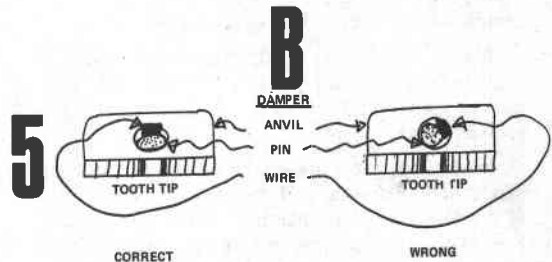
4 LATERAL VIEW - UPPER BLADE IS FLAT - LOWER IS ROUNDED



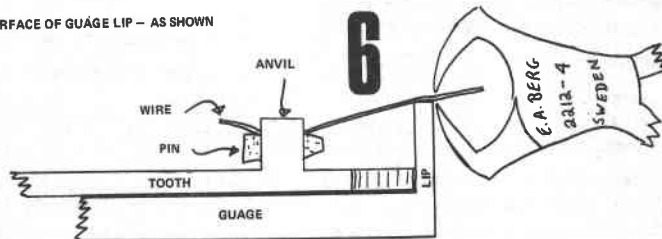
VIEWED FROM 'ABOVE'



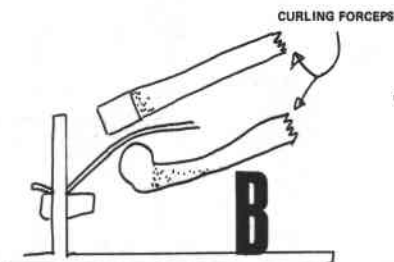
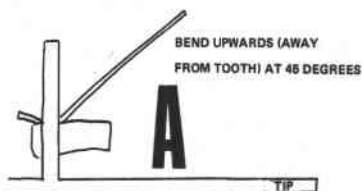
VIEWED FROM FRONT OF COMB ALONG LINE OF TOOTH



TEETH MUST ALL TOUCH INNER SURFACE OF GAUGE LIP - AS SHOWN



VIEWED FROM SIDE



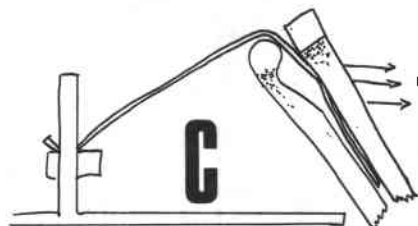
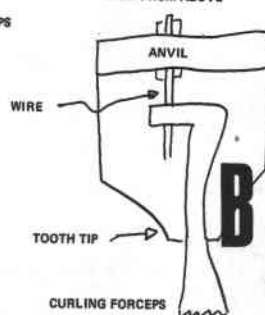
NOTE THE WAY UP THE FORCEPS ARE HELD

7

NOTE THAT THE DIRECTION OF PULLING THE FORCEPS IS HORIZONTAL, AND THAT THE FORCEPS ARE ACTUALLY HELD AT 45 DEGREES TO HORIZONTAL. MOST OF THIS CURLING ACTION IS CARRIED OUT AT THE PIN END OF THE WIRE, RATHER THAN AT THE TOOTH-TIP END OF THE WIRE.

NOTE THAT THE END OF WIRE DOES NOT TOUCH TOOTH TIP AND MUST BE IN EXACT REGISTER WITH THE TOOTH TIP OR THE CYLINDER PINS MAY MISS THE DAMPER WHEN STRIKING THE TOOTH.

VIEW FROM ABOVE



should be in fairly close proximity to the tip but not actually touching as otherwise it will not act as a damper when the cylinder pin contacts it.

Usually at this stage a stiff whisky and at least a few hours retirement is indicated. The comb can then be placed on the musical box and tested. It will probably sound lousy.

I usually play the musical box many-times over a period of a week or so and then re-adjust the position of the dampers. I find that most of the curling process involved in the dampers is in the portion of the wire immediately adjacent to the anvil rather than the portion next to the tip of the tooth.

The illustrations will I hope make up for my inadequacies in description. I am quite willing to demonstrate this method but certainly do not advocate it as by any means ideal or better than anyone else's method but to quote the man who wore his truss back to front - "It works alright for me"!

A few general tips are perhaps now indicated.

All finger movement seems to be shaky and wobbly unless the wrist is rested on a firm surface and then most shaking movements nearly disappear.

The eye-sight can be aided by the use of prismatic magnifying spectacles which can be clipped on to existing spectacle frames or on to a blank spectacle frame.

I found the hardest part to tackle was the removal of existing damper pins but thanks to the use of my needle holder this problem is greatly minimised. However there are occasional short damper pins for which my instrument is useless and I find that the only thing, if attempts to gently lever them out using a very small jeweller's screw-driver behind the anvil fail, is then to file these as flat as possible to the anvil and drill them out using approx. size 74 drill in the Minidrill (I suppose this could be done by an Archimedes drill but I am exceedingly lazy).

The drilled out damper pin can be replaced using brass clock pins approximately 2mm. long and exactly 1mm. wide at the narrowest point. This size seems to have fitted almost all holes in damper anvils.

Some musical box makers must I think have originally inserted brass damper wire using iron or alloy pins, and when these damper pins are short, drilling them out is an exasperating task.

I hope my information will be of benefit to someone.

My thanks are to: - Grace Thompson for persuading me to "have a go"; to Graham Webb for the information in his book "The Cylinder Musical Box Handbook"; to Keith Harding for providing damper wire and information, and to a patient of mine, who wishes to remain anonymous-for moral support.



This tune sheet is from a box bearing all the characteristics of L'Epee. The number 4321 is stamped on the left rear corner of the smooth iron bedplate. Editors collection.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Conducted by Keith Harding and Cliff Burnet

Our Editor has asked us to produce a question and answer forum and we think this is a splendid opportunity for all of us to pool information and exchange ideas. If you want this to be a really exciting magazine, write to us today. We will do our best to answer your questions on anything to do with mechanical music, but if we cannot, so much the better; we will print them and try to find someone who can. If you disagree with our answers, write and tell us; you may well be right. If you have a pet research project, let us know about it and invite other collectors to help you. In short, let us get together and make this a big success. Please write to us soon, "Question and Answer forum, 93 Hornsey Road, London N.7."

Member Norman Brown of Glasgow writes:—

I have recently heard the term "Gamme" number used in reference to a marking or number on music sheets. Can you please explain what this is, and its purpose.

"Gamme" is a French word meaning gamut or musical scale. Strictly speaking, the gamme of a musical box is the tuning scale of its comb. In practice, musical box makers allotted each musical box a gamme number which refers not only to the tuning scale of its comb but also to the programme of tunes which the box plays, and their arrangement. Thus all musical boxes by the same maker with identical gamme numbers have identically pinned cylinders, the same programmes and the same tuning scales.

The gamme number is usually written on the tunesheet together with the serial number in the case of good quality boxes. It may also be found scored on the lead tuning weight of the extreme base tooth, and scratched on the left hand end of the cylinder. This is always the case in boxes by Nicole Freres.

