

JOURNAL OF
THE
MUSICAL BOX
SOCIETY OF
GREAT BRITAIN

THE MUSIC BOX

a magazine of mechanical music



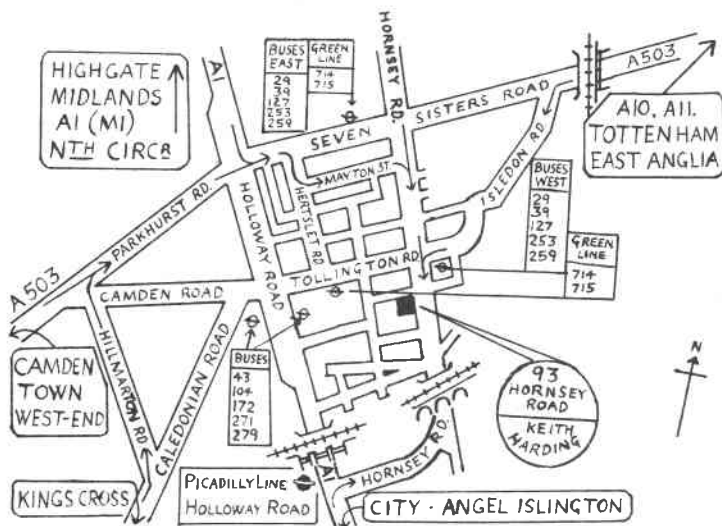
Vol. 5 No. 8

Keith Harding Antiques

W. K. Harding and C. A. Burnett

MUSICAL BOX SPECIALISTS

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THE MUSIC BOX

THE JOURNAL OF THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Volume 5 Number 8

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THE SHEFFIELD MEETING

There is no doubt that the Provincial Meeting held at Sheffield on March 3rd was the most successful Meeting to be held in the Provinces so far. Largely responsible for this success were Mr. Geoff. Worrall, Organising Secretary of the Meeting, and Mr. Reg. Waylett, Hon. Secretary of the Society, these Members working hard in close co-operation, to really show the way to organisers of future Meetings. The Sheffield Meeting is to be fully reported in the next issue of THE MUSIC BOX.

The Editor writes:

As a business man, and one who would consider himself pragmatic in the philosophical sense, I am often struck by the similarity between businesses and societies such as ours. The running of the two types of organisation is similar in that what we gain in reward tends to depend on what we put in in hard work and enthusiasm. In this issue of THE MUSIC BOX we have

practical evidence that some of our Members are true believers in the same philosophy.

It will be seen that Keith Harding, aided by other Members, has discovered some very interesting facts, and is continuing a really exciting line of research into the relationship between gamme numbers and serial numbers of Nicole Freres boxes. We have, not only the Question and Answer article, but also a separate article by Keith, complete with graph, on one of his pet subjects. Who, I ask myself, would not go straight to the nearest Nicole and do his bit?

On a slightly more ethereal plane we have Arthur Ord-Hume, not content with his usual well researched article (this time on 'The Passing of Polyphon'), writing a guest editorial which is guaranteed to set the more musically knowledgeable among us straining at the leash to do their share of his proposed research project.

With this Journal Members will also receive a questionnaire and an invitation to join yet another research project, this one the brain-child of Member Arthur Cunliffe. We print in these pages a sample of the index cards which Arthur hopes to make up from your replies concerning the boxes in your collection. In this way it is hoped to gather evidence of types of boxes, serial numbers, and so on, to begin to piece together a picture which will be of help in, to give just one instance, the closer dating of manufacture of musical boxes.

Here we have three projects, each with its own merits, each well worth the effort involved in giving a helping hand. Now can be decided, not whether to help or not, but which one to help, if not all three. It is good for use to remember the aims of the Society. Why do we exist as a group, if not to help discover more, to propagate knowledge, to learn, to teach?

With the upsurge in value of all forms of mechanical musical instruments comes the peculiar sight of a great many people, often without the slightest knowledge, jumping on to the band wagon in an attempt to cash in on the rise in popularity, particularly that of musical boxes. The existence of our Society is responsible for much of this popularity and for this we should feel proud. One wonders, however, how apt is the phrase 'hoist with ones own petard', when one finds an instance, as I did recently, of a large London multiple store, not until now known for its interest in musical boxes, offering a rather

battered, poorly playing 3 bell box for £180. To see this type of box and other poor relations of the musical box family elevated to 'a fine example of a rare Victorian musical box' as described by auctioneers, many of whom should know better, makes one wonder whether our attempts have succeeded rather too well. Out of the leap in prices does come at least one good result. Since boxes are worth so much more, many are now being repaired which in earlier years would have been scrapped. They are now worth repairing, even at current prices of repair.

It is with regret that I report that, owing to personal commitments, I am resigning as Editor. The next issue of this Journal will be the last I shall have the pleasure of preparing. By the time the next issue is published I shall have been responsible for seven Journals, from Christmas 1971 to Summer 1973. Not a long run by previous standards, but my guilt in deserting the post is mitigated by my belief that no one should stay too long in the important posts of the Society. My two years have, if nothing else, shown that a complete tyro, armed and aided by friendly co-operation from all sources, can tackle a job like editing the Journal, and do it reasonably well.

It will be seen that this issue contains articles from no less than three of our North American Members. This is in response to my plea in an earlier editorial for more active participation from our overseas Members. I thank them, and other American Members who have contributed, and immediately I turn to those members living in continental Europe. Let us celebrate the Common Market I say, and ask you to contribute. After all, here we have the very birthplace of the objects of our passion. Should any European Member find it difficult to write in English, then let him write in his own language and leave it for us to translate.

A last word:

Please note the change of venue for the Annual General Meeting in June. A new place of meeting has been made necessary by a huge uplift of charges to a colossal £200, for the two day meeting. Please see the special announcement for further details.

GRAHAM WEBB

AN INTERESTING NECESSAIRE

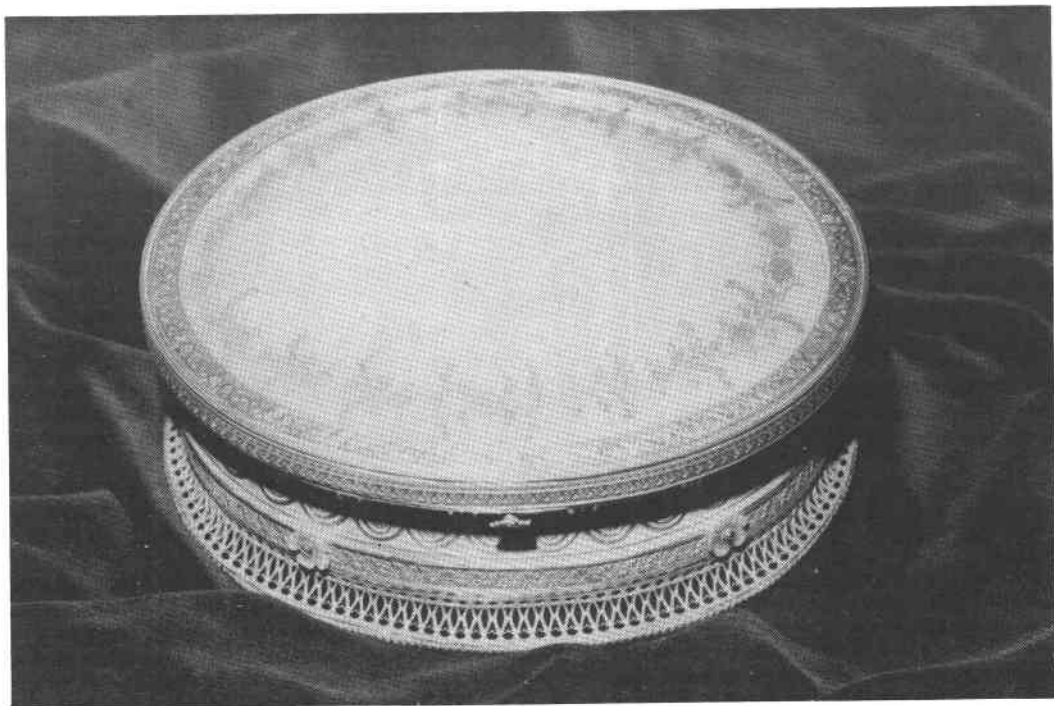
2

by Dr. Frank Metzger

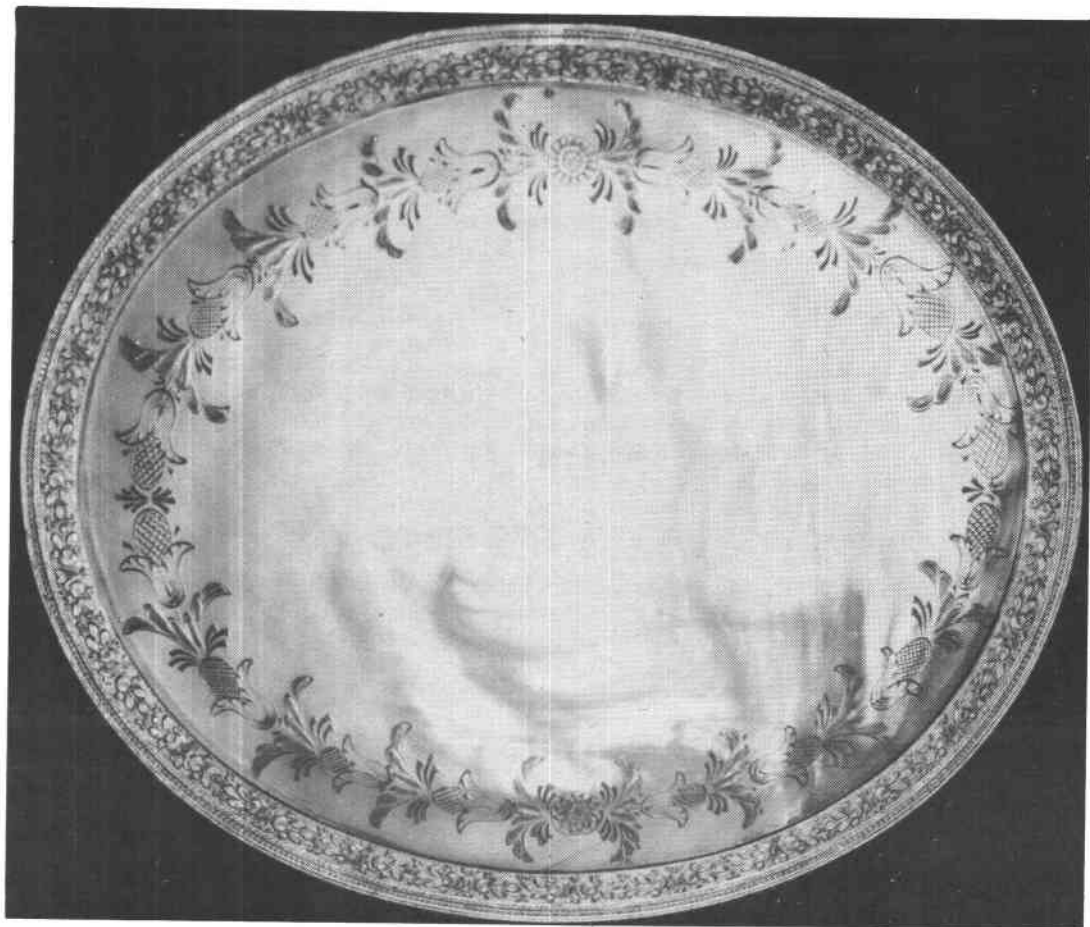
Sometime ago in an article in *The Music Box*, I discussed an unusual and ornate necessaire in large format which I had been fortunate enough to purchase and restore. Since that time, I have been on the lookout for other unusual examples of this combination of ladies' sewing implements, etc., and musical movements and thought I would describe for you a new one which I recently found.

You may remember that in the earlier article, I was bemused by the fact that one of the implements in the necessaire still carried the label of what was apparently the original shop which had sold or put together the various items for the necessaire. That shop, Garnesson, was listed as having an address in Paris known as No. 155, Palais Royale, and therein lies a part of the story of the necessaire which I am about to describe for you in this article.

Although I wrote to the Paris Chamber of Commerce, they were unable to determine when or for how long this shop had actually existed, nor have I ever heard from any reader of *The Music Box* who might have had some knowledge of this. I was intrigued, however, when sometime ago in the catalogue of one of London's auction houses I saw described what was called a "Palais Royale" necessaire with musical movement. The



Photograph Number 1



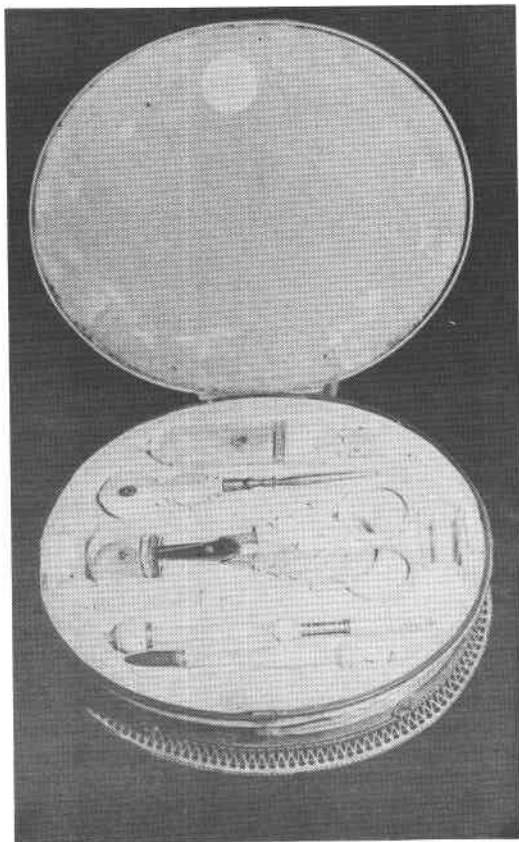
Photograph Number 2

description made it sound very enticing, and in due course of time, I bid on it and was successful. Then came the long wait until it was packed and shipped and finally arrived at home. I was exceptionally pleased when I unpacked my new prize and found that it was not only beautiful and somewhat unusual, but that all of the original implements with which it had been fitted were still present and intact.

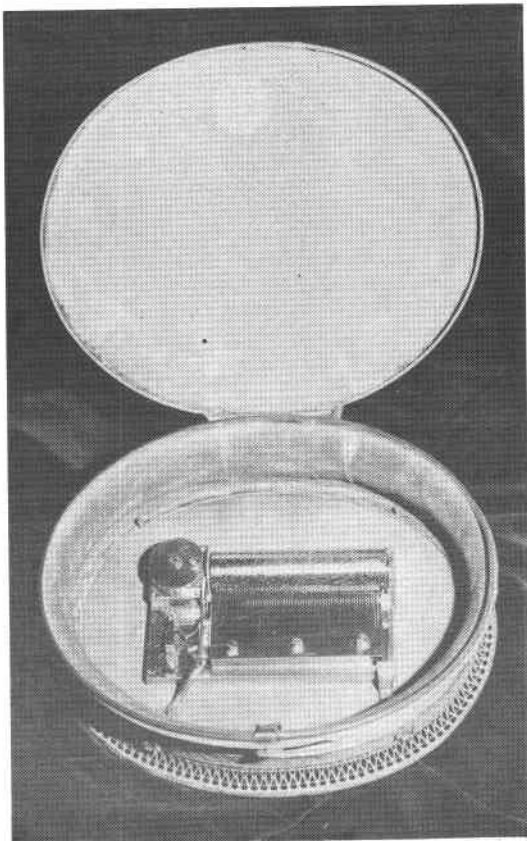
Although I have not made any thorough research, I have found out that the reason for the term "Palais Royale" being applied to this particular necessaire and others of its genre is that its primary form of decoration and the primary material for its contents is mother-of-pearl. Apparently, the street called "Palais Royale" in Paris was in the early through mid-19th century known for the quality of the mother-of-pearl work it produced.

The necessaire which can be seen in Photograph No. 1 is oval in shape, about 6½ inches long and about 4¾ inches wide. The entire top is composed of a single piece of mother-of-pearl which has been engraved, the engraving then having been filled with either gilding or gold leaf. The body of the necessaire is ormolu, and the entire necessaire rests on a pierced foot which extends around the base. Photograph No. 2 provides a detail of the top of the necessaire. The engraving has been beautifully done and is very ornamental without detracting from the beauty of the large piece of mother-of-pearl which basically comprises the top.

In Photograph No. 3, the necessaire can be seen in its open position. The top itself is fitted with a velvet cushion, and the lifting tray is similarly covered in velvet and fitted for the various implements. The implements themselves can be seen in the detail on Photograph No. 4. Each of them uses mother-of-pearl as the primary decorative element. On three of them — the needle case, the awl and the thimble — a small gold and enamel inlay can be seen. This, I know, is characteristic of this kind of mother-of-pearl work, but I have not yet been to determine whether it is characteristic of a particular maker. The scissors are particularly interesting, with the



Photograph Number 3



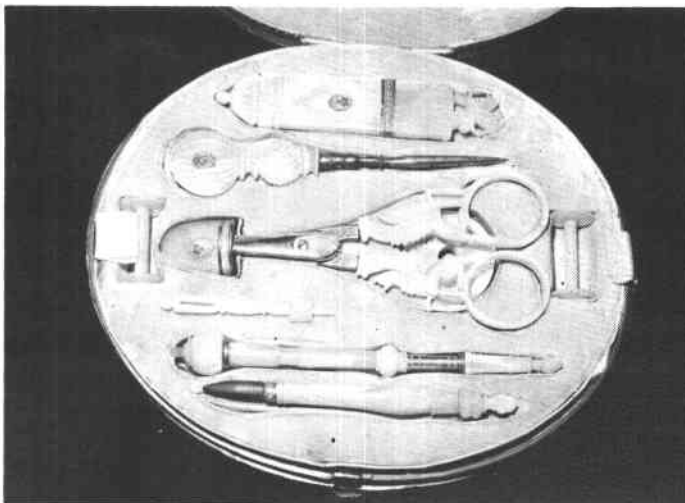
Photograph Number 5

handles entirely shaped out of mother-of-pearl in the form of griffins with their tails extended to make the handles. Fortunately, despite their existence for some 130 or so years, they have never been broken, and I would hazard a guess that they were not meant to be nor were they ever used on a functional basis.