For some years now, together with Patrick McCrossan, we have been keeping records of the programmes, serial numbers and gamme numbers of all the Nicole Freres boxes that have passed through our hands. These have now been card indexed in the order of gamme number, and form a most useful reference. If a box by Nicole Freres turns up without a tune sheet, we can obtain its gamme number from the base lead or the left hand cylinder cap, and by looking at the appropriate card in the card index we can find out its programme. This is particularly useful in the case of boxes which need repinning and do not play. There is also some correlation between the gamme number of a box and its date.

If any of our readers have Nicole Freres boxes without tunesheets and would like to send us details

of serial and gamme numbers, we just might be able to supply them with programmes. Now here's how you can help us to help you. We would urge everybody who reads this article to send us details of the Serial numbers, gamme numbers and programmes of all the Nicole Freres boxes they see and help us to build up a really comprehensive card index. We are now starting to compile a similar card index for other makers such as Bremond, so if you feel really energetic . . . !

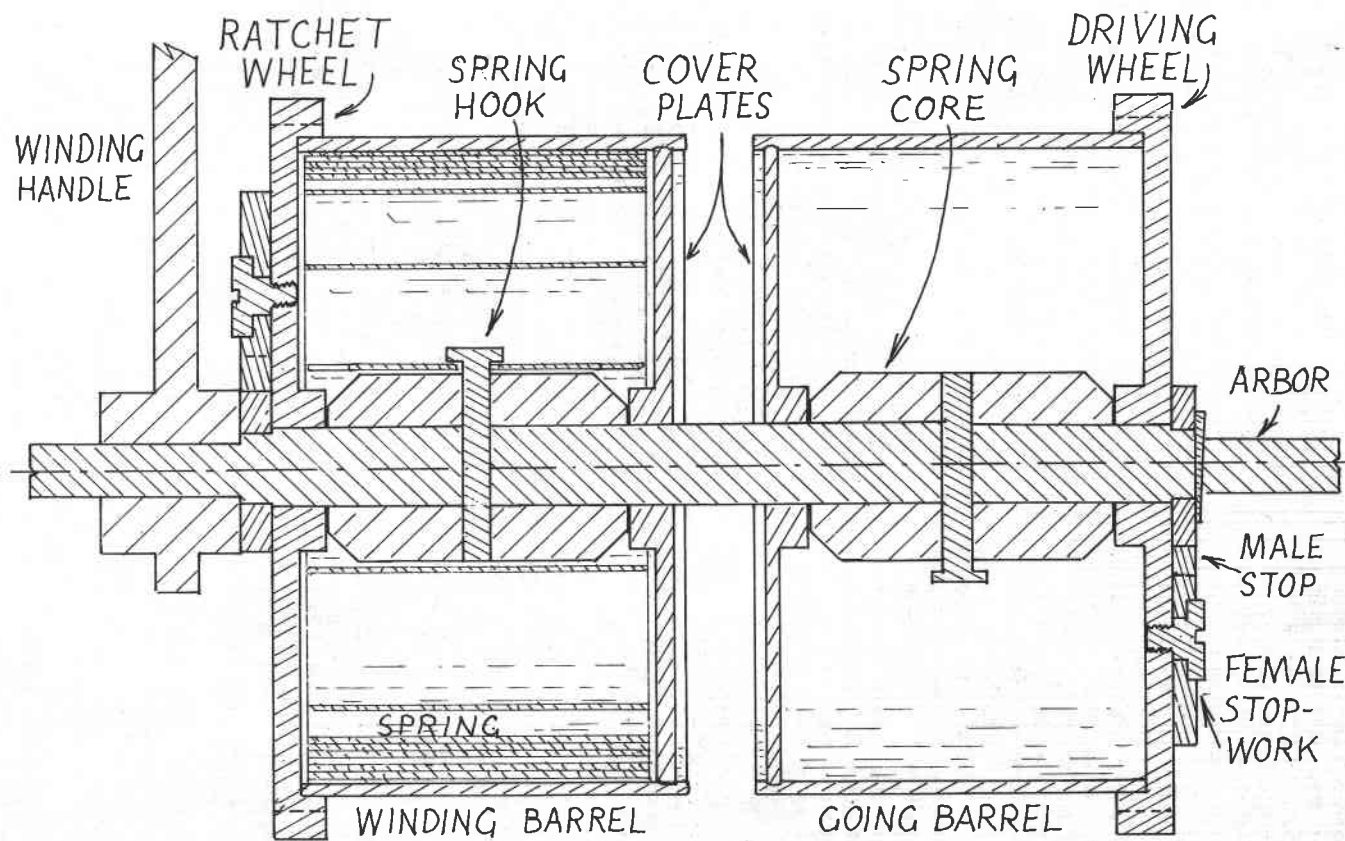
I have recently seen a musical box which appeared to be a Bremond but the name Stauffer was engraved on the winding lever above the Bremond serial number. Who made this box?

In the appendix to Clark's book is the entry "Stauffer, Geneva (1978) musical boxes of good quality."

I suspect that this may be a box ordered from Bremond by Stauffer who may or may not have made boxes of his own. It is known that boxes marked "B.B. & Cie." were made for Berens, Blumberg and Company by Lecoultre, and I have recently had two almost identical Bremond boxes, one of which was clearly labelled Ami Rivenc. Thus there is ample precedent for one maker to make boxes for another. Would anyone else like to comment on this?

I am trying to overhaul my first musical box. I have removed the cylinder pinion and spring, but the cylinder arbor will not come out of the cylinder. How do I remove it?

We must congratulate you on not doing anything drastic. Too many people would have tried to hammer the arbor through, damaging the bearings in the ends of the cylinder and also the male centre on the end of the arbor, which is of vital importance to the restorer who needs to spin the cylinder on the



CROSS-SECTION OF DOUBLE SPRING-BARREL ASSEMBLY

lathe, as in repinning.

First of all, you should soak the ends of the arbor and the bearing holes of the cylinder with easing oil or plus gas to soften the hard oil and rust. With the arbor in as far as it will go, clean all dirt and rust off the exposed part of the arbor, taking care not to scratch the bearing surfaces. Gentle rubbing with fine wire wool will not hurt. Try to pull the arbor straight out, and do NOT twist it, as this may score radial grooves in the bearings and make it harder than ever to put out. If it is stubborn, place a block of medium soft wood such as pine on a firm surface, wrap a cloth round the cylinder and holding it vertical with the cylinder wheel uppermost tap the end of the arbor sharply on the block of wood. This will drift the arbor out of the cylinder. If the arbor is really rusty, it may happen that the end of the cylinder will come off, but of course this can be put back, taking care to line up the locating marks and applying just enough heat to soften the cement.

After removing the arbor, clean off all traces of rust with a wire brush, polish the bearing surfaces, taking care not to remove any metal, and oil it. To prevent recurrence of this trouble, remember that on no account must water ever be allowed near a cylinder, which should be kept as dry as possible. After cleaning the cylinder with metal polish and if necessary watch rinsing solution, peg out the bearings very carefully to remove all traces of the polish, which is abrasive, by twisting a thick piece of tapered wood in the holes in the end plates.

I cannot find any reference on how to deal with a double spring barrel. Could you please tell me how to set about the strip down and re-assembly of my double spring barrel? The maker is P. V. F.

The double spring barrel assembly has two springs linked end to end through a common arbor which is free to rotate.