As a sidelight, I might point out here that I feel it particularly fortunate that in this case, the necessaire arrived at my home with all of the pieces present and intact. It has been my experience on two separate occasions that I have viewed a necessaire in the auction room a week or two before the actual auction and have placed a bid because of its beauty and because all of the original implements were present and intact. On two occasions when, my bid having been successful, the necessaires arrived at my home, I found to my dismay that implements were missing. In both cases, these were thimbles and scissors. Without going into the moral aspects of this happening, I have been in communication with some of the auction houses in London and have asked them to institute procedures which will prevent this kind of thing from happening. In particular, I have recommended that they cover the lifting trays of necessaires when they are on exhibition with a strong, clear plastic (in the United States we call it "Saran") which will allow viewing, but which will not allow small implements to be readily taken from the lifting tray.

Photograph No. 5 shows the necessaire with the lifting tray removed and the musical mechanism exposed. The mechanism is a reasonably conventional, early, solid-comb movement, exceptionally well pinned, and has the usual tune change mechanism and stop mechanism. The actuating buttons can best be seen on Photograph No. 2 and consist of two small mother-of-pearl buttons in the shape of flower petals held to the actuating levers by a blued screw.

Photograph No. 6 shows a detail of the mechanism. Interesting in particular is the association of the early form of geneva lock with the solid comb. The solid comb itself is obviously of early vintage — the teeth are exceptionally long and appear to have been hand-cut. The comb has been cut out of a single piece of thick tool steel and the tuning weights are integral to the teeth. There is one small number on the brass bedplate, but there are no other identification marks, and I have been unable to determine who might have made this

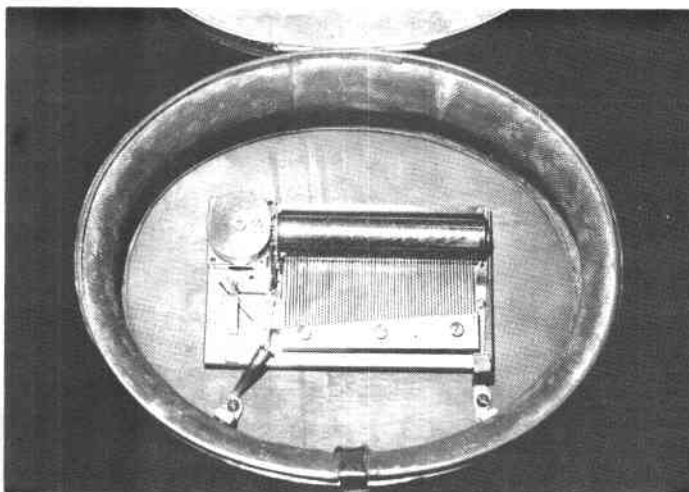


Photograph Number 4

particular movement.

I have tried to determine by inspection whether this musical movement was in fact part of the original manufacture of the necessaire. As far as I can tell, it was. The actuating levers have been specially designed and cast for this purpose. The movement itself appears contemporary with the necessaire, the actuating buttons are part of the overall design, and the general feel is that of contemporary manufacture. I am puzzled, however, by the fact that there is no cover over the movement and that with the lifting tray removed, it represents a somewhat unfinished appearance. There are some very small holes around the extreme upper rim of the body of the necessaire, and I suppose it is possible that they were used to fasten a kind of cover, perhaps made of cloth, which might have extended underneath the lifting tray. It is also possible, I should think, that they were originally used to hold the lifting tray in place – that in fact it was not a lifting tray at all. This would mean that the musical movement was not intended to be viewed and would account for the unfinished appearance of the space below the lifting tray.

In any case, perhaps one of the other readers may be able to help us out on this. I would be very interested in knowing if anyone knows of similar necessaires or of other items which combined function with music and were products of the “Palais Royale”.



Photograph Number 6



WHO WAS GRANNIE PETTINGER?

This is her photograph and apparently she is a late Victorian lady who played an organette in the streets of some large city – but who was she, and what was the special story about her which resulted in a set of sixteen Magic Lantern slides being made depicting a sequence of incidents in which the lady and her organette are prominently features?

The slides are professionally made and titled simply "Grannie Pettinger". They have recently come into my possession and I should like to know a little more about this rather pathetic old lady.
Can anyone help please?

A cry for help from Member D. Gregory

REPINNING WOODEN BARRELS

by J.P. Hall

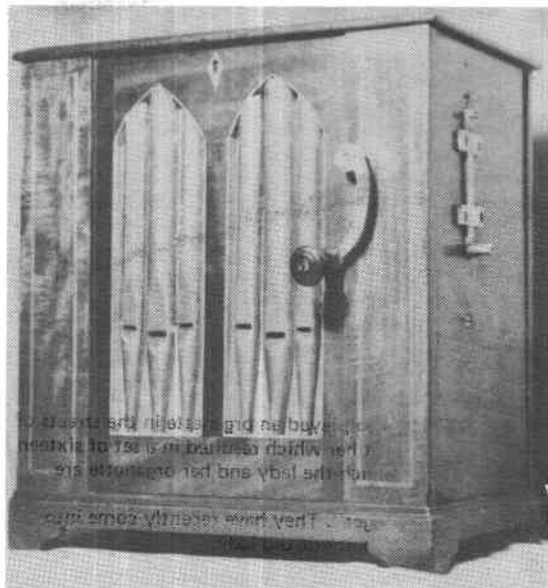
The serinette illustrated was in a poor state when sent to me for repair. The bellows and feeders needed recovering, the soundboard needed overhauling, pallets and new springs, new sticker rods required, and the instrument had no pipework. Many pins and bridges on the wooden barrel were either missing or broken, and cracks were apparent on the corners of some of the existing bridges, so it was decided to repin the whole barrel.

Serinettes, Church and Chamber barrel pipe organs, have pins and bridges of brass. Fair organs with barrels, and barrel pianos tend to have pins and bridges made of steel. Flat section brass wire was required for the serinette, this can be purchased from some wire merchants, or one can roll round wire through rollers, alternatively one can use staples similar to which are used to bind large cardboard boxes together. These staples are of steel and can be got either bright or bronze coated, (in different sizes for stapling machines) – please do not use nails or panel pins, which are not flat section.

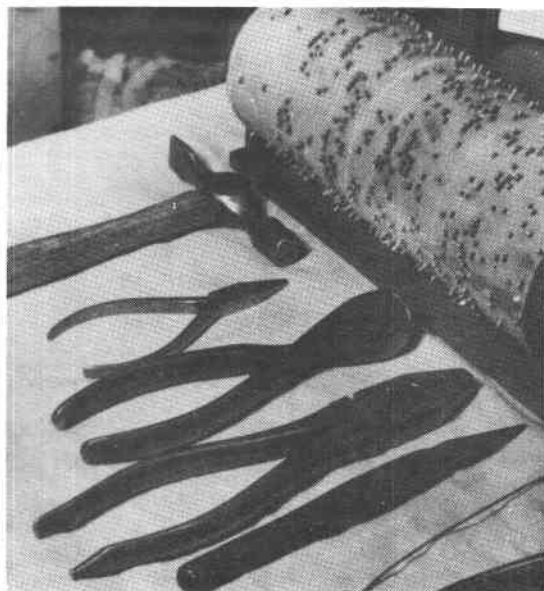
The repinning is a tedious process, the tools required are:— Fine pointed pliers for probing into the wooden barrel to withdraw broken pins, also for bending the wire at right angles when making bridges, and also for holding the wire whilst tapping into

place. Cutting pliers, for cutting the wire to length. Light weight hammer for tapping in the pins, and bridges. Pointed knife for probing broken pins, and for lining up and separating bridges.

The barrel was originally pinned with two thicknesses of wire, so where a thick pin was needed, I simply doubled the wire over on itself and squeezed it up tight like a cotter pin, before hammering into place. Many pins were slack because of sideways play along the grain of the wood, due to moving the barrel without the backfall beam holding the key triggers, being in the “up” position. It is a good idea to make the legs on the replacement pins and bridges an eighth of an inch longer, so they are quite firm when driven into the wood. The method I use, is to first withdraw a good pin from the barrel as a



The Serinette



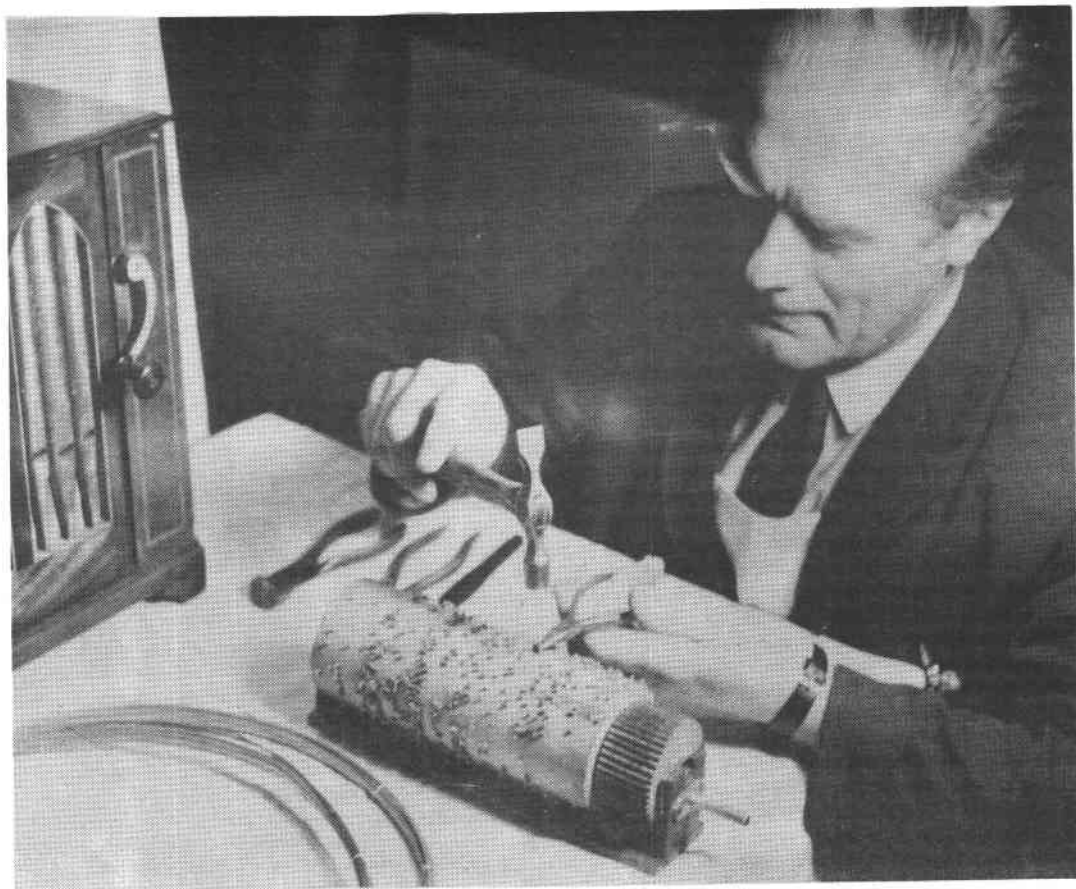
Tools required

pattern, and then for a start, proceed to cut say a hundred – slightly longer. I like to cut the wire at an angle, so one has a point in which to start the pin into the wood. When cutting the legs of a staple or bridge, I find it is better to cut the angle of both legs the same way, if one cuts the angle opposite, the staple tends to twist whilst being driven in.

If the pins protrude from the barrel, say one quarter of an inch, a depth gauge can be made from a piece of wood $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 6" long. Place the pin in position, hammer in part of the way, place gauge alongside it and drive the pin in level with the top of the gauge. Where there is a cluster of pins together, one can level off from adjacent pins quite easily. When one starts repinning, it is a matter of preference whether you start at one end, and work along the barrel or round it, – I prefer to go round it. Large barrels should be taken off their carriage support, but smaller barrels can be left on whilst being repinned.

Care should be taken, not to pin the barrel where there is a mark which has been crossed out because of a mistake in the original setting out. Where the bridge of a staple is missing, and the legs which go into the wood are left standing, one can examine carefully with a magnifying glass, the top of the leg from where the top piece has broken, to determine which direction the bridge went. Extra care should be taken where there are long staples, for the bridge can be supported by single pins underneath. Any doubtful places are best left until the barrel can be played and a decision made on whether to insert pins or bridges, and if bridges, what length. Some barrels are marked with a line drawn in ink where a bridge should be.

The work is very easy but monotonous. I tend to work at a barrel at home in the evening, having a tray with the necessary tools on my knee, and as I tire, watch the television for a while.



The last pin goes in

THE PASSING OF POLYPHON

by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

The affairs of Nicole Freres Limited, the collapse of which was related in my earlier article, were closely tied up with those of the Polyphon musical box in England. Nicole Freres had registered a company called the Polyphon & Regina Co. of 21, Ely Place, as early as 1896. Polyphon products were exported to London by several Leipzig wholesalers, among them Popper (who supplied the old Polyphon Supply Company) and H. Peters, with whom Henry Klein traded.

The Polyphon Supply Company was later replaced by The New Polyphon Supply Company as has already been told. When Musical Opinion injudiciously published a news item describing "Messrs. Zimmermann's latest Fortuna polyphones", the NPSC correctly pointed out that "Polyphon" was the registered trade mark applicable only to their own wares. As the twentieth century advanced, though, the NSPC also stocked Symphonions and then progressed into gramophones and their records.

The void left by the failure of Nicole Freres was thus filled, as regards the sales and distribution of disc musical boxes, by the NPSC. Henri Metert, trading as Metert & Co, started up at 28, Ely Place in the Spring of 1906 as repairer of musical boxes and Polyphons (the separate listing was his, not mine!) and phonographs.

In September, 1909, the NPSC of 2, Newman Street, London, W, was advertising the Symphonista electric piano, the most expensive model of which sold for all of £200. This costly device was 6½ ft. high and included mandoline and/or xylophone accompaniment. Seven models were available ranging from £125 upwards and one model featured a travelling panorama in the top. Henry Klein, back in the summer of 1898, had bought out Peter's UK distributorship for Leipzig-built electric pianos and since these included Popper instruments, it is likely that this was one of Popper's products although nowhere have I been able to substantiate this. The instruments were marked "Xylophone Corona". Perhaps Q. David Bowers would like to comment on this.

As the years passed, affairs in Europe worsened. Trade in Eastern Europe suffered from the Russian-Japanese war which, in 1908, was the cause of a stern warning by the Leipzig musical instrument trade association to its members to be cautious in its credit dealings with Odessa in particular. Things were more serious than this guarded advice suggested and trade between Germany and Russia, developed from the 1884 slump period almost solely by the mechanical instrument, began to decline rapidly. The effect on the mechanical musical instrument factories of Leipzig and Berlin was serious and when it is recalled that the Russian trade had built up to a large and

profitable segment with Russian imports almost equalling German musical instrument exports to the rest of the world, some measure of the effect can be realised.

The catalyst, as far as Germany was concerned, was the outbreak of the Great War. Trade with Russia never picked up and now the market was suppressed almost entirely.

Under the provisions of the Alien Properties Act of 1914, all German-owned companies in England were ordered to close and their properties confiscated. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, in some cases up to a decade before, German firms had formed British-registered limited-liability companies – and these were now carefully weeded out. Among the first to be closed down in the music trade was the New Polyphon Supply Company whose ownership, it was revealed, was entirely German. The two partners were Curt Herzog and Arthur Ficker, neither being naturalised Britons. The complete list of shareholders of the NPSC, published by the Company Register on September 27th, 1913, was as follows:

Paul A. Ahle, Dresden – 100
H. F. Henke, London – 160
S. Nathan, Berlin – 200
Marie Schlayaler, Berlin – 150
Gertrude Wollheim, Berlin – 645
G. Reicheldt, Dresden – 150
W. Wenderlich, Waldheim – 150
H. Ficker, Zschopau – 375
C. Bauer, Burkhardswald – 100
Pflugheil & Adler, Dresden – 130
R. Schumacher, Nuremberg – 100
E. A. Sarle, London – 100
G. Pannett, London – 750
T. Wreschner, Breslau – 231
C. Byford, Ipswich – 5827
Arthur Ficker, London – 7362
Curt Herzog, London – 1000
Behrens & Phillips, Cologne – 200
Hnat & Sohn, Zschopau – 150
A. Marie Merzog, London – 150
May Ficker, London – 250
C.E. Haas, London – 1139

Mayer & Haeler, London – 1000

Further shares were bought by Herzog (1888) and Ficker (1632) and E. Haas (275). The directors in the last list published were Herzog and Ficker only, but they had been supplemented in August 1914 by Louisa Merriden of Moon Street, London, W, and Louis Sterling of Clerkenwell Road, EC, neither of them being traceable as shareholders. If indeed shareholders they were, they must have owned but few shares since all those holding 100 and more were itemised in the records reproduced above. The lists were all signed by S.C. Dixon, Secretary.

And so the NPSC was forced to close. In its wake, though, a new company appeared – the British Polyphon Supply Company. I have been unable to trace its ownership.

The sequestration of German-owned companies had far-reaching effects. To an astonished British public, the Lord Chamberlain's list of companies entitled to hold and display the Royal Warrant published at the start of 1915 included, as pianoforte manufacturers to the King, the Queen and to Queen Alexandra, the names of Carl Bechstein Limited, and Bluthners – both wholly-German companies. An enraged public plus an outcry from the Pianoforte Manufacturers Association, forced the Lord Chamberlain to rescind the Bechstein citation on April 13th, and that of Bluthner on June 16th.

The winding-up of German firms took time. As late as September 1916, Carl Lindstrom was still competing against British-made gramophones in London and earning British money for the enemy. But slowly the complex legal position of the Trading with the Enemy Act (1914) and its Amendment Act (1916) were resolved and the companies and their properties went to the saleroom hammer. Bechsteins, for example, complete with Bechstein Hall in Wigmore Street and many pianos, went for a surprising £56,500 to Debenhams.

To return to the British Polyphon Supply Company, the exigencies of war-time and a reticence on the part of its customers to do business because of its part German connections, caused a sale to be arranged. In March of 1917, Keith, Prowse & Co. Limited, themselves manufacturers of autopianos and electric pianos, purchased the entire stock of automatic pianos, electric pianos, band organs, Polyphons, Symphonions and tunes for these from the BPSC of 2 and 3, Newman Street, London, W. Electric pianos were very popular in restaurants whose former small 'salon orchestras' had been depleted by the military call-up and who were discouraged from live performances by the levy of an entertainments tax. The business boomed for Keith, Prowse & Co. who had, very early on in the war, taken on the manufacture of perforated rolls for many of the electric pianos and orchestrions which had come into the country before 1914. This had not only kept these instruments going with fresh music, but it

effectively killed any demand for German products and it was moves such as this which, in the years of peace to come, slowed down the resurgence of German musical industry.

One of the last German companies to be folded was Kastners, then also called the Auto-Piano Co. This created a huge and somewhat amusing legal wrangle because a previous auction by the holders of the B Mortgage Debentures (the A.P.C.) had already appointed their own Receiver. The closure was eventually completed and a new British-owned company formed out of the ruins – The Triumph Auto-Piano Co. Ltd.

The full list of German-owned companies in the music trade to be closed under the Acts was as follows:

Fonotopia Ltd., 1, Broad Street Place, E.C. – manufacturers of gramophones
Carl Lindstrom (London) Ltd., 77, City Road, EC. – manufacturers of gramophones, records, etc.
Andres Bros. & Co. Ltd., 85, Chiswell Street, EC. – importers of gramophones and records
Sydney Selinger, 5, Paper Street, EC – agent for musical instruments etc.
A. Hartrodt, 9-10, St. Mary-at-Hill, EC. – shipping agent for instruments
Bergmann, Kleeman & Co., 7, Butler Street, EC. – manufacturers agents
Carl Bechstein, 32-40, Wigmore Street, W. – pianoforte manufacturers
Reifurt & Co., 30, City Road, EC. – pianoforte dealers
Kastner & Co. Ltd., 191, Regent Street, W. Dealers in player pianos
S. Kirchhausen, 100k, Blackstock Road, N. – piano hammer maker
New Polyphon Supply Company Ltd., 2, Newman Street, W. – dealers in gramophones, records and automatic instruments.
H. Uhlhorn & Co., 11, Christopher Street, EC – piano supplies
Hendrie & Co., 213, New City Road, Glasgow – gramophones and music dealers.

In the summer of 1918, the Midland Grand Hotel in London was the venue for the provisional meetings of the newly-formed Association of Gramophone & Musical Instrument Manufacturers and Wholesale Dealers. Among the many delegates and representatives of the gramophone trade in the British Isles was Mr. Robert Willis representing the British Polyphon Company. The business was now solely in the sphere of gramophones and records and the company was one of the many small fry in the talking machine world.

Here, for the moment at any rate, the trail peters out. Somewhere in the subsequent years, British Polyphon was absorbed into one of the big names in the gramophone world. So far, I have not traced where or when but the details can be of but academic interest.

An ill-judged development aided by the First Decade depression killed Nicole Freres in London. The Great War killed Polyphon in Leipzig and London.

FELLOW MEMBER

by Dick Baines

4. JOCELYN WALKER

Situated on the outskirts of Reigate, Surrey, one finds a Victorian Lodge which gives the impression of a miniature 'stately' rejoicing in the name of 'Little Birdhurst', the home of Jocelyn Walker. There is a superb garden at the back of the house with flowerbeds in profusion surrounding the well-kept lawns. Trees grow at strategic points and the whole is enclosed by brick walls mellowed with age. As we rested on the patio, sipping our drinks Jocelyn surveyed the view. "This wasn't much when we first came here," he informed me modestly, "but we worked on it."

Two stable blocks are situated to one side of the house and one of these has been converted into a Mechanical Music Room and aptly titled 'Tinkle Hall'. White shelves with terra-cotta backgrounds stretch across the entire length of one wall showing off the mellow cases of his collection, consisting largely of early, key-wind musical boxes. Against the far wall stands a fine Longman and Broderip barrel organ and next to that a very good example of a 19⁵/₈ upright Polyphon. Along the final wall are examples of disc machines with slots beneath to hold their discs, and two or three horn-gramophones. Apart from the mouthwatering exhibits there is a small workbench where minor repairs and cleaning are carried out; work which gives Jocelyn a great deal of pleasure.

Jocelyn is a musician and teacher of music, the musicianship he ably demonstrated to the Society when he played music by Handel originally composed for a musical clock, with Freddie Hill on the recorder, during the Winter Meeting of the Society in 1969. This was to illustrate Freddie Hill's paper on the Development of the English Barrel Organ (Vol. 4 page 246). As a child Jocelyn was fascinated by Mechanical Music, particularly the steam organs which urged on the "galloping horses" at the local fairs in Cornwall where he spent his childhood.

Owning, as he already did the barrel organ, his interest was rekindled by hearing a radio talk by Bruce Angrave which was illustrated by recordings of street organs and pianos. Soon after this he joined the Society and purchased his first musical box.

The barrel organ was built about 1795, it has three barrels, one mainly being of hymn tunes and chants, the other two of dance tunes and popular airs of the period. It is an eighteen key organ and has four stops. Magnificent is an overworked word but it is the only one I can use to describe the sound which issued forth



Jocelyn Walker

as Jocelyn played several tunes. Not only was the sound superb but the arrangement of the tunes on the barrel very fine indeed. Jocelyn demonstrated that it is possible to put a lot of expression into the playing of these organs when one knows the tune and can manipulate the stops and mark the phrases by subtle pauses in the turning of the handle. The organ was completely rebuilt by Mr. Hill a few years ago and is therefore in pristine condition.

It must have been obvious that I was showing too much enthusiasm for the organ because Jocelyn edged me over to the racks of cylinder boxes. He is interested in the early key-wind variety and considers himself lucky in his first purchase from a well-known establishment in the Portobello Road — a Nicole key-

wind, dated around 1840. With this as a beginning he has always kept up the standard and gone in for quality boxes and now boasts 'forty-plus' examples. After playing two tunes he replaced the first Nicole in its allotted place and took down another, this time a Nicole eight air, two comb forte-piano box of 1852. Again wonderful sounds filled the air, as with the organ not only with the fine tone but also the exquisite arrangement of the music. He then said with a further burst of enthusiasm, "Now, I must show you one of my favourites – but then they are all my favourites!" – a dilemma indeed. As box succeeded box, each with its distinctive personal sound so did the anecdotes of how they were acquired. Possibly the most interesting was the story of the F. Nicole Overture Box.

Once, thirsty and tired when on holiday in the north of England, he and his companion stopped for refreshment at a tea shop that also sold antiques on the side. The tea was mediocre and, on leaving they asked the assistant/waitress if there were any musical boxes for sale. After some deliberation she said she thought that there was one under the table. After much searching amongst a pile of rubbish a plain box came to light and it was obviously a 'find'. The shop-girl did not know the price and her employer was away but she took Jocelyn's address and promised to contact him, so he had to return to Reigate palpitating and empty-handed. However the story had a happy ending and now the box is one of the jewels of the Collection. The cylinder is 10½" long and 2¼" thick. The comb is in two sections and there is a total of two hundred teeth. The music is by Rossini and it sounds every bit as good as one would imagine. A photograph of this superb box can be seen in the The Music Box (Vol. 3 page 390). This is obviously his 'pride and joy'.

Another interesting box is an early key-wind with exposed controls. Recently it was given an overhaul and as the original spring was cracked it was replaced. Clearly scratched on the old spring could be seen a date – 1829. The box plays a set of quadrilles and a tune by Mozart. There is also a fine mandoline box, lever-wind, by Du Commun-Girod with a clear distinctive sound. Among the largest musical boxes is a good quality bell box with six engraved bells. This produced a pleasing sound but, to my mind, was not in the same class as the earlier examples. Jocelyn also has a small collection of early musical snuff-boxes, mostly with sectional combs. I should have spent more time admiring these but I was being seduced by the sight of the disc machines . . . and a magnetic smell of cooking! Towering above the table machines is the 19⁵/₈ upright Polyphon complete with its pediment. Here attention to detail was displayed by Jocelyn pointing out that he liked to play it with Victorian pennies! He used to buy these pennies from the boys at the school where he teaches at the good rate of exchange of two old pence (2d) per coin.

There is a fine example of a 15⁵/₈" table model

Olympia which he discovered in Bristol a few years ago. When purchased there were seventeen discs but he was able to purchase other examples from Ruth Bornand in America. This machine is in mint condition and has an excellent tone. It is illustrated in Vol 3 of The Music Box, pages 138–140. A machine of similar size is the single comb Regina, also a table model with a soft, sweet tone.

The first disc box he acquired was a 7½" Monopol found in a local junk shop in the distant days when it was still possible to find such places as 'junk shops'. The smallest machine is a 5½" hand wind box, also a Monopol. All the disc boxes had one thing in common I noticed all the discs were of bright quality. After considerable experiment Jocelyn discovered a method of renovating distressed discs by nickel-plating which he has described in an article in Vol. 4 page 373.

Possibly the most unusual item in the whole of the Walker Collection is a mechanical Christmas tree holder. This has been effectively used for the last two years since its acquisition. Mounted on a firm wooden base there is a hollow metal urn with three screws to grip the tree trunk. When a lever is moved at the side the tree revolves slowly to the tunes of 'Silent Night' and one other, played on a musical box hidden in a mound of imitation earth. The two tunes are pinned on a small, fat cylinder playing two-per-turn. It was made in Germany.

Time always passes annoyingly quickly when one is enjoying oneself and at last I had to tear myself away from Tinkle Hall and succumb to the temptations of the dinner table!

The feeling that came strongly across to me that evening was the tremendous pleasure Jocelyn obtains from his Collection. He really enjoys listening to his machines and sharing them with other people, and that, to my mind, is what collecting is all about. I think we should leave the final words to him, "... they are all my favourites!"

SONNET

by Jocelyn Walker

Within this simple box of polished wood,
Whose unassuming aspect we revere,
There slumbers patiently the mood,
The innocence of yester-year.
Such placid joys as did our forbears know,
Lie captive, yet unfettered by the chains
Which history's development and flow
Inevitably forges. But the gains
Of modern times are banished, silenced, hid,
While happy ghosts and fragrant hours unfold
For him who turns the key and lifts the lid,
To resurrect a glimpse of days of old.
For men who caught sweet romance on its way
Let us be thankful. Bid the music play!

NICOLE FRÈRES

SOME NEW DISCOVERIES

by Keith Harding

It is a commonplace among scientists that discoveries are often made as a by-product of something else. Because we handle large numbers of musical boxes, many of them not our own, it has been necessary to develop a concise system of cataloguing, and this has meant the writing down of distinctive features of every box, including any numbers marked upon it. At the same time, Patrick McCrossan started writing down in an exercise book the Serial Number, Gamme Number and programme of every Nicole Freres we saw.

It gradually became more apparent that there was a tie up between the Gamme Number and the Programme, and it was also found that the gamme number was not only to be read on the tune card, but was scratched on the left hand end of the cylinder and on the base tuning lead of the comb as well. This meant that if we had a musical box without a tune card, we had only to read the gamme number scratched on the movement, and then if we had had a box with that gamme number before, we knew the programme it played.

For ease of reference, all information was transferred to a card index, with programmes arranged by gamme number, and with cross reference to cards arranged by Serial Number. The Serial Number cards contain details of individual boxes and are slowly building up into something pretty like the missing factory records with Nicole Freres must have kept.

With growing excitement we have appealed to other collectors for help, in supplying us with information, and in return we have been able to help them by supplying programmes for many of their boxes. When we have been unable to help, we have filed the request under the appropriate gamme number in our card index, and when the programme turns up it is automatically sent out to the collector who wants it.

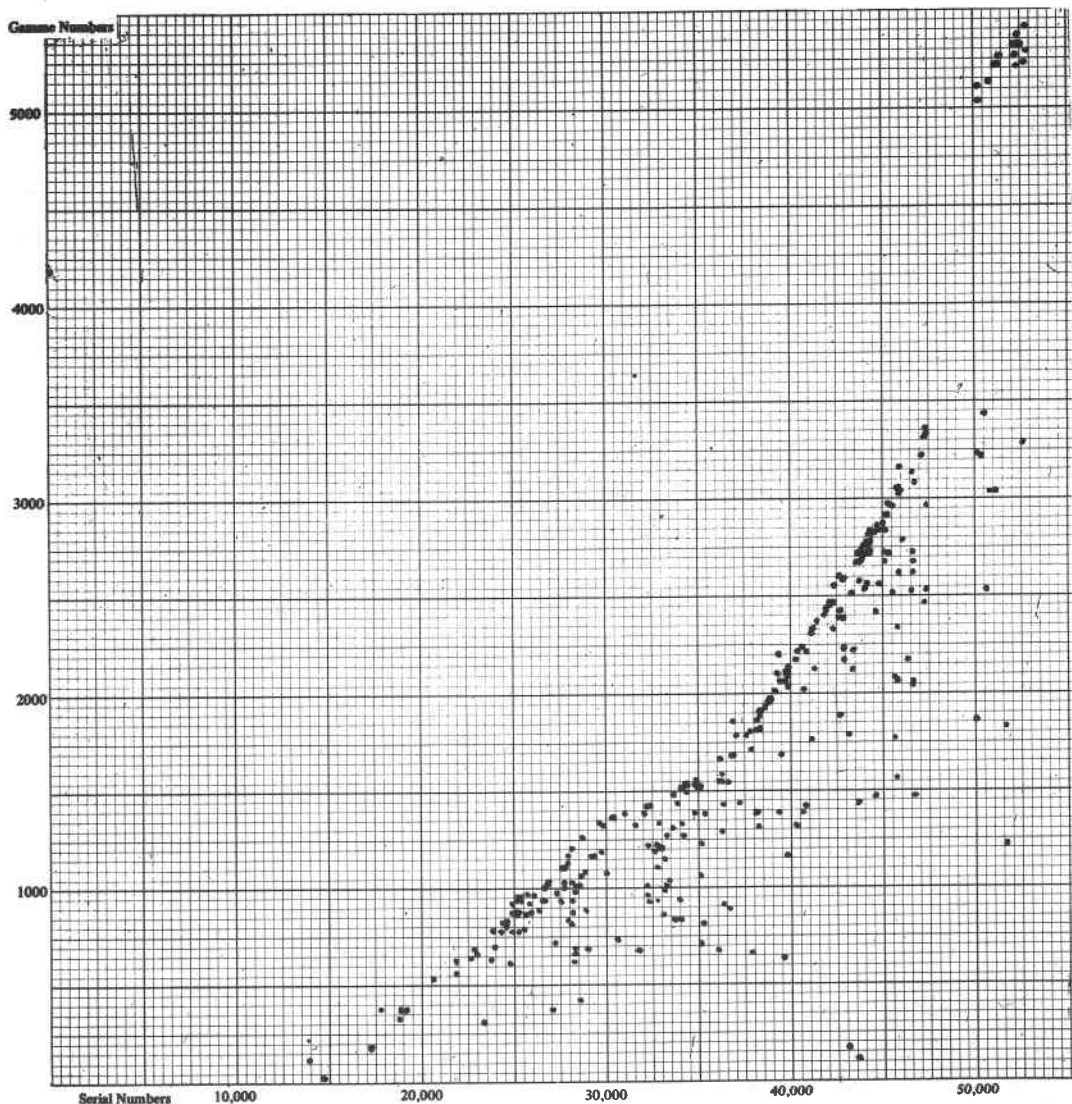
A number of boxes have turned up which can be positively dated in some way, such as by a presentation plaque. Thus the box with serial number 19015 is dated 29 May 1839, which supports Clark's dating of this Serial Number. However, many boxes have turned up with much earlier Serial Numbers, with combs marked F. Nicole and with the words Freres Nicole stamped on the bedplate. This supports Mr. C. de Vere Green's article in an earlier Journal which showed Clark's story of the joining forces of two brothers in 1839 to have been a myth. It also shows that F. Nicole stands not for Francois Nicole but for Freres Nicole.

More recently, as our records grew, we began to suspect certain patterns, as a result of which we have constructed a graph, in which we have plotted

gamme number on the vertical axis against serial number of the horizontal. The results are impressive. Beyond doubt, gamme numbers as well as serial numbers follow a chronological sequence, but that is not unexpected, nor is it surprising that at any one time there was a tendency for a high proportion of boxes produced to have played the latest programmes. Other results are much more startling.

We had already noticed that some of the earliest boxes, including my own grouped teeth 8554, are not marked with gamme numbers, and the graph indicates that before about the ten thousand series not only were boxes not marked with gamme numbers but that gamme numbers in the sense of programme numbers did not exist. It could be that all earlier cylinders were set to order.

The really exciting thing, however, is that there are no records of any boxes with Serial Numbers between 47,463 and 50,008, or any boxes with gamme numbers between 3,911 and 5,045. Research by Ord-Hume has disclosed that the firm of Nicole Freres was sold to one Charles Brun in 1885, and the date is about right to suggest that after his take over all new boxes were numbered from 50,000. There is also a complete change in the style of the boxes, which often are made up of parts identical in design to those used by other makers such as Paillard. After number 50,000, some boxes use old Nicole Freres gamme numbers, and some use a new series starting at 5,000. May I make the tentative suggestion that after the headquarters of the firm moved to Ely Place,



London, England, some cylinders were brought from Switzerland bearing the old gamme numbers, and that some, as Clark said, were set up in London, possibly by Metert, and that these are the ones with the 5,000 series gamme numbers?

What is now needed is a serious study of later Nicole Freres boxes to try and establish connection with other makers and to see if there is a physical difference between those with the earlier and later gamme numbers.

Another line of research will be the dating of programmes by the dates of composition of the tunes they contain. This will give the earliest possible dates for some of the gamme numbers and lead to the construction of a scale of Gamme Numbers by date,

as well as cross referencing with the Serial Numbers to produce a more accurate scale of dating by Serial Number. We can then produce more graphs of Serial Number and Gamme Number against date, and see what new results emerge from those.

Please help us in this task. We urgently appeal to collectors everywhere to send us the Serial Numbers, Gamme Numbers and Programmes of all the Nicole Freres boxes you have access to, and anything else about them you consider interesting, such as the length of the cylinder and the arrangement of the combs. Let us make this a real Society project, and on behalf of Collectors everywhere, we offer you our thanks.

Collecting in AMERICA

by Q. David Bowers

The other day a member of the MBSGB wrote to me and asked: "I plan to make a trip to the United States this summer. I have never been there before, and I wonder if you can give me some suggestions as to places to visit and the proper "etiquette" of collector-to-collector relationships in the United States, as compared to those in England."

This inquiry, plus the fact that I had found quite enjoyable the arranging of a similar trip for my Danish associate Claes Friberg last summer, prompted me to do some thinging . . . and hence this article.

In the pursuit of business and pleasure I have had the opportunity to visit a number of fine collections in England. The hospitality shown to me by Dr. and Mrs. de Vere Green, Arthur and Judy Ord-Hume, Frank Holland, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Evans, Graham and Jo Webb (in visits to their Portobello Road premises), C. H. Hart, Keith Harding and others will never be forgotten. As an American I can say that the warmth and hospitality given to me by the average British collector — and I like to think that other collectors I haven't met in England are just as friendly as the ones I have just mentioned — is remarkable. I only hope that should you visit America you will feel the same way about citizens here!