The 'winding barrel' remains stationary, except when winding, whilst the 'going barrel' drives the movement. Thus, compared to a single spring of the same size this assembly stores twice the energy, gives the same turning force and so gives twice the playing time. Whilst in motion, the arbor should turn at half the rate of the moving barrel.

Before taking the movement apart, wind the springs sufficiently to lift the male stop from the stopwork, and remove the female stopwork wheels, noting which one is which. Let the springs down in the usual manner until the going barrel is slack; if you joggle it there should be free play at the cylinder pinion. It is now safe to remove the spring assembly from the chassis. Take off the right hand bridge, the winding handle, the left hand bridge, and the male stops. Take great care to keep each set of stopwork for its correct spring barrel.

Find a thick piece of fairly firm but soft wood and lay it on a firm surface. Take hold of one barrel and raise the assembly with the arbor vertical over the wood and bring it sharply down, when the momentum of the lower barrel will part it from its cover; unscrew it to unhook the spring. Holding the arbor remove the other spring-in-barrel the same way.

You now have two spring covers trapped on a double arbor! However, it is usually simple to remove one of the spring cores. The arbor hook is the shaped end of a large steel pin which passes through the zinc or brass spring core and the stool arbor shaft. Take a piece of wood and make in it a hole sufficient to receive the hook and pin, place the arbor horizontally on the wood, hook in the hole, and with hammer and punch drive the pin through. Now draw the spring core off the arbor and remove the spring covers for polishing etc. Note the core orientation!

All the components can now be dealt with as for single spring assemblies, except that the winding ratchet wheel may need dressing with a file to remove burrs. Take great care not to deform the tooth or mark the barrel.

Assembly is carried out in the reverse order. Take care to thread the covers onto the arbor in the correct order; they are rarely identical. Put on the spring core the same way round as before, ensuring that the holes are perfectly aligned before driving in the hook which must be orientated to hook the spring. Do not rivet the hook; the pressure of the spring can only hold it in. Cracks in the core are common, but as it is only compressed by the spring this is not troublesome. Before putting the spring barrels on be sure that the innermost turn is true and tight enough for sure hooking. Put one barrel on first and hook the spring by winding it round. To replace the cover, use three clamps with protective card, and packing for recessed covers; draw each clamp up in turn a little at a time until the cover snaps into its groove all round. Be sure that the cover is orientated correctly. It is usually necessary to modify the clamps by thinning with a file so that they will fit between the barrels to fit the other cover. When putting on the other barrel, be sure to screw it on so that the spring hooks without unhooking the first spring. Temporary use can be made of the stopwork to hold the springs in tension and hooked.

Setting the stopwork

Use a duster to hold your polished barrels throughout this process. Do not re-assemble cracked mainsprings.

When you are sure that the entire mechanics of the movement are sound you can set up the stopworks. Be sure that the ratchet wheel, clicks and click

springs operate correctly. Before winding up you must be certain that the governor is functioning well.

Wind the mainsprings fully, i.e., until a positively increased resistance is felt, but not beyond this point. Run the movement down until the screw hole is accessible for fixing the stopwork. Rewind the springs fully. Run down the movements until going barrel has rotated approximately two turns and the screw hole is again accessible. Now screw on the going barrel stopwork so that rotation of the male in an anti clockwise direction will bring it into the last notch and prevent further winding.

Most likely the winding barrel is placed so that the screw hole is not now visible, so wind and run down until the screw hole is accessible at the same time as the spring is fully wound. Now run down the movement, watching the male stopwork until it has rotated approximately one turn, then fit the female stopwork so that any rotation of the winding barrel in a clockwise direction will engage the last notch in the female stopwork and prevent further winding. Note the orientation of the stopwork is the same

both ends! Check your success by running down the movement and seeing both stopworks keep roughly in step. Finally, rub over the assembly with a fine polishing cloth to produce that 'untouched by human hands' look.

Member C.R. Thompson writes:—

"I find it difficult to obtain from ironmongers replacement hinges the same size as the originals. Short of making them, is there any way round this problem?"

It is sometimes possible to cut down slightly larger hinges to fit. Piano hinges are sold in long lengths, and are most useful for this purpose. We would like to hear readers' suggestions for replacing hinges.

Editors note: The section devoted to double spring barrel assemblies is taken from a workshop manual which Keith and Cliff are preparing, this of course includes the fine drawing.

.... UPON CARILLONS

Reprinted from 'Household Words' October 24th 1857

Just on the verge of that mysterious country, about the time when the furniture is growing into queer misty shapes, and the droll jumble of the day's events with grotesque and inconsistent creatures is beginning, I am rudely called back to earth by horrid jangling — such jangling! — apparently just over my head. Carillons disorderly, working away pitilessly: creatures that never sleep all the night long, and care not whom they waken. Carillons of the great palace, round the corner, now making ready to ring in the hour. Hear the music of the bells, sang a poor sot once on a time, what a world of fancies their melody foretells! At any other season perhaps: not when just come off the Spoorweg. They should be stopped, silenced, I cry, indignantly, as they resolve themselves into a tune — a real tune — Mozartian, Handelian, I care not which; at any rate, now impossible to say. For a stave or so from the tune's close, another Carillon hard-by begins, and others far and near all over the city are getting into play, making most horrible discord. Vile hurly burly! confusion! distraction! ten thousand Teufels! What does all this mean? Is there conspiracy in the

town to murder sleep? Where are the politie, as their vile jargon has it — yes the politie? Where, indeed! I rise up, and look towards the window, and find that there has grown up in the street, a din and hum of many voices, say I? At this moment there are half-a-dozen men full of wine coming processional down the street, and roaring, in parts, at the top of their voices. The whole town has discharged itself into that street — giggling, laughing, chattering like a thousand magpies, and calling to each other from afar; this being, as I am informed later, their promenade, or Boulevard; and this being, of all other times in the world, their choice season for recreation, or *delassement*. I look down on the population from my window with weary eyes, and find them as thick as flies. Crowded together are these Hollanders and Hollandaises, — absolutely jostling each other to get through. I look down for some moments curiously, and go back to my lay-figure drapery, praying heartily for their flying countryman to come and take them off bodily in his ship. All this while Carillons are at work periodically, waking up every quarter-of-an-hour, punctually. I liken them, with grim satisfaction, to the dogs in a cur-infested neighbourhood, — one dismal whine setting all the rest off in full cry.

by Roger Booty

The atlas organette, in common with most other disc organettes, was made in Germany. The model which I examined has a case measuring 17 inches by 13 inches by 8 inches high. The case, again like most of these machines, is painted black. There are 18 steel tongued reeds and the disc size is $10\frac{3}{8}$ inches diameter. The disc is driven in a clockwise direction by means of two drive pins which enter holes at the centre of the disc. A larger model was made using a disc of 12 inches diameter and possibly machines even larger were made. Unfortunately I do not know what the tuning of the reeds is since they are only numbered, and not marked with the scale, as most American made reeds are. The lowest tuned reed has a small open ended cardboard box covering it, the only reason I can see for this is that it may help to improve the tone of the note.