Whereas in England nearly everything is within a day's journey from London, America is far different geographically. In fact, America is a vast, vast land, and probably no single instrument dealer or collector has ever visited more than just a part of the many collections to be seen, heard, and enjoyed. The possibilities of "keeping busy" visiting collections here is almost unlimited. Your main problem will be to determine which ones.

If you have not visited America before then I consider it to be important to visit some points of geographical interest as well. The country is quite varied in this respect. Florida is as different from Oregon, and California is as different from New York as, for example, England is different from Egypt and Spain different from Denmark. Perhaps the two most popular natural attractions are Niagara Falls in New York State and the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Not to be missed if you possibly can help it are the inspiring peaks of the Rocky Mountains, the tall, sombre forests of the Pacific northwest, the deserts of the southwest, the lush palmetto Everglades swamp (with an astounding variety of wildlife), and the pastoral countryside of New England. A travel agent can be of great assistance to you in helping to piece your trip together from a logistics viewpoint. Not to be overlooked are special discount fares avail-

able to visiting Europeans (but, strangely, not available to Americans in their own country) which will enable you to travel around for half price or less.

Your most valuable asset in visiting collections will be a copy of the Musical Box Society International Directory. Published by the MBSGB's sister organization in America, the Directory lists the names, addresses, and collecting specialties of over a thousand different members in America. The guide is arranged in a very helpful manner — and by pursuing it you can determine whether the collection owner's main interest is in automata, fairground organs, reproducing pianos, or whatever. You can also determine the ease of seeing the collection as each member has submitted one of the following three declarations concerning the instruments he owns: "Viewing at any time," "viewing by appointment," or "viewing not possible". Copies of this dandy little directory are supposed to be for the exclusive use of MBS members, so I would be speaking out of turn here if I were to invite you to write for one. However, I know I am within the limits of propriety when I suggest that if you plan to visit the United States you may well want to invest in a membership (which includes receiving a copy of the Directory) in the MBS. Information concerning all of this is available from the secretary; Marguerite Fabel, 1765 East Sudan Circle, Greenville, Mississippi, 38701. It is



Hon. Sec. Reg. Waylett (far left) during his visit to America. He is listening to a home-made Coinola orchestrion at the home of Frank Rider, Wabash, Indiana.
Photo: Harvey Roehl.

customary to have a "sponsor" when joining the MBS, so this present sentence will serve as a notice to the effect that I would be happy to be your sponsor — just mention my name when writing to Mrs. Fabel for information!

No one person can collect everything — so as in England, collectors in America also tend to specialize. It is difficult to categorize collectors and collections — but for one rough division might be worth I can suggest the following: (1) collections devoted mainly to music boxes — the cylinder type, the disc type, or as is usually the case, a combination of both. (2) nickelodeon pianos and orchestrions. (3) dance organs and fairground organs. (4) reproducing pianos. Of course this listing is not all-inclusive. There are several fine collections specializing in field organettes, to cite just one speciality absent from the preceding enumeration.

Music Box Collections

In England the preferred word seems to be "musical" boxes with an "al" at the end of the term. In America the "music" box nomenclature is more often used. America had no home industry in the field of cylinder boxes. As a result American collections of these consist of instruments imported from European manufacturers, primarily those in Switzerland, over the years. Achieving widespread popularity years ago in America were the products of Mermod Freres of St. Croix, Switzerland. However, due to tariff

restrictions and shipping considerations it was the practice of Mermod to usually ship just the musical movement and mechanisms to America — and not the cases. The American distributor for the Mermod instruments added the movements to American-made cases. So, the instruments of this type you are apt to see in America will differ in case style from those you are accustomed to viewing in Britain. In my opinion some of the finest cylinder boxes ever made were produced by Mermod, so America is particularly fortunate in having been a major outlet for instruments of this manufacturer.

In addition to the Mermod instruments, products of Bremond, Paillard, Abrahams, and others were sold in large quantities here. These are apt to be encountered in all sizes, shapes, and degrees of quality. The cases for these latter manufacturers were made in Europe and are not apt to differ much from those normally encountered in British collections. Products of Nicole Freres, extremely popular with collectors in Britain (due to the basic quality and also due to emphasis on this particular make by such writers as John Clark), do not have their counterparts in the United States — not because the instruments are not desirable here, but because Nicole Freres instruments were originally distributed in America only in very small numbers compared to those of other makes. By way of contrast, Nicole Freres products were aggressively sold in England — and the firm even had a branch outlet in London.

Automata are enthusiastically collected here in America — but not to the extent that they are in England. Part of this is due to the lack of availability of specimens here. Some fine collections — the celebrated group assembled by Murtoigh Guinness being perhaps the most renowned — have been put together, but the primary source of these in recent years has been through dealers in Europe — not from automata originally sold in America years ago and found in recent times in antique shops and other such places. The same holds true for finely-crafted musical movements in snuff boxes, key-wind boxes, and so on.

The field of disc instruments is an active one in the United States. The Regina Music Box Company, in business in Rahway, New Jersey, from the early 1890's through to the 1920's, produced approximately 100,000 music boxes during its business career. Happily, thousands of these instruments survive today. Regina boxes are found most commonly in the 15½ inch disc diameter. Scarer are instruments with discs measuring approximately 11", 20¾", and 27" in size. Several other types were also made.

As most readers undoubtedly know, the Regina Music Box Company was the American offshoot of Leipzig, Germany's gigantic Polyphon Musikwerke. Regina products, especially those made prior to 1900, were often inspired by Polyphon instruments of the same era. During the early 20th century Regina branched out with its own distinctive series of instruments — with the result that the ornate cabinetry and certain other Regina features of the 1900-1921 period have no direct counterparts with Polyphon boxes.

Perhaps the most spectacular of all Regina music boxes are the disc changing or "auto-change" (as you would say in England) pieces. These store discs in a toast-rack fashion and play them in sequence automatically. Regina disc-changers were made in three disc sizes: 15½", 20¾", and 27". 20¾" instruments are the rarest.

The English visitor to an American collection is apt to see one or more Regina instruments. Certainly Regina instruments are much more plentiful here than are products of the other two members of the "big three" in the industry: Polyphon and Symphonion. The population of these other two makes in America is increasing, however, with avid purchases from English and other European dealers by American collectors.

Apropos of this latter subject I might mention that ten years ago America was considered to be THE market for music boxes. Prices were higher here than anywhere else in the world — and virtually every dealer in Europe considered Americans to be his best customers. During the past several years the trend has reversed somewhat. It is safe to say that automaton figures bring higher prices in London salerooms than they do in America. The same is true of musical clocks and watches and certain early cylinder music boxes — particularly those of especially fine craftsmanship. A good market for disc music boxes is also developing

in England and in continental Europe. At the Mekanisk Musik Museum located in Denmark we do a great business selling disc and cylinder music boxes to European collectors. Offhand you might think that this is only natural — it might seem logical that nearby customers would buy the most. However, it is poignant to observe that quite a few of these sales have been with instruments located in America and shipped from there to Europe!

The collecting of music boxes (indeed, the collecting of all types of automatic musical instruments) is truly becoming international. Instruments are being shipped across international borders regularly. Some of this is due to the rise in values of the instruments themselves. Ten years ago when a very large and impressive Regina or Polyphon music box might have been worth, say 100 Pounds then there were few collectors who would pay another 100 Pounds to ship it thousands of miles from America to England or vice versa. Now that the same instrument might be worth 1,000 Pounds the idea of paying an additional 100 Pounds for freight is not proportionately significant. No longer will a collector say "I want to find one locally." Instead shopping for instruments is done on a world-wide basis.

The English visitor to America will possibly see some other scarce types of American music boxes — including the uniquely-conceived Capital "cuff" boxes (made in three different sizes), and disc boxes bearing such names as Criterion, Olympia, Monarch, and Triumph. These last-named instruments are rare, however. Stella and Mira disc-type boxes, both types of which are renowned for their magnificent tonal quality — were made in Switzerland and sold in large numbers in America. Just the movements of these were usually imported. The cases were built here in America for the most part — so the British collector will have the opportunity of seeing some case styles and designs not familiar to him.

Bellm's Cars and Music of Yesterday museum in Sarasota, Florida has a particularly outstanding collection of disc boxes of all types. If you have the time, the museum is worth a visit just to see these — not to mention the hundreds of other items on display. I might mention at this point that I am conscientiously refraining from mentioning the names of the many, many fine collections in America — as the Musical Box Society Directory will do a better job in that regard that I possibly could in this small amount of space. The few names I do mention are simply in context with other comments — and are not necessarily intended to be a list of recommendations over other collections.

Nickelodeons, Orchestrions, and Related Instruments

In America, coin-operated instruments are apt to be called 'nickelodeons' by collectors and the general public as well. This term is a slang one — and arises from a popular tune entitled "Music, Music, Music"

which has as its opening line: "Put another nickel in — in the nickelodeon". The popular and charming term has no more basis in history than would a term such as "shillingodeon" (if someone were to make up such a nonsense word and incorporate it into a British song!).

The general category of nickelodeons and orchestrions also includes other types of related instruments — such as violin players, the curious Encore Banjo, and so on.

More so than in England, coin-operated pianos and orchestrions were a way of life in America. From about 1900 through 1930 quite a few different firms produced tens of thousands of instruments for use in restaurants, hotels, bordellos, and other popular public places. Prominent among these manufacturers were

two firms: the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of North Tonawanda, New York, and the J.P. Seeburg Piano Company of Chicago, Illinois. Curiously enough, both of these companies still survive today — although their product lines are completely different (and consist of automatic phonographs, electronic equipment, and so on).

Coin-operated American pianos are much different from their European counterparts. The products of Seeburg, Wurlitzer, Link, Operators Piano Company, Marquette, and so on resemble only slightly their European cousins made by Hupfeld, Philipps, Weber, and others.

The exterior of a typical American nickelodeon or orchestrion is apt to be decorated by opalescent glass illuminated from within. The more ornate the



STYLE "H"—"Solo Orchestrion"

better, or so the original manufacturers must have thought — for they tried to outdo each other in the number of carvings, light bulbs, art glass panels, and other accoutrements with which these are festooned. Perhaps the ultimate product of all is the Seeburg Style H orchestration — an instrument decorated with two carved statues (nicknamed "Strength" and "Beauty") three hanging art glass lamp shades, four large art glass front panels (each containing seemingly countless individual pieces of glass), and several other smaller art glass panels! Of the estimated several hundred Seeburg H orchestrions originally made, about two dozen exist — so chances are fairly good that you will have a chance to see and hear one sometime on your United States trip.

The musical arrangements of American nickelodeons and orchestrions are different from their European counterparts. Expression and true musical ability, a prime consideration of such manufacturers as Hupfeld in Germany, was only a secondary consideration of the American makers. Expression capabilities of most American instruments are limited to loud and soft. This is not to disparage American-made instruments in the slightest — for there is something snappy about hearing the razz-ma-tazz toe-tapping tunes turned out by a Cremona, Seeburg, or Cionola. Perhaps such instruments are really made for fun rather than for serious music — and serious music should be saved for more distinguished-appearing instruments (such as reproducing pianos)! In any event American nickelodeons and orchestrions come in a wide variety and are quite fascinating. They have a charm all of their own. Quite a few collectors have made a specialty of these. The normal way is to collect them by different roll types. The basic American coin piano roll is what is called an "A" roll — a ten tune (usually) roll containing loud and soft expression and provision for one extra instrument in addition to the piano — usually a xylophone or a rank of pipes. Most American collections incorporate at least one "A" roll instrument — usually of Seeburg, Nelson-Wiggen, Western Electric, or Coinola make.

A bit larger are instruments using orchestrated rolls. In the Seeburg line many instruments using "G" rolls were made — including cabinet-style (without keyboard) and tall key-board-type pieces. Most of these are quite ornate and are ornamented with art glass. The most abundant American orchestration in terms of surviving examples is the spritely Seeburg Model KT which is housed in a trim little cabinet ornamented by an American eagle done in art glass. On the interior a Seeburg KT contains a piano, mandolin attachment, xylophone, triangle, tambourine, and castanettes. The largest Seeburg orchestrions are those using the type "H" roll — the aforementioned Seeburg Style H orchestration being the main variety utilizing this style.

Orchestrions of the "Coinola" make, produced by the Operators Piano Company of Chicago, are prized by collectors. Coinola instruments have many per-

cussion effects — usually including bass drum, drum, kettle drum effect, woodblock, tambourine, triangle and cymbal. The main appeal of Coinola orchestrions, however, lies in the fact that they use incorporate an extra instrument arranged to play solo — a xylophone or a rank of pipes, of 24-note compass. Whereas almost all large European orchestrions have solo sections as a matter of course, the same is not true of large American orchestrions. Solo sections are found in Coinola orchestrions, Seeburg orchestrions using the style "H" roll, and in Cremona instruments (manufactured by the Marquette Piano Company) which use a type "M" roll. Other American orchestrions for the most part lack a solo feature.

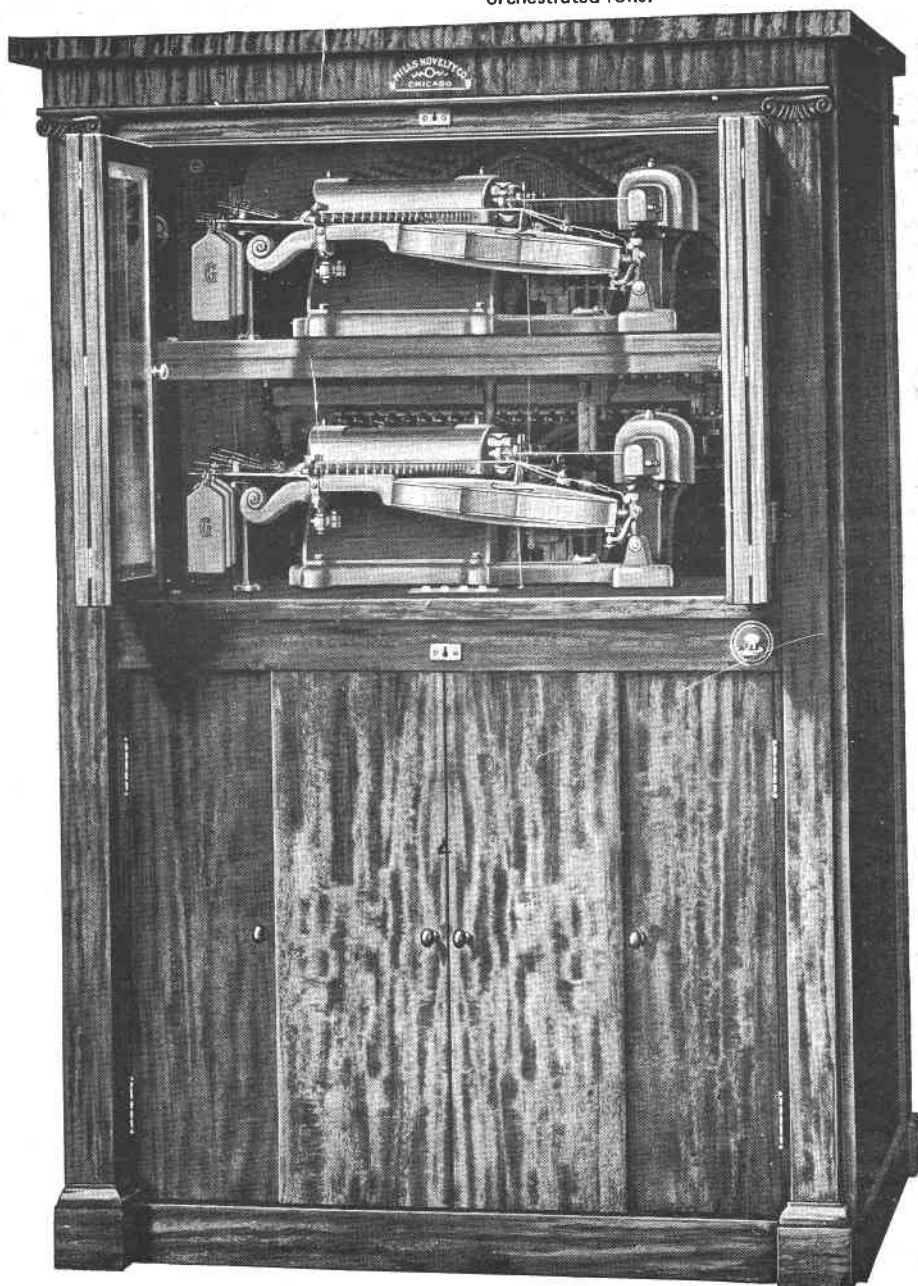
The recutting of music rolls has become an active industry in America in recent years. Old time rolls are being recut by Ed Freyer of Flemington, New Jersey, by John Malone of Turlock, California, by Carl Burton of El Monte, California, and by several others. The result is that the collector possessing an American nickelodeon is able to acquire a large variety of music rolls at a low cost. The same recutting activity is prevalent in the field of player pianos, reproducing pianos, and band organs I might add.

Several other types of instrument which are coin-operated and which use paper rolls are usually collected under the "nickelodeon" heading. The Encore banjo was made in limited numbers around the turn of the 20th century. An uniquely American instrument, the Encore plays four strings on a real banjo by means of tiny mechanical pickers. The effect is really quite well done — and hearing one of these is a "must" on your trip to this country.

There were two successful type of violin players marketed worldwide during the early 20th century. The Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Violina, made in Germany to the extent of about 10,000 instruments (estimated), may be the subject of a future article by me for this publication (if I can get all of my notes in order!). The other contender is the Mills Violano-Virtuoso, an electromagnetically-operated instrument made to the extent of about 4,500 specimens by the Mills Novelty Company of Chicago, Illinois. The Violano-Virtuoso is one of the commonest of all American-made nickelodeon-type instruments — a rather fortunate situation for the Violano is quite interesting, and it would be sad to contemplate the situation if they were exceedingly rare. As a side note I might mention that the Phonoliszt-Violina, although it was made in greater numbers than the Violano-Virtuoso, is quite rare today — the reason being that the Phonoliszt-Violina incorporates very sophisticated mechanisms which required constant servicing and attention when the instruments were new. Once the servicing ended the instruments stopped playing — and then were scrapped or met other fates. On the other hand, the electromagnetically-operated Violano-Virtuoso kept playing, and playing, and playing once repairs to them stopped. They might not have played well but at least they made some noise!

So, the survival rate of the Violano is much higher. Hundreds of instruments exist today in the United States, and any collector caring to part with the requisite sum needed to buy one can own one. Relevant to the durability of these instruments is the fact that most which survive in collections today have the original electrical cables and mechanisms still intact.

The Violano-Virtuoso were built in two main styles—the one-violin model commonly known as the “single Mills” and the far rarer two-violin model known as the “double Mills”. Even far rarer still (only two or three survive) is the curious Violano Orchestra, an ensemble of percussion instruments made to add to the Violano-Virtuoso and to be played from its own special orchestrated rolls.



The Violano-Virtuoso was once popular in England. In recent years two large hoards (numbering nearly two dozen instruments in each instance) have turned up in England. One was found by Frank Holland of the British Piano Museum. The other hoard was located in England by Robert Johnson, an American collector from Georgia, and the individual instruments were shipped back to their country of origin.

Really immense orchestrions such as were once made by Hupfeld, Philipps, and Weber were never made in America. The German manufacturers, however, were very aggressive in promoting their products — and many were originally sold here. In addition to instruments surviving from the “good old days”, American collectors have acquired a number of these magnificent pieces from European sources in recent years. The result is that some superb examples can be seen and for large orchestrions — so when you check your MBS Directory you will be able to see several possibilities for visiting collections with these. Hearing a huge Weber or Hupfeld orchestrion is an unforgettable experience.

Dance Organs and Fairground Organs

Fairground organs, or “band organs” as they are commonly referred to in America, were made here by a number of different manufacturers. Paramount among these was the firm of Rudolph Wurlitzer. Products of this company were made in many sizes ranging from compact instruments designed for “kiddie shows” to large instruments for use in skating rinks. The size of American-made organs is insignificant, however, in comparison with the gigantic products of Gavioli, Bruder, and other European manufacturers.

During the past 10 to 15 years the collecting of fairground organs and dance hall organs has “caught on” in a big way with American collectors. The primary source for these has been Europe. Hundreds of instruments have been imported into the United States from Belgium, Holland, and other continental European countries. The result is that some truly superb instruments can be found here today. Perhaps most stunning of all are the ornately-decorated dance hall organs made by the firm of Theofiel Mortier, of Antwerp, Belgium. A number of these instruments measure over 20 feet wide and over 15 feet high! For what one guess is worth I might estimate that perhaps 200 to 400 large fairground organs and dance hall organs are in America today. A number of years ago I purchased from Mr. Arthur Bursens, well-known dance organ builder of Antwerp, nearly forty instruments in one group. I was rather worried about how well these would sell here in America — and to help things out I had a printer prepare an elaborate brochure especially concerning these instruments. However, all the printer did was to prepare it — he never did have a chance to print it for all of the instruments were sold before this was necessary!

Reproducing Pianos

The collecting of reproducing pianos is a speciality in itself. An organization, the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Association (AMICA) has become active in recent years and specializes in this field. There are now over 600 members in this group! Reproducing pianos were once sold in enormous quantities in America. Three main types were produced: The Ampico, Duo-Art, and Welte. The Ampico and Duo-Art were native American products, Welte instruments, first developed in Germany by M. Welte & Sons, were produced in America by a branch of that firm.

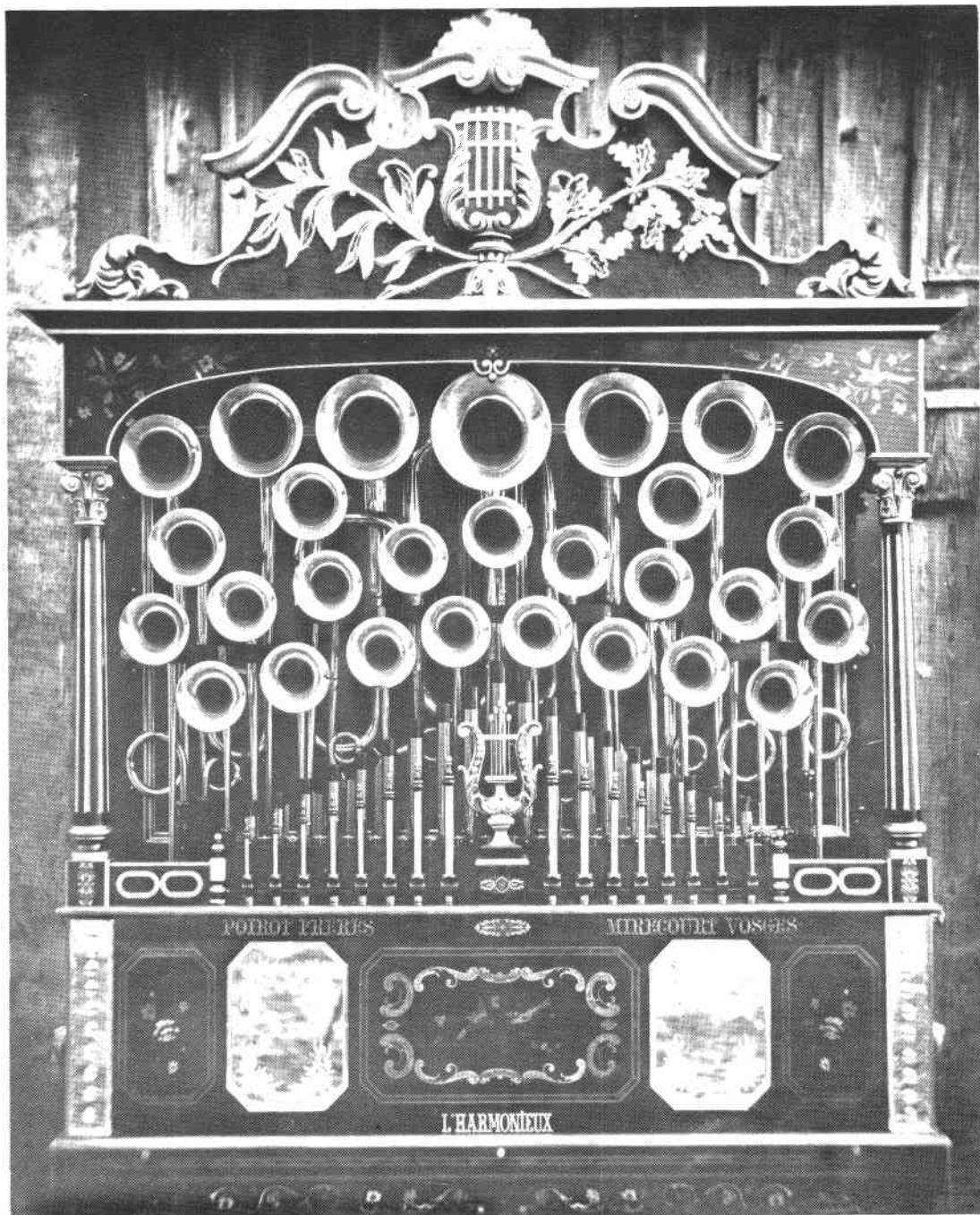
Duo-Art pianos were produced in one main format. Ampico instruments were produced in two main roll types: the model A and model B styles. Welte reproducing pianos were produced in several different variations — including the “red Welte”, “green Welte”, and the Welte Licensee.

Perhaps more than as collectors of other instruments, collectors who specialize in reproducing pianos tend to build large libraries of rolls. Emphasis tends to be on the musical productions recorded on the rolls rather than on the instruments themselves. Countless hours of fun and fascination are spent listening to concerts produced by these beautiful instruments.

Somewhat allied to reproducing pianos are their predecessors, player pianos. Few collectors have made a speciality of player pianos per se. Rather, the purchase of a player piano usually inspires a collector to go onto to other things — perhaps a reproducing piano if he is inclined towards the serious side of music, or perhaps a nickelodeon if he likes tunes in a more lively vein. Player pianos are quite common and are quite popular in American collections — and most enthusiasts have at least one specimen on hand — usually with an abundant supply of ORS rolls to go with it.

In Conclusion

It is my hope that you will visit America someday. I have had the privilege of visiting many fine collections in England, Germany and other countries around the world — and I believe it is truthful to say that the enthusiasm for the instruments and their history transcends all international barriers. I am sure you will feel “right at home” in the living room of an American collector in New York or California — thousands of miles away from where you are right now. Most collectors do not mind at all if you bring along and use a camera or a tape recorder — indeed, they are flattered by this extra attention. Let me take this space here to say an informal “thank you” for the hospitality that you in Britain have shown to me over the years. I am speaking for 1,000 to 2,000 collectors here in America (the combined membership of the MBS and of AMICA) when I bid you a hearty welcome to see our country. And, if I can do anything to help you with your planning I am at your service!



This picture of a really fine Trumpet Organ by Poirot is printed by kind permission of Alain Vian of Paris. He has kindly lent many photographs to Graham Webb personally for possible use in his forthcoming picture book: This is one of them.

Poirot Freres, writes Graham Webb, was founded in the last quarter of the 18th century by Nicolas Poirot at Mirecourt, Vosges, France (much later Thibouville-Lamy were to have a factory there). Trumpet barrel organs are believed to have been the first type of organ made expressly for use in fairgrounds.

A MORTIER CONCERT ORGAN

by Roger Burville

I have a Mortier 101 key organ which we take round to various rallies during the season. We use the organ to collect money for charity and are most proud of the fact that so far the organ has been responsible for obtaining over £24,000 in this way. We have a crew of volunteer helpers.

Theophil Mortier started business in 1890, not as an organ builder but as the owner of a cafe who also ran a rental service for barrel operated organs. He had a keen business sense, but perhaps his greatest asset was his gift for good public relations. Mortier obtained an organ from Gavioli of Paris for his cafe. This was soon sold, and he ordered another one. This kind of business was to become a profitable sideline for Mortier during his early years of business, in fact it was so good that he set up his own organ repair workshop, and by 1908 he had ten men working there.

Mortier had a daughter who was interested in organs and he arranged with Gavioli for her to go to Paris to study the art of arranging music. There was a strict understanding between Gavioli and Mortier that no new organs were to be built in the Mortier workshop. Apparently the agreement was disregarded almost immediately by Mortier who was soon building his first organ to fill a customer's order. Gavioli, not at all pleased with this flagrant breach of agreement, commenced legal proceedings, based on a claim that Mortier was infringing Gavioli patents. This in spite of the fact that many organ builders were doing just that, with no reaction from Gavioli. It is probable that the valuable Belgian outlet represented by Mortier was considered important by Gavioli. The result of the prolonged battle in the courts was that Mortier was ordered to purchase from Gavioli twelve organs per year. The ingenious Mortier countered this order by ordering, not the twelve minimum he was bound to do, but so many organs that it was impossible for Gavioli to supply them all. Gavioli admitted defeat and Mortier was allowed to make his own organs. It is as well for the organ world that he was, since it is commonly held by experts that Mortier made the finest organs of his period, in particular his large organs are highly praised.

By 1918 the Mortier factory in Antwerp was producing a new organ every two or three weeks, and by 1920 it employed eighty craftsmen. The various

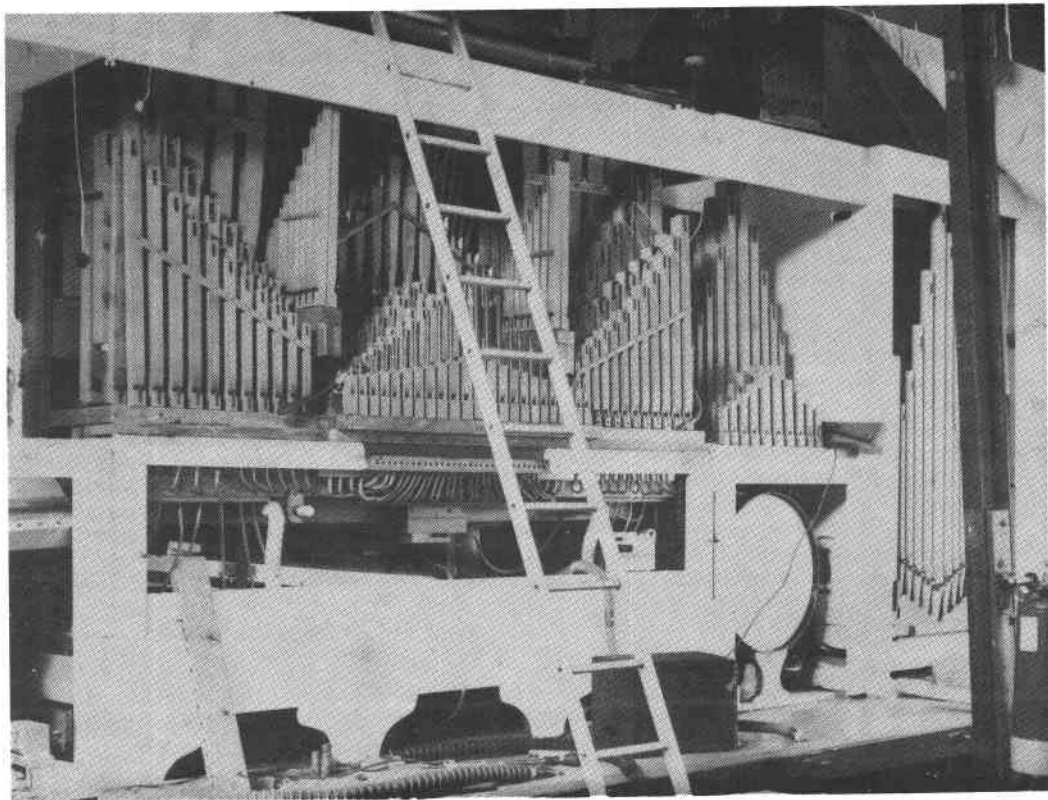
departments had at their heads men such as Paul Daelemans, who led the team making the organ fronts; Gailliaume Bax, together with his two sons Julius and Louis, on pipe design, with Julius Bax also composing; Joseph van Dermueren on the making of music books, and Josef van Loveren on pipe making. There were many more of course but these men, well known in their own right, stand out as being representative. In particular the name Bax is famous for the pipe arrangements named after it such as the Baxophone.

My own 101 key Mortier organ, serial number — 1023, was built in the late 1920s for a dance hall at Kluisberg near Antwerp. We do not know much about its early history, but the dance hall it was built for could either have been a permanent building or possibly a travelling dance hall, of which there were many in Europe, often using an organ of this size. An organ would be parked and set-up, a floor laid before it, a huge tent over the lot and the dance was on.

Later the organ was owned by the famous Amsterdam organ builder G. Perlee, who owned it for a number of years, using it for large events around Holland. When David Barlow, who was the first English owner of the organ, and a good friend of Mr. Perlee, approached him to buy it, Mr. Perlee was so fond of it that it took several years for him to decide to sell it and agree a price. Finally David Barlow, who has since died, bought the instrument and it came to England in early 1962.

I first saw the organ on the Good Friday of that year, where I had been invited by David to hear it. Since it was Good Friday David had decided only to play a book or so, in case the local vicar became annoyed. The machine was, and still is at the Wingham Engineering Works. Several hours later, after hearing all of the books at least twice, we went home to a very late lunch. Nothing had been heard from the vicar! In any case we must assume that he is used to organ music.

The next step was to build a trailer large enough to contain the organ, complete with front. The



A view of part of the pipework

smallest measurements had to be 28 feet long, 14 feet 3 inches high and 7 feet 6 inches deep. Even then we had to arrange the trailer roof so that it could fold back to allow the rest of the top of the proscenium to be put in position. When the work was done we certainly had a beautiful machine, ready to go anywhere (except under low bridges). We had fitted electric motors and built in a small steam engine to provide power for the bellows and the key frame. When we weighed the complete instrument last year it weighed well over 8 tons without the top part of the front. With the work completed we went on the road and started to earn money for charity. This was David's idea, he wanted a toy, but not just for himself.

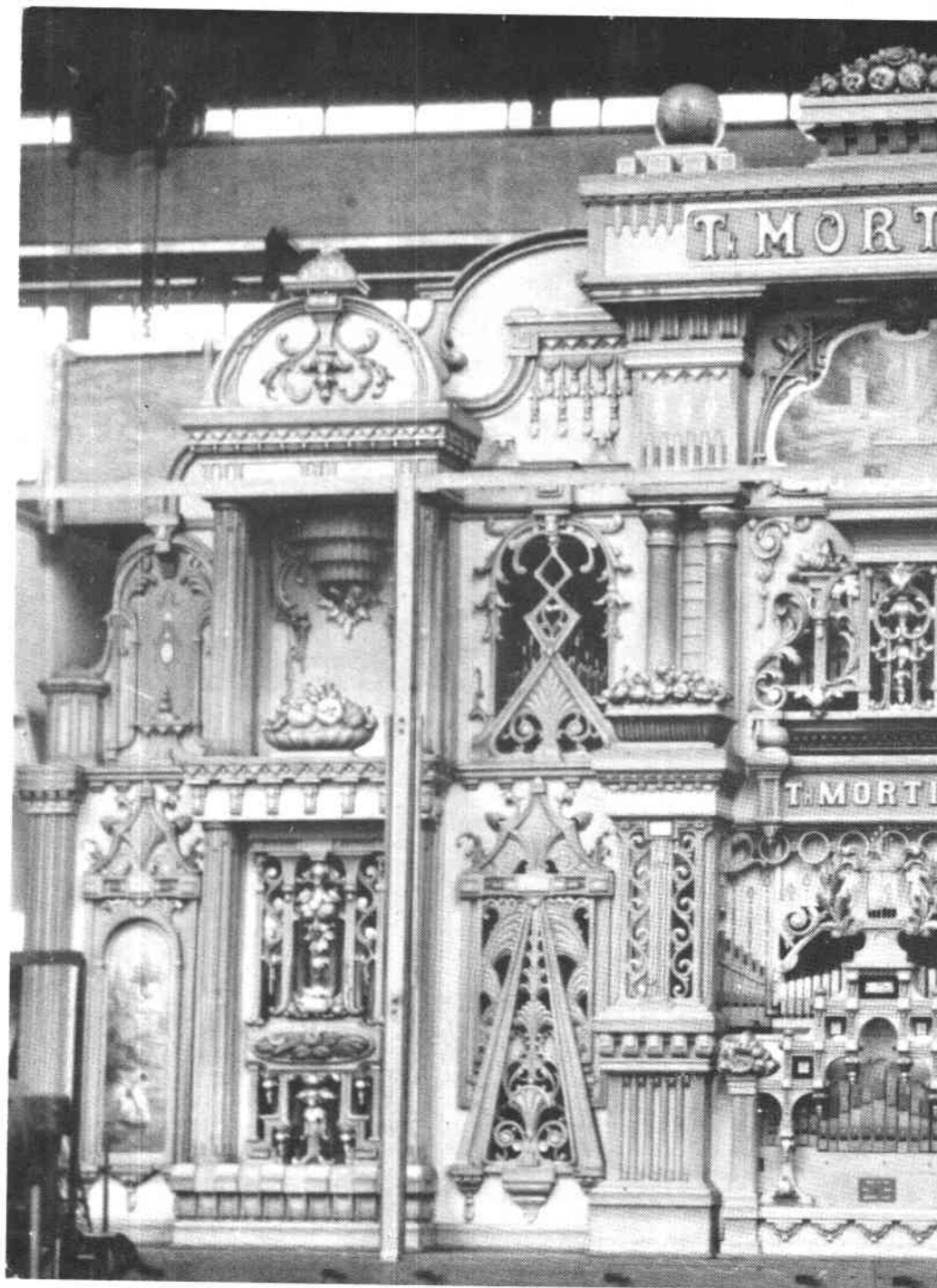
The organ was the normal Gavioli type key frame operating the 'air gain' system throughout the operating mechanism. This is to say that: when a slot appears in the music book it allows a key to rise. This allows air to pass from the key frame wind chest, through a valve, and by way of a connecting tube to a primary pouch, or bouchet. This opens the main valve, allowing air from the main wind chest to pass through the gallery to a secondary pouch under the pipe, which opens the valve leading to the pipe. This allows air into the pipe, which can then speak. Many ranks of pipes

may be operated by this system of galleries. The number of ranks in play at any one time is governed by whether air is supplied to the wind chest under a particular rank or not. The key which controls the air supply to the various ranks is called a Register. On the ordinary organ it would be called a Stop. The Register key is operated in the same way as a note but the primary valve is a special latching valve which, when operated from the key frame, will then hold mechanically until released by a master key.