Usually on a keyed organette, all the keys are held down until a hole occurs in the disc to allow one to rise and open the valve connected to it. On the atlas however the opposite applies, when a note is required to play the key is pressed down by a flange formed as a projection on the underside of the disc, this method, and indeed the same shape of flange, is used on the Amorette disc organette. In an article in *The Music Box* (Volume 1 Number 4) R.A. Moss states that the $10\frac{3}{8}$ inch discs are interchangeable between the two machines.

As may be seen from the photograph of the interior of the Atlas, the action is in 'as new' condition. It seems likely that it has had very little use, as even the sheep-skin valves are clean and not blackened by grime. If it is found necessary to remove the soundboard, on which are fixed the keys and valves, crankrod and centre turntable, remember to take extreme care, since the reeds are fixed to the underside of this board. They are most fragile. The bellows, which create pressure within the action, are made from folded card, with the corners covered with split skin. The hinges on the bellows are pieces of sheep-skin, which hold the two boards which form the bellows together. The externally sprung reservoir is also made with card and split skin. This is not visible in the photograph but when working it comes down between the two inside boards of the bellows.

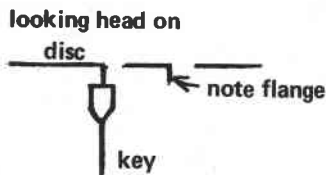
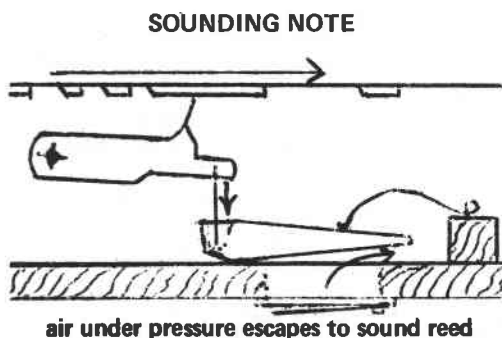
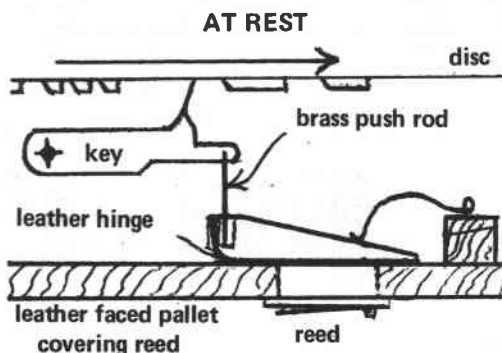
As it is essential that the discs should not be turned anti-clockwise, a ratchet and pawl are fitted to work on the crank rod. There is however a slight chance of the pawl becoming disengaged, especially if the machine is turned upside down. To ensure that this does not happen it is possible to fix a small stop in the form of an L shaped piece of wire. The short arm of the L is set into the block on to which the

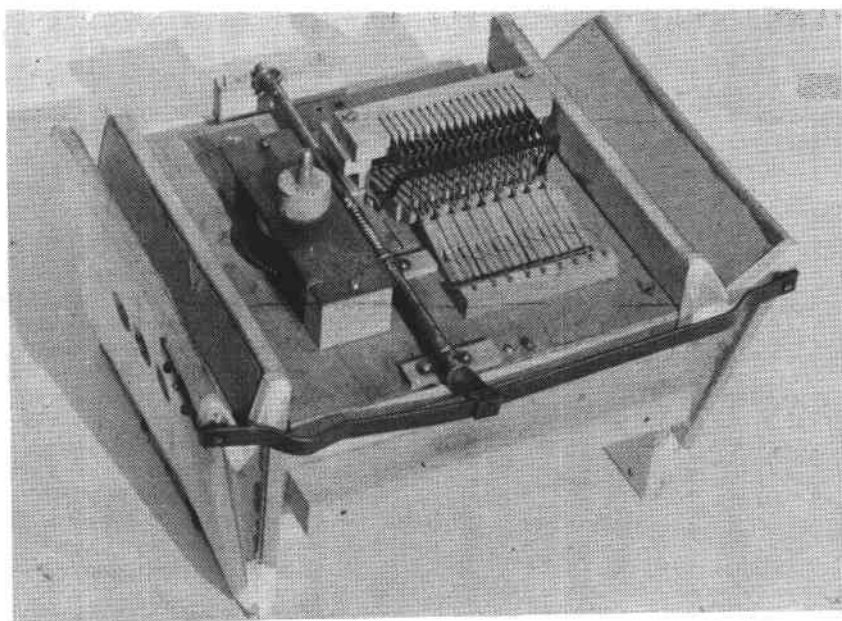
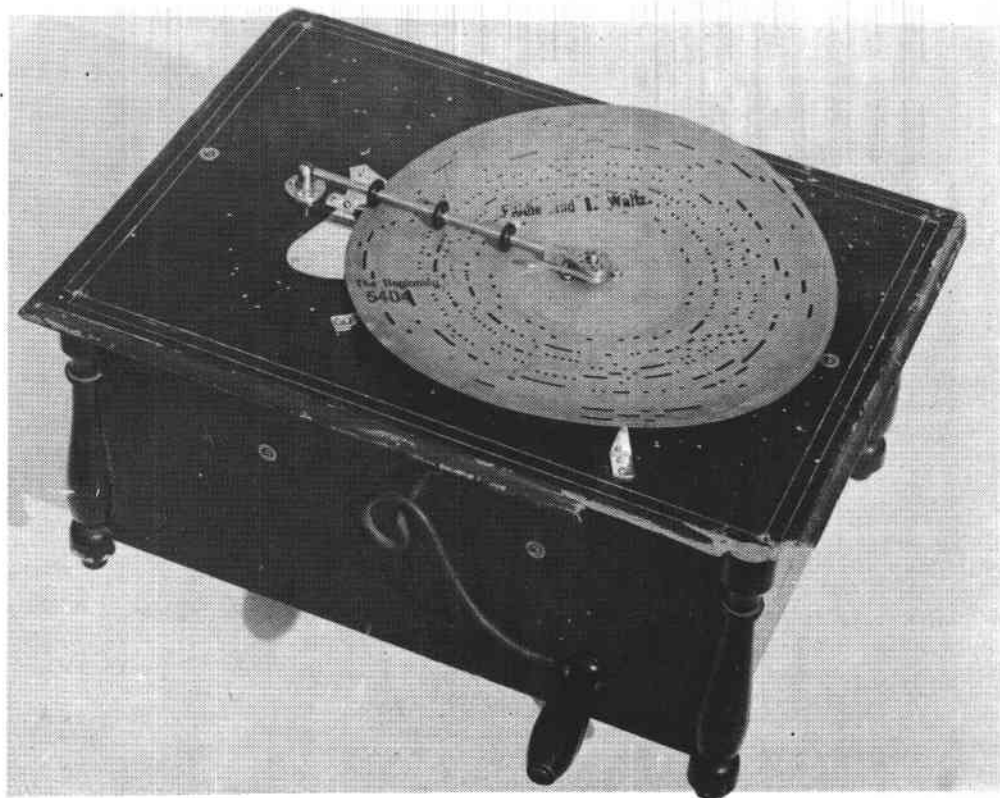
pawl is fitted. The long arm of the L rests across the pawl at a point just above its pivot, but no so far along that it is prevented from moving up and down as the ratchet revolves.