The pipe work of our Mortier is split into four groups: Main Melody; Counter Melody; Accompaniment; Bass.

All of the scales are chromatics.

Main Melody
Violin Piano
Violin Forto
Unda Maris
Vibritone (or Vibras)
Baxophone
Xylophone
Jazze Fluit
Trompet
Bordon I
Counter Melody





Cello
Cellest
Bariton
Fluit 8
Basoon
Bourdon II (Pifaro)

Accompaniment
Mixture of Reed and Open Fluit

Bass
Bass Bourdon
Bass Trombone

Other registers control Tremolo units and Swell shutters. The organ is also fitted with additional Trumpet and Cornet ranks, which can be brought into play, manually, on the Main Melody section when required. Also a full Percussion section is fitted consisting of Bass Drum; Side Drum; Cymbal; Triangle; large and small Wood Blocks, and three Cow Bells.

The main wind is supplied by the original bellows or feeders system. They were re-leathered some seven years ago. Only on the very hottest and driest days do they run short of wind pressure (about ten inches water gass). I am pleased to say that the Mortier will carry on playing long after many other organs have run short of puff, even those fitted with blowers!

The complete front of the organ was repainted in its original colour scheme in 1970. Restoring it to its former condition, line for line and colour for colour, took Mr. Richard Hogben almost 6 months work in the painting. Apart from this all of us spent many, many hours preparing the paintwork surfaces.

We now have over 130 books of music for the Mortier, some of them having as many as six tunes on each. The music covered is of every type, from the classical, through evergreens, to pop. Something for every taste. On the earlier books the notation is by people such as Frans Able; Schollart, and Pearsman. Some of the later ones are by Perlee/Razenburg and Arthur Prinsen. The late David Barlow cut some of his books from 'signings' sent over by Mr. Razenburg and, after David's death, Mr. D. Hooper, one of the original helpers, has also cut many books.

Members may be interested to know that 3 long playing records of the Mortier organ discussed here are available.

"David Barlow Presents the Mortier Dance Hall Organ". EMI Studio Two 104

"David Barlow Presents Marching and Waltzing with The Mortier". EMI Studio Two 168

"Roger Burville Presents the Mortier Dance Hall Organ". EMI Starline SRS 5106

AN EARLY COLLECTOR OF MUSICAL BOXES

by Ronald Pearsall

Today the author A.J.A. Symons, brother of the detective story writer Julian Symons, is best known as the biographer of the eccentric 'Baron' Corvo, whose fantastic novel Hadrian VII has recently been made into a play. Symons' The Quest for Corvo was like a fascinating who-dunnit. He tracked his subject all over Europe, and he started a new type of biography which pulled no punches.

Symons died early in the last war; he was only 41. He was a gastronome, an expert amateur forger, an authority on African exploration, and an inventor of complicated games. He thought up a War Game that could last for days, and might even then end up with the loss of a battalion and a few guns.

Unquestionably he was quite a character, but what, readers might ask, is he doing in the journal of the music box society? Briefly, for one reason only. He built up a collection of three hundred musical boxes.

Members of what might be termed a mature age may remember the pre-war musical box scene, when boxes that would be ogled and fought over in the sale room today would simply be treated as of being no account at all, on a par with all the relics contemptuously dismissed as Victorian rubbish. He collected

other things as well — Victorian glass obelisks and paperweights, panoramas of the Crystal Palace, and old gramophones. But musical boxes were his favourites, and he became an acknowledged expert on them, playing them on the radio and even appearing on film with them (it would be interesting to know if this film still exists).

His brother Julian stated in 1944 that A.J.A. Symons (known as A.J. even to his family) had the largest collection of musical boxes in Britain, and there does not seem any doubt that this was true. It is rather surprising that his name is so little known even to acknowledged experts in the field.

In an age when most people were on the defensive about their collections of Victoriana, A.J.A. Symons proudly proclaimed that for him 'the musical box is the only form of music' and was honest about the manner in which he became interested in them. He had discovered at an early age that Beethoven and Bach were not for him, and that the only kind of music he really liked was that found on the cylinders of musical boxes.

He was therefore very fortunate. He found the music he liked played in the way he liked, and all at trifling expense. Can anyone ask more?

THE HON. SECRETARY LOOKS BACK

The last issue of THE MUSIC BOX marked the tenth anniversary of our Society. Although not a founder member I enrolled two years after its formation after a chance introduction at the Dorchester Hotel, London, to our President and Founder member, Cyril de Vere Green. From a founders meeting of 21 keen enthusiasts we now have a membership of about 450. I have looked back through the Society Minute Book and find the following historical data which might be of interest to members.

1/12/1962 Founder meeting Manderville Hotel, London W1. at which meeting the late Mr. John E.T. Clark was appointed President and Cyril de Vere Green was appointed Secretary.

30/3/63 First Annual Meeting at the Clifton Ford Hotel, London, W.1. Membership now totalled 51 and 36 members and guests attended the meeting.

9/5/1964 Second AGM Londoner Hotel, London W.1. Membership 101. 70 members and guests attended and the BBC were in attendance.

15/5/1965 Third AGM Londoner Hotel, London W.1. Membership 146. Our first President Mr. J.E.T. Clark died, 12th October 1965.

Mr. Dorian Dinsmore — 2nd President.

7 & 8/5/1966 Fourth AGM Berners Hotel, London W.1. Membership 230. Dr. R. Burnett — 3rd President.

3 & 4/6/1967 Fifth AGM Gt. Western Hotel, Paddington. Membership 301. Dr. R. Burnett — re-elected President. 1st Annual Dinner.

17 & 18/5/1968 Sixth AGM Gt. Western Hotel. Membership 350. Dr. R. Burnett — re-elected President.

17 & 18/5/1969 Seventh AGM Gt. Western Hotel. Membership 360. Dr. R. Burnett — re-elected President. Cyril de Vere Green resigned as Secretary.

29/11/69 Winter meeting. Gt. Western Hotel. Mr. A.R. Waylett appointed Secretary.

18 & 19/5/1970 Eighth AGM. Gt. Western Hotel. Dr. R. Burnett — re-elected President. Membership 365.

22/23/5/1971 Ninth AGM. Gt. Western Hotel. Visit by members of MBSI. on European tour. 175 at meeting. 2nd Annual Dinner. Membership 345. Cyril de Vere Green elected 4th President.

3 & 4/6/1972 Tenth AGM. Gt. Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street. Membership 410. 3rd Annual Dinner.

The steady growth in membership over the last ten years reminds us that there certainly was a need for a Society interested in the restoration and preservation of all types of mechanical music, and we must all be deeply indebted to the late Mr. John E.T. Clark when he contacted Mr. C. de Vere Green about the idea of founding such a Society ten years ago.

I was appointed your Secretary in 1969 at a difficult period in our growth. At that time the Committee lost their London 'home' at Devonshire Place, W.1., for its meetings, as well the services of C. de Vere Green, all within eighteen months of my appointment.

The Society also lost the services of the Editor A. Ord Hume and our President Dr. R. Burnett. I know at the time I wondered if the Society could survive. After much persuasion our well known and respected Graham Webb agreed to 'have a go' as Editor. Great credit is due to him by all members for the excellent magazine he now produces. After two years and much persuasion the Society managed to regain the services of our beloved and respected Founder Member Cyril de Vere Green as President. From my appointment as your Secretary the Society now had a central London home again where the Committee could once more meet in comfort. We had been meeting at pubs since Cyril resigned as secretary.

During the last two years I have tried very hard to arrange for the Society to hold four meetings a year, two in London and two in the Provinces and I am pleased to report that commencing next year will be having four meetings a year, two of which will be in the North, Sheffield and Liverpool. Our meetings do enable members to 'get together' and form new friendships. As your Secretary I receive many letters from our overseas members, especially those in the Commonwealth, who cherish a letter from England. I sometimes feel we are one great family with over 200 of our membership residing overseas.

I have recently returned from a five week tour of the USA where I was lavishly entertained by our American members, and where I had the great honour of being able to attend the yearly convention of the MBSI. at Chicago as their Principal guest and speaker at the farewell banquet. Our friends sent their congratulations on attaining our tenth anniversary. Our Society has had a wonderful ten years record and I am hoping that the future will show even greater achievements and that members will feel it an honour to belong to THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN.

A. R. Waylett

RZEBITSCHek REPAIR

by Olin Tillotson

What greater pleasure can there be for the amateur musical box enthusiast than the complete restoration of a valued item? The greater the task of repair, the greater the challenge, it seems. So it was with this job. For a start, it lacked a suitable case in which to house the movement. Neither the fact that one tune was stripped nor its original start-stop mechanism missing proved a deterrent. The hauntingly beautiful strains of its one remaining tune were enough to sustain me.

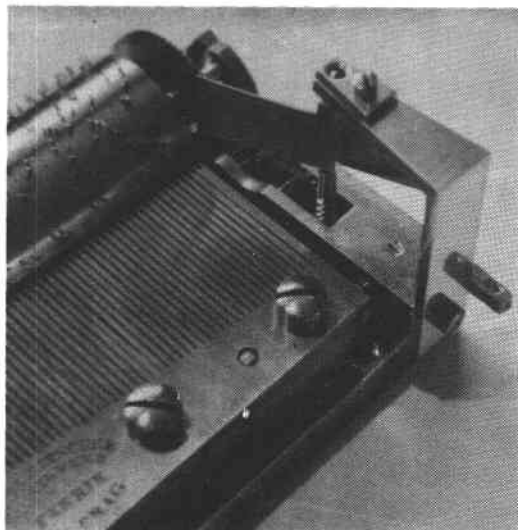
Of the several Czech or Viennese movements on hand at Graham Webb's following the AGM in London last Spring, this one intrigued me most. I'd been rather partial to those lovely movements of Frantisek Rzebitschek and his son Gustave since I first encountered them in quantity in the fine collection of George Boser of Long Island, N.Y. I was then surprised at the amount of music contained on the cylinder. Later I learned this was made possible by virtue of a slow moving endless. The music seemed exquisitely arranged and the tonal qualities of the comb surprisingly pleasant.

In design, these movements were essentially the same for the several Czech and Viennese makers (see Vol. 3, No. 8, pp 539-543 earlier article in the MUSIC BOX) and cover a long time span, making an accurate dating of them difficult. Frantisek Rzebitschek is reported to have commenced work in 1813 as a watchmaker in Josefan, Bohemia, later moving to Prague where he was joined by his son who took over the business fifty-seven years later in 1870*. Of particular interest are the long, raked pins and reversed comb with bass teeth at the right. The last tooth in the bass often has two points so that it could be played on both tunes, and the movements generally utilized a unique activating mechanism for use in clocks, picture frames etc.

This movement was marked 'F. Rzebitschek Musikwerk Fabrik in Prag' on the comb. I dubbed it 'Prague' and could hardly wait to get back to Canada to start work on it.

The first and obvious task was the repinning. I carefully dismantled the entire movement and examined all of the parts before carefully putting them aside for a good clean later. I was intrigued to find that although the serial number was plainly marked 22872 and the programme number 1808, many of the parts (spring barrel arbors, spring barrel, cover, governor and cylinder arbors) were all incised with the number '22' (the first two numbers of the serial number) rather than the last two numbers, as one would expect.

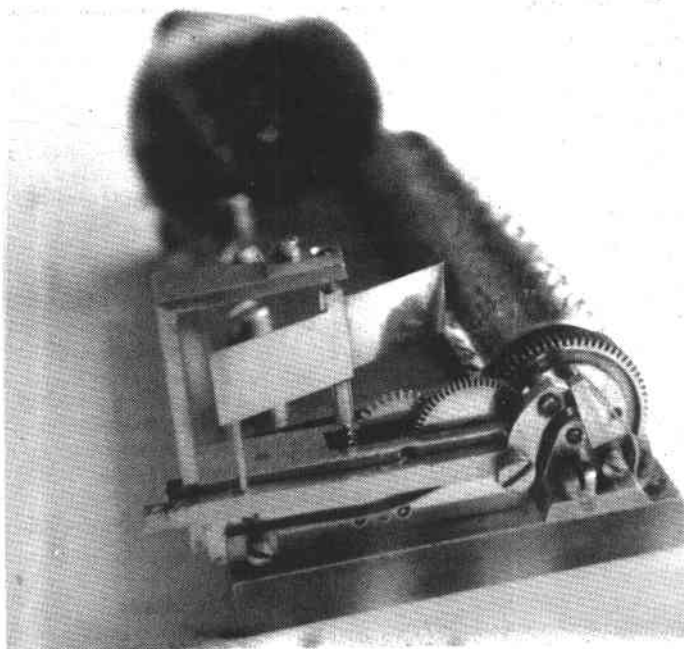
Before dissolving the old pins, I carefully noted the vital characteristics of the existing pins. They proved to be .013" diameter and .0405" in height; unusually long, but raked at an angle of nearly 60°. The height



My other Rzebitschek movement

is gauged by vernier caliper, measuring the diameter of the cylinder itself, subtracting this measurement from the diameter of the cylinder plus the pins and then dividing the result by 2.

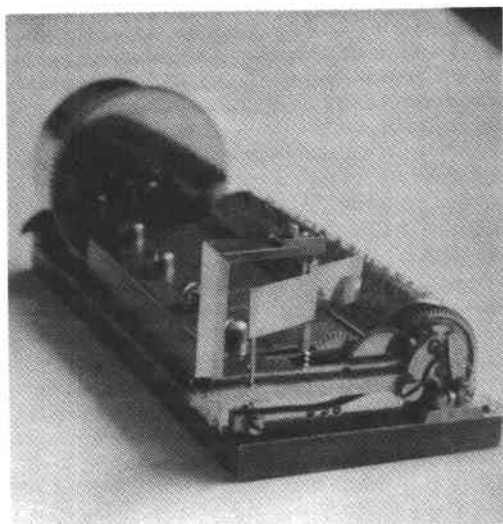
The measurements taken, the first of several problems presented itself. There appeared to be no overt evidence of any pins holding the ends of the cylinder in place and not wanting to melt any soldered joints, I was left with no alternative but to heat the



Which are the original stop-start levers?

cylinder cement and pour it out of the ends of the cylinder itself. The cylinder was held lightly in the bench vise with a pan below to catch the drippings and the shaft, being not large it took a while. I used a propane torch and worked as carefully as possible so as not to heat it any more than was really necessary for the job.

With the cement out, I could breathe a little easier. Off I trotted to the druggist for some sulphuric acid. I must say that it is getting harder all the time to get the stuff . . . it seems one is forever being suspected of conniving to do in his spouse, mother-in-law or the Prime Minister. Consequently, many drug stores don't even stock it any more. However, I finally managed to find a local druggist who, upon hearing my impassioned plea (I'm sure that he still thinks me daft!) gave me a small quantity of 95% solution which I diluted to 10% into which I immersed the cylinder. The process of pin erosion took just over twenty-four hours and was followed by a thorough rinse. That's when I came in for a surprise! With the washout came wads of matter which on close examination proved to be debris from a piece of musical notation on parchment! It might even have contained the tunes on the cylinder itself. What a shame it was destroyed! Later I realized its purpose in the cylinder. The stiff parchment had been inserted after the cement had been put in and cooled to serve to protect the shaft from



any cement which might later have happened to melt for any reason whatever, and thus insuring that the shaft would remain free to shift laterally and thereby broaching no interference with the tune changing, a thoughtful bit of foresight.

Next I polished the cylinder and returned it on its shaft and arbors to the bedplate. Using Swiss pins I had purchased years ago, made for modern

movements, I selected a supply of pins .0135" or .0005" oversize. With a no. 15 Boley staking tool (equivalent to a no. 70 K&D for North Americans) and needle nose pliers which were conveniently magnetized, it wasn't long before I had developed a suitable technique. The pins were sprinkled onto an empty jam jar top sparingly and a couple of drops of oil added to make their response to the magnetized pliers a bit sluggish. So dispersed, it became quite an easy matter to lift one at a time from the jar top to my left index finger where I laid the pin and then grasped it at its pointed end with the pliers. Holding the staking tool in the fingers of the right hand and gently rotating it I found it not difficult to insert the pin into the tool. Meanwhile, I had taped the great wheel of the cylinder to the bedplate. So immobilized, it was prevented from turning while putting the pins into place in the cylinder. Such movement might easily break a pin in the staking tool which would be no inconsiderable inconvenience! I used a small brass hammer to tap the pins home . . . two light taps would do the trick. It had to be heavy enough to be forced all the way home but light enough not to mark the cylinder with the punch. I found that at best I could manage 17-18 pins per minute by this means. The entire cylinder was pinned in just something over five hours, in a couple of sittings.

With all the pins in, my next job was to restore the cement to the cylinder and this really had me worried. Getting the hot cement out of that little hole in the end of the cylinder was bad enough. Getting it back was going to be something again. I thought about aluminium foil funnels. A funnel would help, but would it be enough? They say that "necessity is the mother of invention" and so it must be. In a moment of inspiration I realized what I should have realized long ago with all that concern for the risky hot pouring business after those long tortuous hours of repinning. Why pour it hot at all? Why indeed! Excitedly, I seized a hammer and putting the cold lump of cement into a paper bag, I pulverized it into a powder in no time at all. Then, carving a couple of wooden pegs to seal all of the openings in the cylinder, I poured the powder in like one would fill a salt shaker. Then I placed the cylinder in a shallow pan, heated it in the oven at a temperature of 250° for about thirty minutes and, believe it or not, actually rolled it on a breadboard until it was sufficiently cool that the cement adhered to the cylinder walls. At this point I removed the pegs inserted the shaft and mounted it in collets on the lathe to spin until cold.