If it is found necessary to repaint the black case of this or any other organette it is fairly simple to do and the name can be replaced by using Letraset lettering, some types of which are obtainable in gold. As a final point I would like to ask a question. Why are the cases of these German disc organettes so popular with wood-worm?

THE ATLAS ORGANETTE ACTION

(about half actual size)







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The New Editor writes:

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER your journal has a new editor. For the past eight years or so the professional talents of Arthur Ord-Hume have been available for the task of editing this journal which he alone created. During this time, for as long as the Musical Box Society has existed, we have seen his baby grow from its small beginnings as a duplicated booklet to its present position as a journal equal, at the very least, in quality and content to the organ of any comparable Society.

Over the years Arthur has, by dint of sheer hard work, made this book his own to such a degree that it is hard for me to imagine that I can continue to do as good a job of work as we have come to take for granted. What I am resolved to do, however, with God's grace and the help of all of you, is to become as competent and as skilful as it is possible for me to be.



Past Hon. Editor Arthur Ord-Hume



Present Hon. Editor Graham Webb.

With a new editor there are bound to be some changes, however small, it is only natural that the personality of the editor will reflect in the journal. There will be mistakes too, of course, however hard I try, and for these I blame my total ignorance in advance and ask you not to judge too harshly.

I hope it has been noticed how much emphasis I am putting on the fact that the journal belongs to the members. Without your contributions of material, articles and letters the journal will grind to a halt. On this subject I must be plain, so far there has not been enough participation in the content of the journal by members of the Society. I ask you now, please remember that, however small your contribution may be, it is the life blood of your Society and therefore your *duty* to submit it. Think hard, decide what you can do as your share and act, spend three of those Newps on a stamp and send your contribution to me. Even if it's a letter of complaint it will at least make you an active member of your Society.

Having asked not only your blessing but your assistance I leave you to read my first attempt.

GRAHAM WEBB

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN

We are indebted to Member Richard Jefferies for the poem we print here. Mr. Jefferies found it while glancing through one of the many interesting books he has collected.

The author of the poem was Charles Stuart Calverley, who was born in 1831 and died in 1884. The poem was originally published in an anthology which Calverley wrote called 'Fly Leaves', published in 1872. The book ran to two editions, the second being published in the same year.

Calverley became a full-time poet when an ice-skating accident prevented him from completing his studies to become a solicitor. Although he became an invalid this did not detract from his sometimes repier wit. He was known as a satyrist and a parodist. One of his better known poems was 'Ode to Tobacco', but perhaps he was best known for a sardonic poem he wrote entitled 'Proverbial Philosophy'. Although a 'minor poet', Calverley was, nevertheless, well thought of in his time.

GRINDER, who serenely grindest
At my door the Hundredth Psalm,
Till thou ultimately findest
Pence in thy unwashen palm:

Grinder, jocund-hearted Grinder,
Near whom Barbary's nimble son,
Poised with skill upon his hinder
Paws, accepts the proffered bun:

Dearly do I love thy grinding;
Joy to meet thee on thy road
Where thou prowlest through the blinding
Dust with that stupendous load,

'Neath the baleful star of Sirius,
When the postmen slower jog,
And the ox becomes delirious,
And the muzzle decks the dog.

Tell me by what art thou bindest
On thy feet those ancient shoon:
Tell me, Grinder, if thou grindest
Always, always out of tune.

Tell me if, as thou art buckling
On thy straps with eager claws,
Thou forecastest, inly chuckling,
All the rage that thou wilt cause.

Tell me if at all thou mindest
When folks flee, as if on wings,
From thee as at ease thou grindest:
Tell me fifty thousand things.

Grinder, gentle-hearted Grinder!
Ruffians who led evil lives,
Soothed by thy sweet strains, are kinder
To their bullocks and their wives:

Children, when they see thy supple
Form approach, are out like shots;

Half-a-bar sets several couple
Waltzing in convenient spots;

Not with clumsy Jacks or Georges:
Unprofaned by grasp of man
Maidens speed those simple orgies,
Betsey Jane with Betsey Ann.

As they love thee in St. Giles's
Thou art loved in Grosvenor Square:
None of those engaging smiles is
Unreciprocated there.

Often, ere yet thou hast hammer'd
Through thy four delicious airs,
Coins are flung thee by enamour'd
Housemaids upon area stairs:

E'en the ambrosial-whisker'd flunkey
Eyes thy boots and thine unkempt
Beard and melancholy monkey
More in pity than contempt.

Far from England, in the sunny
South, where Anio leaps in foam,
Thou wast rear'd, till lack of money
Drew thee from thy vineclad home:

And thy mate, the sinewy Jocko,
From Brazil or Afric came
Land of simoom and sirocco—
And he seems extremely tame.

There he quaff'd the undefiled
Spring, or hung with apeline glee,
By his teeth or tail or eyelid,
To the slippery mango-tree:

There he woo'd and won a dusky
Bride, of instincts like his own;
Talk'd of love till he was husky
In a tongue to us unknown:

Side by side 'twas theirs to ravage
 The potato ground or cut
 Down the unsuspecting savage
 With the well-aim'd cocoa-nut:—

Till the miscreant Stranger tore him
 Screaming from his blue-faced fair;
 And they flung strange raiment o'er him,
 Raiment which he could not bear:

Sever'd from the pure embraces
 Of his children and his spouse,
 He must ride fantastic races
 Mounted on reluctant sows:

But the heart of wistful Jocko
 Still was with his ancient flame
 In the nutgroves of Morocco;
 Or if not it's all the same.

Grinder, winsome grinsome Grinder!
 They who see thee and whose soul
 Melts not at thy charms, are blinder
 Than a trebly-banded mole:

They to whom thy curt (yet clever)
 Talk, thy music and thine ape,
 Seem not to be joys for ever,
 Are but brutes in human shape.

'Tis not that thy mien is stately,
 'Tis not that thy tones are soft;
 'Tis not that I care so greatly
 For the same thing play'd so oft:

But I've heard mankind abuse thee;
 And perhaps it's rather strange,
 But I thought that I would choose thee
 For encomium, as a change.

GRAND CROSSWORD SOLUTION



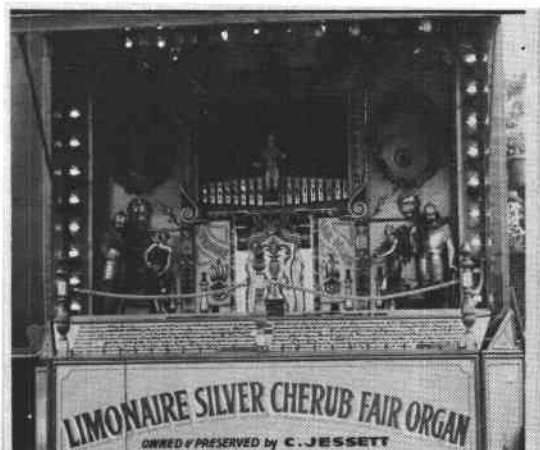
..... THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES!