For the shaving I used my Arrow 400 mm bench lathe. With the cylinder carefully mounted in collets and an Arkansas stone mounted in the roof post holder, I turned the cylinder at moderate speed with the foot operated rheostat. Working very slowly and reversing the direction of the motor after each pass, the

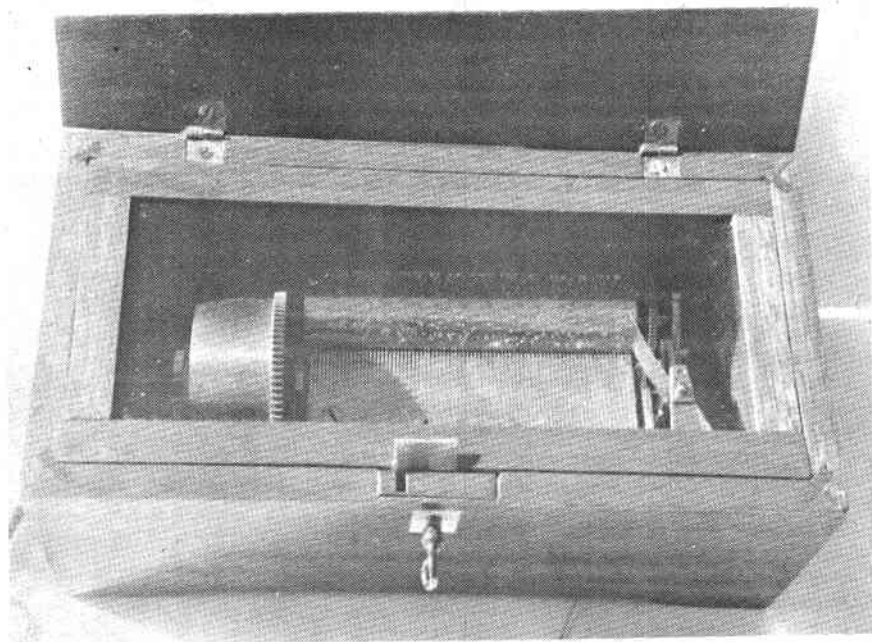
shaving was accomplished with ease. I might add that I prefer this method to that of a high speed grinding wheel if for no other reason than the risk of an accidental fracture of the wheel, but additionally I think an Arkansas stone does a cleaner job.

When the grinding was complete to the height required according to my measurements, I removed the Arkansas stone and replaced it with an inverted cutting tool ground to 45° for raking the pins. My bench lathe has a production feed lever which permits setting the depth of cut with a set screw. Very carefully I adjusted this and tried it out on the treble end of the cylinder noting the results and repeating until I had the angle of rake to the pins I wanted. It was then a simple matter to traverse the length of the cylinder one tool-width at a time raking the pins as I went. For this operation the lathe was slowed to perhaps 250 rpm.

The cylinder finished, I turned my attention to the comb. The dampers on this movement were all of parchment save half a dozen at the treble end which were minute tail feathers. From an old diploma I scavenged a suitable piece of parchment. I then fashioned a jig like a primitive tobacco cutter using a razor mounted at about 100° in a wooden frame. With a strip of parchment whose width was precisely the length of the desired damper, small isosceles-shaped triangular pieces were fashioned by turning over the strip each time it was cut. In no time at all I had plenty of uniformly cut dampers. These I put in place with epoxy glue, sparingly applied.

Next came the start-stop levers which were a bit of a fiddle. From a nearly identical movement which I was fortunate to have I borrowed the levers for use as a model. I really know of no way to describe how such things should be properly made. There seems to be a number of factors all of which need to be taken into account. And so their fabrication becomes a matter of trial and error. In the end, with jewellers saw, drill, files and a lot of elbow grease, I fashioned a set which worked as Mr. Rzebitschek would have wanted them to and that's all that matters, isn't it.

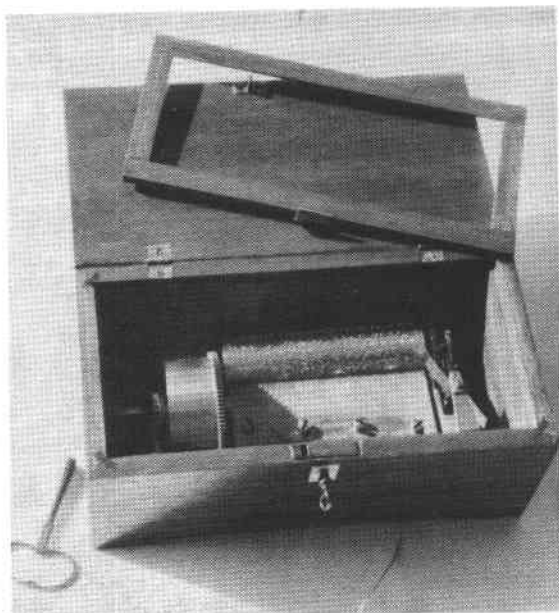
If you are like me and attend auctions, jumble sales, curio shops and the like, you may have acquired as I have the few pieces of hardware for the case. The lock I'd bought years ago. The hinges were fashioned after those found in other boxes of this maker; crude but serviceable. The case itself I made of mahogany stained walnut on the outside with a vermilion oil brushed into the interior, wiped, shellacked and waxed. A removeable glass lid was fitted and the movement operated by a flax string attached to the activating lever and threaded through the soundboard, which is of spruce. The escutcheon for the keyhole was made from an old ivory piano key. The winding key was from an empire clock and the lock key contemporary



Two views of the new case

with the movement was also the result of some earlier speculative purchase. (Note to collectors: A box locked when not in use helps reduce warping of the lid. Old keys are easily fitted and not difficult to find. Nice old ones are worth purchasing when you find them for that box like 'Prague' which happens along).

The Moment of Truth had arrived! I had promised myself not to play the movement until it was completely ready, i.e. repinned and dampered. I set out the box and a bottle of sherry and 'phoned Jim Heyworth, my collecting buddy, and asked him over to share my joy. It must have been a sight! He, Brenda and I sitting in the kitchen with baited breath as I switched on the movement. In a perfect delivery 'Prague' issued forth with two of the loveliest though most obscure operatic arias I've heard in a long time. I felt like a proud papa, I was so pleased with the result! I'm sure those real buffs who read this will recognize in my tone with a certain nostalgia that special feeling that comes to a collector at times like this. The next similar such feeling will likely occur when I happen onto the titles of the mysterious, ethereal tunes played by this fine addition to my collection. Here's to happy hunting!



* Ord-Hume, A.W.J.G. "Collecting Musical Boxes" et al, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967

THE NEXT TEN YEARS

by Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume

I am writing this in the form of a 'guest editorial' in the manner generally encouraged by editors who believe that their chosen contributor or author may have something worthwhile to write about which cannot be classified other than as an editorial. There is, though, only one difference. I have not been invited to contribute this 'guest editorial'. I am presuming to write thus because I have something which, in my humble opinion, is of consequence and is, to me at any rate, worth saying. And the Editor is letting me say it.

Ten years have slipped away since that day when twenty musical box enthusiasts found themselves acceded to the title of Founder Member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. I was one of that clique whose only claim to such an appellation was an all-consuming enthusiasm and a smattering of knowledge. Time has crystalized that enthusiasm for most of us and shattered many of the illusions we had regarding what we then supposed to be out knowledge.

Those intervening ten years have been an astonishing revelation. In the space of a decade we have, as a Society, covered an enormous amount of ground. We have pieced together, working largely as a team, great sections of the history of the musical box and its development. We have searched and found information which had it not been for our individual and collective efforts, would most certainly have remained lost. Through the facilities of THE MUSIC BOX we have set into print in the form of a permanent record the results of our findings.

For the novice collector, we have amassed great heaps of information from which the astute enthusiast can rapidly assimilate an excellent working knowledge of his subject. All this we have done the hard way — learning by our own mistakes that others might profit; sharing those fragments of information which together make a worthwhile whole; bringing together those members whose work proved complementary.

Rather like the schoolboy who fills his notebook with engine-numbers, we have got this far — and wonder which way to proceed next. Not that I am for one moment suggesting that the history we have so far gleaned is anywhere near complete, nor am I suggesting that the period of progress of our society is reaching its perihelion and a gradual decline into stagnation must inevitably be our lot.

What I am trying to suggest is that we should now channel our efforts into new quarters. Before we throw up our collective hands in dismay at the thought of

changing our individual roles, let me explain what I have in mind.

Within the Society membership, we have museums, musicians, technical colleges, research institutes and members qualified in many fields both artistic and technological. This amounts to a valuable pool of talent. This talent within our membership inspires me to think that we should now set ourselves some fresh challenge to utilise the enormous powers of learning potential which we have so readily at our disposal.

So far we have concentrated fairly and squarely on the instruments of mechanical music, and this has largely been to the exclusion of the other aspects of mechanical music. There are others which are in many ways more important and which remain almost totally grey areas of knowledge.

Take for instance the music of mechanical instruments. What sort of music we find various instruments playing. Then there is the special music which has been written for these machines. And music was written for them by what we so loosely call 'famous composers'. What about styles of musical notation used on early instruments? Systems of notation, styles of arrangement and embellishment, musical form, key modulations, the dexterity achieved in arrangement and pinning, the problems of setting music in one key to an instrument which played in another, transcriptions where fully-chromatic scales were not available, and so on. Then there is the musicological analysis of the limitations of the so-called rigid notation (seen on early music boxes) and the flexibility of 'la Tonotechnie' which was so fully exploited with the era of cardboard and paper music. The list of subjects is almost endless when you stop to think about it. The subject of meantone tuning would alone produce a fascinating musical box analysis.

Here is something which our society can do. We can get together (those of us who are qualified so to do and who wish to) and compare musical data. We can contribute something of immeasurable value to the world of musical knowledge for, let there be no mistake, serious musicologists are only just beginning to realise that the music on an eighteenth century barrel organ is more than just an amusing diversion.

Last November I listened to a piece of music arranged for mechanical organ by Mozart — a piece of music which you will not find listed in any of the many learned books on the compositions of Mozart. I also heard some fascinating transcriptions of music by Handel and Bellini. And here in London there now lives a very rare and valuable musical clock which turns out to perform eight pieces of music which Handel wrote and which are either no longer in the repertoire or were hitherto unknown.

How about forming two selective sub-committee or factions or groups — it doesn't matter what we call them — to concentrate on advanced concepts of mechanical music. Let the first one take on the mechanics of mechanical instruments and start analysing musical

box combs with a view to establishing exactly what they are made of, why some sound totally different to others, and find out just why and how they produce their various tonal qualities. Let the second group get down to evaluating the music which the instruments play. Only a small minority of members are likely to be able to take an active interest in either of these divisions – but be sure that there are the ones who will probably be able to build up some really worthwhile data in what is so much a virgin

field.

The next ten years – just let's say 'the future' – lie ahead for us as a perfectly plain canvas. We have shown ourselves that we have the skill, the knowledge and the ability. Let's make it a worthwhile future. I am sure that the Editor would welcome any letters from members on my suggestions. The Society can then serve to put interested members in touch with each other and let them sort out just what they want to do – and how. It is up to you.

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Claes O. Friberg and Q. David Bowers present the latest news from the

Mekanisk Musik Museum

Lots of Activity at the MMM!

We've been very busy here at the Mekanisk Musik Museum lately. The Larry Givens Collection catalogue has been released, and orders are coming in nicely—for which we thank you! If you haven't sent us an order yet, there's nothing we would like better than to hear from you in this regard. There are many, many fine orchestrions, reproducing pianos, organs, coin-operated pianos, disc and cylinder music boxes, and other fine instruments in the MMM stock awaiting your selection.

We have just purchased for our inventory two large collections: The Nielsen Collection, one of Scandinavia's finest, contains over sixty items, including many interesting types of phonographs. The Armand Duval Collection was formed many decades ago in Switzerland. Following several exhibition tours in Europe the collection was sent to America. In the 1949-1952 years it was exhibited in Rockefeller Center and other centers around the United States where it attracted "millions of visitors and admirers," according to the many newspaper clippings acquired with the group. The late Adrian V. Bornand was a partner in the exhibition of the Duval Collection and supervised the instruments during their display.

Are You One of the 350?

In our opinion, being on the MMM mailing list is an absolute MUST for any active collector or dealer. Happily, about 350 members of the Musical Box Society International and the Musical Box Society of Great Britain have already sent their \$5 U.S. (or 2 pounds sterling) subscription for our next six catalogues. If you're one of these 350 you can look forward to lots of interesting reading and many good buys in the future.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Although we've sent out some sample copies to Society members in the past, this will be discontinued in the future. If you want to receive our large illustrated catalogues as they are issued, a subscription is necessary. As we know that some people think about this, we might mention that we're not making a profit by selling you six catalogues at our subscription price (this should be self-evident if you've seen our large Larry Givens Collection catalogue, for instance). The subscription covers our costs, or nearly does. Send your subscription today. Not tomorrow; today! Otherwise you'll miss what we consider to be the best buys in the business today!

GUARANTEE: You are not risking much by subscribing to the the MMM catalogues. If for any reason you are not 100% delighted, the unused portion of your subscription will be refunded at any time—with no explanation necessary. Interesting and possibly significant note: as of this writing no one has ever requested such a refund!!!

So, "get with it," as they say—and send your subscription now!

Collections Wanted

If you're not an active buyer of instruments now, how about selling some instruments to us? We realize the time, care, patience, and love that went into the formation of your collection. When time comes to sell it is important to think the matter over carefully and to make the right decision.

We think the 'right decision' is to sell to the Mekanisk Musik Museum; to Claes O. Friberg and Q. David Bowers. And here's what we offer you in this regard:

*A fair price for your instruments. We're not seeking bargains. We know that quality is never cheap and that the market for choice instruments is strong. We're willing to pay generously for what you have.

*Immediate cash payment in full. We will pay you instantly for all items purchased. There's no waiting for your money. No delays or wondering what your instruments "might" bring at auction or on consignment. You get the price you want and you receive cash payment in full. And, all details of the transaction will be held in the strictest confidence—even the fact that you sold instruments to us, if you wish.

*An enjoyable transaction. We think you'll like doing business with Claes O. Friberg and Q. David Bowers. We're collectors and enthusiasts ourselves, and we will treat you as we would like to be treated. You'll also have the satisfaction that your fine instruments will be well cared for after we buy them and that they will find new homes with collectors who appreciate owning them.

The 'right decision' to sell to Claes and Dave has been made by others in the past. We've had the privilege of purchasing these outstanding collections (a partial list) in the past ten years:

The Cliff House Collection/Sutro Museum Collection; The Wayne Collection; The Marvin Collection; The Hamilton Collection; The Museum of Music Collection; The Bursens Warehouse Hoard; The Marvin Collection; The Eugene DeRoy Properties; Petersen & Steenstrup A/S; the recently-offered Larry Givens Collection; and the soon-to-be-offered Nielsen Collection and the Armand Duval Collection, not to mention millions of dollars worth of other instruments not included in this list. Follow the footsteps of 'those who've gone before' and make the 'right decision.' A friendly reception awaits you!

Holiday Planning

It is not too early to plan your holiday trip for the coming summer. We invite you to visit "Wonderful Copenhagen," Europe's fourth-largest tourist center (after London, Rome, and Paris). While you're here you'll want to visit the Mekanisk Musik Museum, of course!

If you're coming to see the MMM exhibit then we invite you to stop by anytime without advance notice. If you're coming to see a selection of instruments for sale, then it's best to write to Claes O. Friberg (our Danish director) or to Fritz Hartz (our museum tourguide) so one or the other can be expecting you, for many of the things we have for sale are stored in other locations around Copenhagen (the MMM simply isn't large enough to hold everything!).

"The Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments"

The first printing of the *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments* sold out quickly. The second printing is now ready, and we've been shipping copies for several weeks from this new group. This 1008-page book is 8½x11" in size, weighs about 7 pounds(!), contains thousands of illustrations, and is what the Musical Box Society International review terms "the definitive book on automatic musical instruments." (Reference: review appearing on pp. 93-95 of the Christmas 1972 issue). Copies are available for \$25 U.S. funds to U.S. addresses; \$27 elsewhere. Q. David Bowers, the author, will personally autograph your copy on request. Orders from North American collectors can be sent to: Q. David Bowers; Box 1669; Beverly Hills, California U.S.A. Orders from European and Asian collectors can be sent to the MMM in Denmark. Our price includes postage. Your complete satisfaction is guaranteed. (We've sold hundreds of copies, and not one buyer has ever asked for a refund! However, quite a few buyers have ordered additional copies for use as gifts or to have a second copy for the office, etc.!)

Your Friends at the MMM!

At the MMM we enjoy instruments a lot. We would like to share our interest and enthusiasm with you. We look forward to your telephone calls and letters!

Mekanisk Musik Museum

Directors: Claes O. Friberg and Q. David Bowers

Vesterbrogade 150 / Copenhagen, Denmark

MUSICAL BOX REPAIR

The article we reprint here is from Volume III of 'Spons Workshop Receipts' published in 1909. It was sent in by Member Brian Wooton of Surrey.

WARNING: This article is interesting in many ways and in parts it will be found helpful. We must draw attention however to the fact that some of the practices recommended by the writer are not only dubious but *downright dangerous*. The article will be found of most value to those members who are already conversant with the basic precepts of repairing cylinder musical boxes, but a relative newcomer is advised to study other sources of information carefully before tackling any of the jobs described here. To take a paragraph or so at random, anyone should look most carefully at the one which is seen under Fig. 72. On the other hand the remarks concerning Fig. 74. are most interesting.

G.W.

Musical Boxes.—These delicate instruments are very liable to get out of repair, either by direct violence or by neglect, a small defect sufficing to render them temporarily useless. Whilst it would be futile for any one ignorant of their construction to attempt remedying accidental defects, a small knowledge of the first principles of their mechanism will enable any ordinarily handy workman to repair all but very serious injuries.

Fig. 66 illustrates part of a cylinder, showing the progress of the 5 operations: *a*, pointing; *b*, boring; *c*, garnishing; *d*, gunning; *e*, turning.