As a family man whose wife and children delight in dragging him off to the country on every possible occasion, wet or fine, I often find myself within exhorting distance of a Whitsun or August Bank Holiday fete. Now, rapidly approaching my dotage, I have become somewhat of an expert on these pallid affairs, knowing for instance that the Tombola will quite likely be good; the tea awful but the cakes edible; the second hand books all read and the coconut shy impossible. Together with the knowledge that the weather will turn threatening in spite of the current heat wave, these particles of knowledge have become a part of my vast experience of family matters. In final and convincing proof of this I can tell you that I know, instinctively, where to park the car for a quick getaway before the callover of the three hundred raffle prizes is under way. A necessity this since I hold a very firm view that my wife should buy her own small bottle of malt vinegar.

It was with no surprise, but a deal of gloom, that I learned from my smallest (and so less likely to be attacked) child that I was to be feted yet again. We were staying for the weekend with friends at Brightling, in Sussex, home of a very good church barrel organ by the way, and the fete was to be held at a village a few miles away called Burwash. It all came out in a six year-old rush, the notices of the fete were everywhere it seemed and 'canIhavenextweekspocket moneynow'.

No need to go into the battle and defeat which followed, for me at least the generation gap is nowhere near wide enough. Sufficient to say that three o'clock on the Monday afternoon found me bringing up the rear of a fair sized party of fete goers. In the rear that is until I heard the unmistakable sound of a Fair organ. I find it difficult to describe my feelings at the moment I realised that the organ was there. It's so easy to be effusive, after all it was just a small Fair organ, a Limonaire to be exact, with 49 keys and a metalophone, but it changed my day completely. Like a frog into a prince I changed from a Dad, dishing out the endless Newps, into an aficionado. This was *my* meat. Like a true member of the Society I moved in to sort out the facts.

As a beginning the Limonaire took its place inside the camera together with Mum drinking tea, kids riding the pony, kids not riding the pony, and a very shaky Dad taken by a ten year-old with an ice cream in mind. I then found out that the organ had been built to a special scale in Paris in 1912 for a roundabout in Ghent. It was restored in Antwerp



in 1933. It's third owner was placed in a concentration camp by the Germans and eventually the organ was bought by Grymonprez of Ghent-Brugge in 1953. They restored it again and sold it to a fair in Holland. Once more purchased by Grymonprez, it came, after further restoration, to England and its present owner Mr. C. Jessett, a member of the F.O.P.S., who lives in Uckfield, Sussex.

And so an organ came through two world wars and several major overhauls to make a difference to my afternoon at a village fete in Sussex. I even won a coconut . . . the difference it makes!



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Record Review

THE WORLD OF MECHANICAL MUSIC. Decca – Stereo SPA 145. Price: 99np. A selection of recordings of various mechanical musical instruments, from the musical box to the barrel organ.

The idea of having a variety of instruments on one record is a good one. There are problems of course, in particular one gets more from the record if one adjusts the volume from track to track and this can be something of a nuisance. If one takes the trouble to do this however, the record is, for the most part, very good. The cylinder musical boxes are in fine condition, thanks I believe to Keith Harding, since most of them have passed through his hands for repair. Unlike many of the recordings on the market which feature cylinder boxes, notoriously difficult to record, the technical side of the disc, with the exception of one or two tracks, has been well executed. There is little mechanical noise to distract.

The record opens with two tunes from a fine sounding Belgian cafe piano. This is followed by several tunes played on various cylinder boxes, perhaps the finest of these is the overture to *Semiramide* on a Nicole Freres six overture box with a 21 inch cylinder. The mood then changes to an Imhoff and Mukle chamber barrel organ, from which four tunes are played. This is followed by the most disappointing part of the disc, three airs played on an Imhoff and Mukle barrel piano, which truly should not be on this record at all. Either the machine is out of tune or it was very badly recorded.

For those who like a good cylinder organ box there is a fine Bremond 22 key which fills the bill with a nicely balanced organ-comb combination, but the final offering on this side is again rather a disappointment. It is a tune from an early snuff box which presumably was included for variety. One can hear that this is obviously a good box, but it is too much to expect a recording of it to stand up in this company.

The Ariston organette which starts off side 2 is one of the best I've heard although not to my personal taste. The disc boxes which follow are not quite up to the standard of the side one cylinder boxes for clarity of sound apart from a machine which is termed a 'Pop Polyphon' which sounds like a 195/8 inch Polyphon. Next we have two hymns from a Bevington and Sons 24 key barrel organ and this is followed by Chopin's Etude number 23 on a pianola. The piano is by Steck, but there is no mention of the action which, since Steck Dou-Art is not uncommon, may well be of this type. Although the music is admirably designed to show off

the virtuosity of the instrument, one cannot help but feel that a more romantic piece would have suited here. The rest of this side of the disc is taken up with more cylinder boxes, one or two of which are not, seemingly, so well recorded as the boxes on side one.

The front of the sleeve of the disc presents us with one of Member Bruce Angrave's Wonderful cartoon machines which could be called a '*Barreلودiscylinderharporganophon*'. Unfortunately the back of the sleeve prints the titles and names of machines in what could be called an artistic design but takes some time to sort out. One would like more in the way of information on the machines. Nothing is conveyed by 'Pop Polyphon' (Victorian), or 'Superpolyphon' (High Victorian Music Machine).

All now said, this is a disc which, if you like variety in your mechanical music, is a good one to buy.

G.W.

Book Reviews

For some years it has been the practice to reprint old catalogues of mechanical musical instruments in the centre pages of *The Music Box*. There have been arguments both for and against this practice, those for say that the catalogues give valuable information and reference material, not just for members in the present but for succeeding generations, to whom the material might otherwise be lost forever. Those against the practice state that the *Journal of the Society* should cater mainly for the present and contain a higher proportion of topical news and contemporary writing on historic, technical and similar subjects. The obvious solution is to keep a nice balance between the two, but to do this one must assume a ready supply of both types of material and this is certainly not the case.

Any source of knowledge must be welcome and it was with interest that it was discovered that a member, Mr. Ernie Bayley of 'The Talking Machine Review' has started upon a commercial programme of reprinting catalogues containing instruments of interest to the Society. The first offering is a catalogue produced by Nicole Freres in 1901. It contains a selection of Regina, Polyphon and Harmonia disc musical boxes, several cylinder boxes, Phoenix organettes and various other pieces. There is also a short section on Zono-

phone 'talking machines' and Edison phonographs.

The catalogue is reproduced extremely well, obviously from a very good original. The content is of interest from a referent point of view, since the period around 1901 is a good time for a catalogue on disc musical boxes. Interesting machines abound, like the Emerald Polyphon, a 'concertina' type case containing a movement with 16 bells playing a 22 inch disc. This is the model, from which Regina are said to have taken the design for their cases to house the 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and 27 inch Regina table models which are more familiar now. Here too are many autochange machines

and disc-playing clocks. In its stiff paper covers, a booklet well worth putting on the book shelf.

The second offering from Mr. Bayley is a booklet advertising various models of the Hupfeld player-piano. In it there are explanations of the Solophonola, Douphonola and the Triphonola. This reprint, again well produced, is of less general interest than the first but still a useful addition to the library of those who have a leaning toward the player-piano.

Both of these booklets are available from Mr. Bayley at the price of 50 new pence each. G.W.

Found in 'The Illustrated London News' of Christmas 1882 in the collection of the Editor, this advertisement for the HARMONETTE paper organ was obviously used originally in an American paper.

THE HARMONETTE.—A Musical
Wonder, and the best Mechanical Musical Instrument in the World. Novel in construction, elegant in design, powerful and melodious in effect, MUSIC AND MUSICIAN COMBINED. More Reeds and more powerful than 800. Organettes. The HARMONETTE plays anything, from a simple song to a difficult waltz or operatic selection. Any child can operate it. Music only 4 cents per foot. It is beautifully finished in black walnut, and of handsome shape and design; EXPRESSION SWELL, and many patented improvements. It is as loud as a cabinet organ, and will furnish music for any occasion, and it is a most complete present for any one, old or young. We send the Harmonette, with selections of music, to any address, on receipt of price, 50s. Extra Music can be sent by Mail at any time. This is the most wonderful musical instrument that has ever been invented. Address, the MASSACHUSETTS ORGAN CO., 67, Washington-street, Boston, Mass.
Harmonette, 21; Music, 2d, per foot.

RIDDLE MEE REE SOLUTION

Three Bell Box

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mrs. Q.F. Lawrence, wife of our much admired Honourary Member Henry Lawrence who is, sadly, still suffering the effects of a stroke, writes from their new home at 33, Glynfield Rise, Foxmoor Lane, Ebley, Near Stroud, Glos.:—

This is a very pleasant place, with good views and plenty of sunshine when there is any. I do hope that if any members are ever in the area they will call upon us. We still have a few boxes of interest, and welcome company.

Member Richard Jefferies of Surrey writes:—

Going through my archives the other day I found an old gramophone record which may interest members. It is called 'A Casey Court Concert' — The Casey Court Kids with Barrel Organ (sic) and Effects. It must be one of the few, or perhaps the only, commercial recording ever made of a street piano, apart from special records since the revival of interest. Other collectors of records to whom I have spoken about it

have never heard of it. It is on the Regal label, number M.R. 448 and the tunes included are:—

Jolly Good Company,
Whistling in the Dark,
It Always Starts to Rain,
When You Were the Blossom of Buttercup Lane,
For You,
Tie a Little String Around Your Finger.

Unfortunately the record is in a shocking state, but it does still play. I found it in the backyard of a junk shop and it had been in the rain for heaven knows how long. The street piano must be a late one because it has drum and cymbal. The whole is punctuated with period 'humour':—

Angry Mother "Ere you — take your bloomin' organ round the next street!"

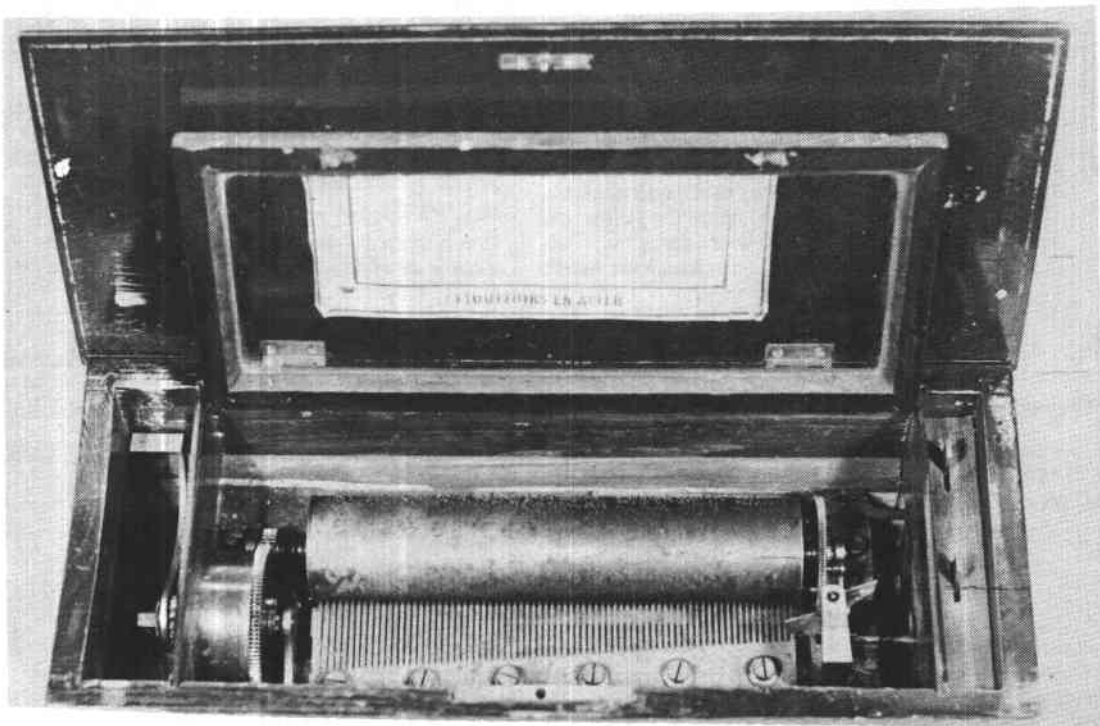
Grinder "What me? What do you mean take me organ round the next street?"

Mother "Well I just got me baby off to sleep".

Grinder "Got your baby off to sleep — you take your baby round the next street."

Mother "Saucey 'umbug!" etc. etc.

I don't know if the B.B.C. might have a better copy in their record library, or possibly there is one, or something similar owned by another member.

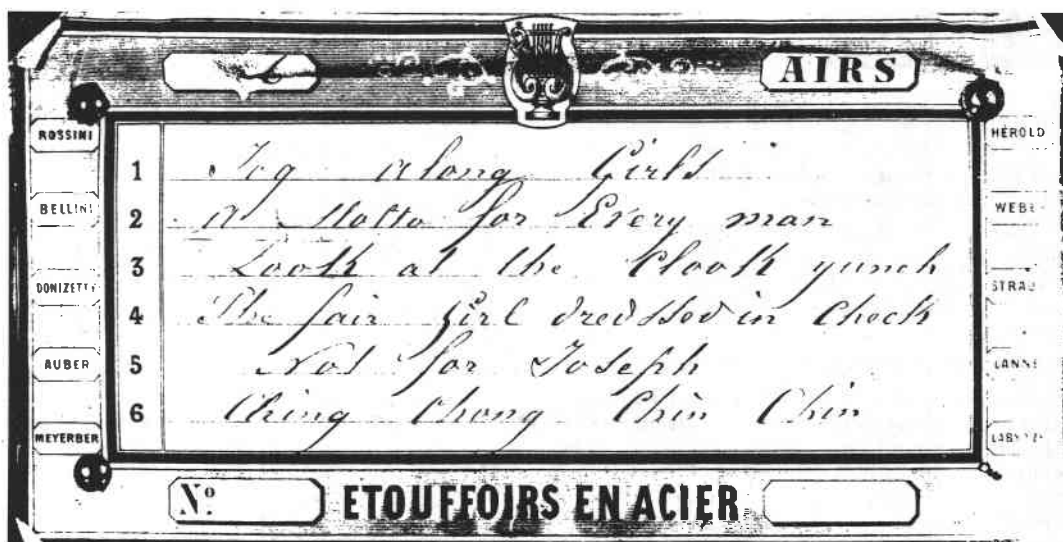


Member Arthur Cunliffe of Morecambe writes:—

For very many years I have been keenly interested in cylinder musical boxes and in January of last year I found out about the Musical Box Society and

promptly joined.

I have found the Journals most interesting, and I am wondering if the couple of photographs I have enclosed would be interesting enough to print



in some future edition. I am hoping that some member will be able to tell me what box I have and what period it was made in!

The box is a six air one and quite small, the cylinder being 8 inches long and the comb having 76 teeth. The tune sheet is printed in blue on a white background and is of fairly thin paper. There are no marks or numbers on the movement, but the tuning scale is marked on the front of the comb. The register screw is of the later type and the music seems to me to be well set up. Tune No.3 by the way is better known as the Soldiers chorus from Carmen. Member Keith Harding thinks the movement could be Conchon, but I can find no clues to lead me towards this name.

I have also two Dawkins cylinder boxes in my hands at the moment, one mine and the other for repair, and on the bottom of the cases someone has written in pencil some names and dates. The writing is very faded and written in a style so common in the Victorian age that I think it could have been put on the boxes when they were originally bought. No.35135 is an eight air, six bell Dawkins box and has the words "Bought Dec. 1884" on it. The other is a Dawkins No.44191, Eight air Harmonical Harp Piccolo box and underneath the words, "Bought 17th January 1898. To James Graham and Evelyn Graham". This information may be of use, I don't know. It may just help to date Dawkins with a little more accuracy.

Member Norman Brown of Glasgow writes:-

Prompted by a reference in David Tallis' new book to the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford I decided to pay a visit there to find out just how extensive their collection is.

Whilst the display conditions are at the moment very poor, and the condition of many of the fine boxes leaves much to be desired, I was surprised at just how good and varied the collection is.

The collection comprises
30 cylinder operated boxes including:-
Nicole Freres double cylinder
Meyer Marix Orchestra box
H.L. Graveur Harpe Piccolo
Nicole Freres Table Grand Interchangeable
? Revolver box

There are a number of early boxes with sectional combs, and one with a Fusee drive.

9 disc boxes comprising:-
Regina 1 Autochange 15"
1 Table Model 15"
Polyphon 1 Upright 24"
1 Table 16 cm.
1 " 15½"
1 " 9½"
1 " 6"

Symphonion 1-3 disc model upright
Stella 1 Table Model

Singing Birds comprised of:-

2 large models in cages

1 Tortoiseshell snuff box inlaid with brass, copper and silver

Barrel organs 3

Street Piano 1

Mechanical piano 1

There is, in addition, an organette playing on cardboard discs and an Automated musical "Pavilion" with tightrope walker and numerous "Musicians".

Certainly a collection worth visiting, but it is essential that you write to the Secretary of the Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford, and make arrangements for your visit as the collection is not on open display.

Letter number 2 from Norman:-
"His Masters Voice"

Indulging in my usual hobby of junk shop "raking" I was flipping through a pile of old records when the label of one caught my eye.

Staring down the horn of a mechanical musical instrument was a hairy animal, looking for all the world as if it were listening for squeaky dampers.

This immediately brought to mind a certain member of the Musical Box Society, and as my eye moved down to the composers name I noted the name *J. Ord-Hume*; the piece of music was very appropriately named DANSE-ANTIQUE.

I have inspected the record thoroughly but it has no cylinder pins, bellows etc., which would lead one to believe that *Our Ord-Hume* had a hand in producing one of these new fangled talking/singing things - or has he?

Perhaps the skeleton in the family cupboard?

For Discomaniacs the record is *Zonophone Serial 2169 English Band X-2-40411 St. Hilda Colliery Band*.

David Shankland, our Hon. Treasurer, has written for help with his pet project, Interchangeable Cylinders:-

I have been maintaining a register of cylinders available for sale and cylinders required. If any members have cylinders for sale will they please send me details and I will record that they are available. On the other hand if anyone requires cylinders please send me description and size and I will record the requirement, or if cylinders are known to be available I shall put you in touch with the vendor. Editor- Here perhaps is a chance to help yourself and someone else at the same time. If you can answer this call please do so. Praise to our Treasurer for a thoughtful and helpful scheme.

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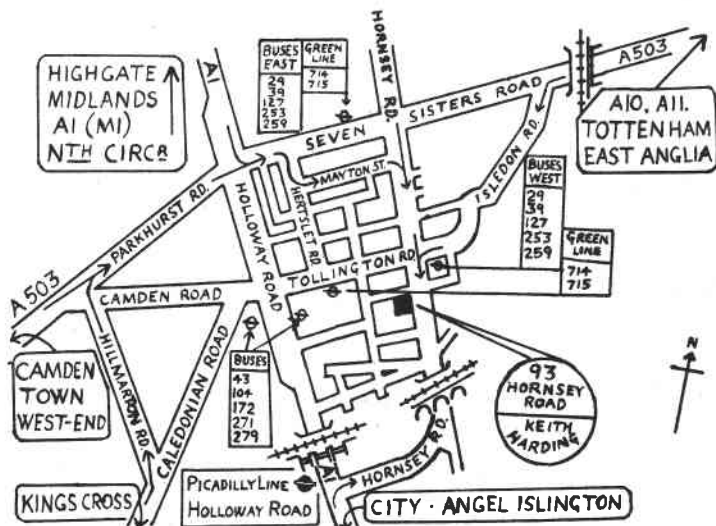
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The aims and objects of the Society are extremely simple. The Society exists to bring together all those who share a common interest in the collecting, preservation and appreciation of all types of mechanical musical instruments.

What for? What good does the Society do? The Society brings together fellow collectors from all over the British Isles and many foreign countries including Switzerland — the accredited birthplace of the musical box as we know it.

The Society publishes a quarterly Journal called THE MUSIC BOX which is devoted to articles on all aspects of musical automata, repair and overhaul tips, descriptions of fine and unusual mechanical movements and, of course, it circulates Members addresses.

Membership to the MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN opens up a whole new world of musical box appreciation. Wherever you live, up-to-the-minute news of members and collections reaches you through THE MUSIC BOX. Twice a year, a full day meeting is held at which all members and their guests are invited to attend. Regional meetings, film

shows, lectures and demonstrations are held at various places at intervals.

How much does all this cost? Just THREE POUNDS (U.S.A. \$8 per year! If you are not convinced that Society membership can benefit you, why not send 10/- (50p; \$1.50) for a specimen copy of THE MUSIC BOX? Judge critically, for yourself.

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, THE MUSIC BOX, is devoted to articles and material of interest to collectors, antique dealers, historians of mechanical music and enthusiasts in general. As a work of continuing reference. THE MUSIC BOX publishes much material which has never before appeared in print as well as reproducing contemporary advertisements, descriptions, articles, patents, tune-sheets, lists of types of boxes and lists of tunes which they play.

Additionally, it acts as a clearing house for the opinions and researches of Members throughout the world and carries advertisements for Wants and Disposals. The main purpose of the Journal is, of course, to act as the mouthpiece of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain and is recognised as the leading authority in all matters concerning mechanical music and mechanical musical instruments. The Society maintains archives and publishes in facsimile much out-of-print material in its Journal.

THE MUSIC BOX contains articles of three basic types; general interest, historical; technical. Instructions on the repair and overhaul of various types of mechanical musical instrument provide a most valuable guide to such work for other overhauers.

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