The manufacture of a musical box may be divided into two very distinct parts. The first includes all that concerns the mechanical part of a box—that is, wheels, pinions, harrel, spring, fly-wheel, etc., or the "clockwork" of the box. The second concerns more particularly the musical part of the box, viz. putting the desired tunes on the cylinder, tuning the key-board, finishing these two parts and putting them in their proper places, so as to have a playing box. About the first part, it is necessary to say nothing, everything concerning it having a great resemblance to watches, and especially to clocks. Clocks and watches being universally found, and everywhere easily repaired, the case will be the same with the mechanism of a musical box. As to the second part. For finishing an ordinary musical box, the following processes are necessary:—

First.—The tunes are pointed on the cylinder. (Previous to this, of course, the choice of tunes is made, with the notes necessary for playing them.) This pointing is effected by an instrument in which the cylinder is placed on its 2 points. A needle on a dial serves to make the cylinder turn, in accordance with the measures

of the music (tune), whilst the pointers slide from one end on the cylinder to the other, making small dots on the cylinder in accordance with the notes of the tune.

Second.—At each one of these dots a hole must be bored, of the same size as the steel pegs. This is made by a very simple boring machine especially adapted for the purpose.

Third.—In each of these holes a steel-tempered peg must be placed, and all forced into the same height above the cylinder. The pegs are long enough to have a part in the inside of the cylinder.

Fourth.—The cylinder is partly filled with mastic gum, in order to fasten the steel pegs, and to give to the whole cylinder a certain consistency.

Fifth.—The cylinder is put on a lathe, and, with a file, is turned, so as to give to all the pegs a flat summit, and to make them all of a perfectly cylindrical surface.

Sixth.—The key-board must be turned in accordance with the note

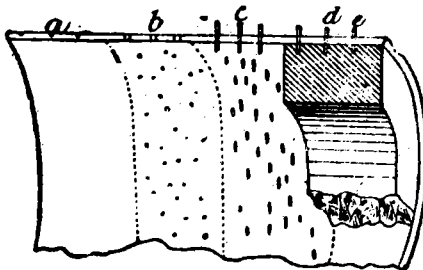


FIG. 66.

put on the cylinder.

Seventh.—The key-board must be attached by screws to the plate of the musical box.

Eighth.—The ends of all the keys must be put in their right place, in respect to height (they must all be on a level), and with regard to the

pegs of the cylinder.

Ninth.—The key-board in place, each peg of the cylinder must be bent forward, so as to pass directly by the middle of the point of the key corresponding, and more or less bent, so as to allow the key to produce its sound at the right instant; a special instrument with dial and hands is here again necessary.

Tenth.—Steel spirals must be put at the end of each key, and bent in the right shape, so as to stop the vibration of the key each time a peg comes to lift it.

In the preceding description, several operations have been intentionally omitted which are of no great consequence for a general comprehension. Before giving further details, it will be necessary to make three preliminary remarks. The first is a precautionary suggestion, that great care should be taken never to take out any part of a box, except the key-board, without ascertaining whether the spring of the barrel is quite run down. It is easily understood that by lifting the keys of the key-board, if, for instance, the fly-wheel is removed, the spring being partly wound up, the cylinder, not being able to turn without the pegs attached to it, will revolve rapidly, and one of two things must happen, either the steel pegs of the cylinder will give way under the resistance of the key-board, and then break or be bent backwards, or, if the pegs be strong enough to resist, the key-board will be destroyed in pieces. Very often both cylinder and key-board may be broken in this way. Therefore, after having taken out the key-board, ascertain if the spring is at rest, and if not, let the box run down, and for more security, that no strain exists on the spring, lift the ratchet which hinders the spring from running backwards, and unwind it.

The second suggestion is: Before commencing to repair a box, observe at first if the pegs of the cylinder are all bent in the same direction, and if there be a few missing. If this be the case, there is all probability that the box need not be sent to the manufactory for repairs. But, if a certain number of pegs be wanting, or bent in all directions, especially backwards, no hope must be entertained of repairing the box, except at the manufactory itself, where all the particular tools are found necessary for making a musical box entire. In this way much expense may be avoided, and time and annoyance saved.

Thirdly, a very wrong impression is widely spread concerning the repairing of a musical box, which the writer will

endeavour to correct. Very often a badly damaged key-board is alone sent to the manufacturer to be repaired or changed for a new one, or a new key-board is demanded to replace an old one, without sending back the whole box. In the actual state of manufacturing musical boxes, it is impossible to make a new key-board for a given cylinder, or the reverse—a new cylinder for a certain key-board—without having in hand the entire musical box. These two parts, which are the two most important of a box, are too closely connected to permit the mending of one without the other, or without the plate which carries them both. It is only when one or two keys are broken that it is possible to replace them without the entire box.

We have now given, in a brief way, an idea of the manner in which a musical box is made, and the indications when a box should be repaired at the manufacturer's, or elsewhere. We will now admit that the cylinder is in sufficiently good condition, and will mention, one after another, the accidents which may be easily repaired by any skilled workman, possessing ordinary tools.

Next to the cylinder, one of the most important parts of the musical box is the key-board. We will first see how all accidents happening to a key-board can be remedied.

It is well known that the number of vibrations of a pendulum in a given time, is regulated by the weight of the pendulum-ball. The heavier it is, the more slowly will it vibrate, and the lighter it is, the more quickly it will go. The same is to be found with the key of a key-board, which is nothing but the half of a tuning-fork.

The lower tones giving a less number of vibrations in a second than the higher ones, it will suffice to load the end of the key to lower the tone, and to lighten it to have a higher tone. It will also be easily understood that a thick key or a short one will vibrate more quickly than a thin or long one. After these suggestions, it will be very easy for any one to put any number of keys to the right tone.

Any person having had a key-board in hand, will have noticed that there are two kinds of keys; some having lead at the end, and others that have none. For those having lead, it will be sufficient to cut some of it to elevate the tone, and to file the key between the lead and the brass plate, to lower it. For those without lead, the same must be done to lower the tone, but having no lead, must be filed near the end underneath, to elevate it. As you must avoid having

any thin keys (these not possessing good sound), instead of filing a key to lower it, it will be often preferable to change the lead for a heavier one, or supply the deficiency by solder.

We have now to see in what manner a missing tooth may be replaced. Take a piece of steel and make a key of the same shape as the missing one, or the adjacent ones, but on the under part a heel must be devised, as indicated in Fig. 68. In the steel block of the key-board, with a file of the width of the key, make a notch as indicated by Fig. 67. Hammer

the new key in its place, so that the heel will exactly fill the hollow space, and so that the key will be placed as much as possible in the right direction and right level. In making the new key, the point must be made a little longer and a little wider than the adjacent ones. Then temper the new key, draw it to a dark blue, so that it will vibrate like a good spring, and at the same time so that it can be filed. Whiten the heel of the key, put it in place, and solder it. This must be done with a soldering bit, which weighs at least 6-8 lb., so as to retain sufficient heat. Lay the copper pretty hot on the key when in its place, and after a few moments' delay the solder will run. The solder and acid are the same as used by tinner. The key, well fixed, must then be finished, filed on the top to a level with the other keys, and tuned by filing it underneath. It is necessary here to say in what way the under part of a key can be easily filed. Put in the vice a small block of steel or brass, a little thicker than the key is wide, about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, with a small elevation, lengthwise. Place the key to be filed on this block, the whole comb being held in the hand under side up, and with a certain pressure the key will rise above the others, and will be easily filed with a square file $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, and 6 in. long. When the key to be filed is in the middle of a long key-board, it will be advantageous to make an appropriate handle to the file, as indicated in Fig. 70.

The point of the key must then be finished, that is, filed to its proper width (to correspond to the other points), and, at the same time, brought as nearly as possible to the same

distance from the two adjacent points. For putting the point to exact its

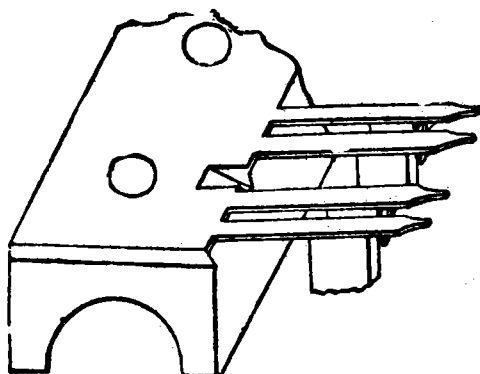


FIG. 67.

length, it would be well to hold the key-board with the keys perpendicu-

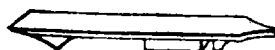


FIG. 68.

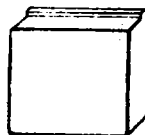


FIG. 69.

larly on a piece of flat window-glass, and by reflection it will be easily seen when it is brought to the same length as the others.

Place the point of the key, when it is filed to the right width, as nearly as possible to its level, and proper distance from the adjacent ones. Sometimes it may be found necessary, however, to change the place of the point of a key; to lower it so as to put it on a level with the other ones, or to shift it to the right or left. In this case, a small anvil must be made, well tempered, of about the same shape as the one used for filing the keys, but quite flat on top, with no elevation. The hammer used must have one end tempered, with the end a little rounded and not too sharp. If a key is forged on the left angle, it will move to the right, and *vice versa*. The key must be forged on the under side. Here a certain practice is quite necessary; the key must be well placed on the anvil,



FIG. 70.

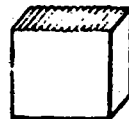


FIG. 71.

the spot to be re-forged resting well on it, and 2 or 3 strokes of the hammer will make the key move a little.

To lower or elevate a key, another anvil of the same size as the preceding one is necessary, tempered, but notched on the top (Fig. 71). The key is laid lengthwise and quite flat on this anvil, and by striking the key with the other end of the hammer (Fig. 72), which is flat and not tempered, the key will bend upwards. In both these cases much care must be taken, as it is very easy to break a key in using this hammer.

In case only a point of a key is broken, it is not necessary to replace the whole key. With the blowpipe, the end of the key must be untempered, but care must be taken that the flexible part of the key be not beaten and untempered (the sound would be lost); a small notch is made with a narrow file, and a small piece of spring is

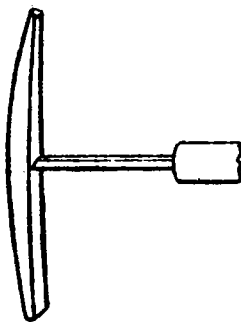


FIG. 72.

filed and pressed in. It will be easily soldered with a small soldering bit. Then the point must be finished as already indicated.

It may be well to remark here, that when a key is untempered and has no sound, it will sometimes regain sound by drawing it to a blue with the blowpipe, without previously tempering it.

Now the whole key-board being complete, no keys or points missing, it must be put on the musical box-plate, and the line of small dots, which every cylinder carries, will serve to indicate if all the points of the key board occupy their right places. This can

also be seen by the pegs; when the cylinder turns, the pegs must all come exactly under the middle of each point of the key-board. When it is ascertained that all the points are in their places, the key-board must be finished

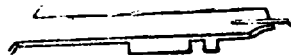


FIG. 73.

completely—that is, all missing spirals replaced, and the key-board then definitely tuned.

The tuning must always be done twice, because all operations upon a key change its tone a little, even when a spiral is changed; and before hammering a key, it must be brought to the proper thickness and about to its right tone. It may be advisable here to remark that in the first tuning it is well to leave the key half a tone too high, because putting a spiral at its end lowers the tone, and in general it is easier to lower the tone than to elevate it.

There remains now only to be seen what form must be given to the spirals, how to put the key-board in its right place, and, in general, how to have a good playing musical box.

The manner of repairing all defects in a musical box has now been indicated. The mechanical part now runs well, the key-board is repaired, tuned, and in good condition. Before indicating the form which must be given to the spirals of the key-board, and how to place the key-board itself in its right position, we offer the following suggestions.

The cylinder must be free to move easily up the 6, 8, or 10 times, as the case may be, and fall back readily to the first time, being regulated by the spring at the left end of the cylinder. But care must principally be taken that the axis of the cylinder turns freely; on the other hand, it must have no play whatever to move length-

wise between the two bridges. If the least play exists, it will be utterly impossible to finish the box properly. The pegs of the cylinder must neces-

sarily follow exactly under the points of the keys; if not, the box will never play well. If any play be found, it will easily be removed by bending the legs of one of the bridges of the axis.

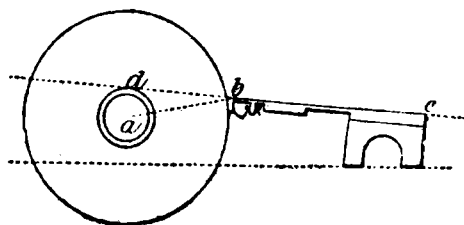


Fig. 74.

sarily follow exactly under the points of the keys; if not, the box will never play well. If any play be found, it will easily be removed by bending the legs of one of the bridges of the axis.

This done, the spirals of the key-board must be bent their right shape, and the key-board put in its proper place. It will be well in a few words to describe the theory of the spiral, this being a very important part of the musical box. The manner in which these small steel stiffers are bent contributes very much toward making an excellent box. The upper side of the key-board must always make the same angle of the radius of the cylinder, passing through the point of the keys. This angle $a b c$ Fig. 74, must be 165° , or, which is the same thing, angle $a b d$ equal to 15° . It is not very easy to measure this angle, but in practice the following will amount to about the same results. Supposing the diameter of a cylinder to be $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., $a d$ must be $\frac{1}{4}$ in. It will be observed that the upper level of the key-board, $b c$, prolonged, will attain pretty exactly the summing of the spring at the end of the cylinder. Supposing this to be the case, the spiral must have the shape indicated in Fig. 75 magnified. The end of the spiral must be as near the point of the key as possible without touching it. It must be observed that the heavier a key is (or the lower the tone) the thicker must be the spiral, as it is more difficult to stop the vibrations of the key. As the cylinder turns, the peg will first touch the spiral at about

reached the end of the key, the vibration of the key will have stopped. If the spiral is too thin, the peg will readily pinch it (it must then be changed), and will not sufficiently stop the vibra-

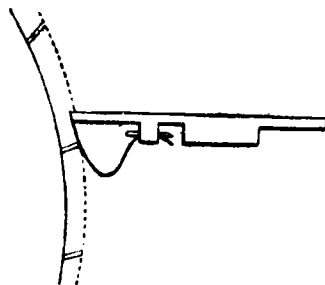


Fig. 75.

tions; or if too thick, the spiral itself will produce a buzzing noise in stopping the vibrations of the key. To see if the spiral has a good shape and works properly, it will be best to let the box play slowly, the key-board in its place, and examine how the pegs act on the spirals, and see that they do not get out of place. Some practice will be necessary here to find out if the spirals must be bent forward (when they do not sufficiently stop the vibrations), or backward (when they make too much noise, or are pinched). For bending these spirals a pair of pliers (Fig. 76) with a hook at each end will be necessary. It must not be forgotten that the shape and strength of the spiral, its distance from the end

of the key, its place backward or forward, all have an importance which must not be overlooked.

The only thing remaining now is to put the key-board in its proper place. 1st. As to height. The dotted line which is found on each cylinder will here serve as a guide; but it must be observed that, supposing the shortest key to be on a level with the dots, the longest ones must be a little below,



FIG. 76.

about the distance of half a dot. This difference in level gives the difference in "rise" of the keys, the longer ones necessitating more rise than the shorter ones. If this level should not be right, the key-board must be left as it is, and one of the bridges must be raised or lowered accordingly.

2nd. The key-board must occupy the right place, as to left and right. That is, all the pegs must pass directly in the centre of the points of the keys. It will facilitate matters to observe if the points of the keys pass at the same distance between the pegs of the two adjacent tunes. Should they not, the cylinder or the key-board must be shifted right or left; the key-board by bending the feet in the opposite direction, the barrel by filing or elevating the metal piece which rests on the tune counter placed on the inside of the toothed wheel of the cylinder.

3rd. A good rise must be given to the keys of the key-board. If they rise too little, they will have but little sound; if too much, they will have a disagreeable sound, and, moreover, it will be difficult for the spirals to stop the vibrations, or they will make a noise and get pinched. At the same time it must be carefully examined if the different keys produce their sound at the same moment; that is, in those parts of the tune when it is easy to observe that they should. This will be readily seen by letting the box play slowly. When the sounds are produced too late, the part of the key-board where this occurs must be put a little backwards, and if too soon it must be put a little forwards. This is

obtained by bending the feet of the key-board in the opposite direction.

When the key-board is mended and tuned, it would be well to suggest that the spirals be bent only approximately, until after these last operations are completed, when the last touch must be given to the spirals, in order to obtain a musical box playing smoothly and agreeably.

After all this is done, it would be well to let the box play through all the tunes, and correct all the pegs that may have lost their right position, either right or left, by producing a disagreeable noise, by touching the ends of the keys when they should not, or by playing too soon or too late. When they play too soon the pegs must be bent backwards; when too late, forwards.

The case may happen that 3 or 4 tunes play quite well, and at the fifth one, for instance, all the pegs pass over the side of the ends of the keys. This will be corrected by touching that part of the counting wheel which gives the said tune.

Let us now resume, in a few words, the order in which all these different repairs are to be effected.

First, repair all concerning the mechanical part of the box, until, without the key-board, every wheel runs well. See that the axis of the cylinder has no play lengthwise, then that the cylinder moves freely on its axis. Repair all missing keys and points of the key-board, file the new keys half a tone too high, put all the points on a level and at the right distance from each other. place all the spirals, bend them appropriately, tune the keys definitely, put the key-board in its right place, finish the bending of the spirals to their proper shape, and then correct all pegs on the cylinder.

It often occurs when a musical box plays that the pleasure is destroyed by a continual buzzing noise, produced always by a piece of metal or wood not properly fastened. The best way to find out what part of the musical box produces this disturbing noise is to let the box stop, and make the keys resound from one end of the key-board to the other with a rounded point; the notes which cause this noise will soon be discovered, then continue with one hand to produce this sound, and at the same time with the other hand touch all possible parts of the box which seem to produce the noise, and as soon as, by touching, the noise ceases, the object has been discovered. Tightening the screw, or a drop of oil, will very often do away with the noise.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Keith Harding and Cliff Burnett

K. G. Parrott of Rugby writes:—

"I find a tendency for mould to grow in some boxes, particularly on the bottom of the box inside and on internal joints or stringing, presumably in the latter case feeding on the glue. Do you know of any treatment to prevent this happening?"

Mould can only grow in the presence of damp, so if you keep the box in a warm dry place it will not happen. You can very easily kill mould with either a mild solution of carbolic or a proprietary fungicide. We find boxes in this state that have come from damp out-houses. We merely clean them up and polish them in the normal way and the trouble does not recur.

"Is there anywhere I can get strips of brass suitable for inlay? Even more difficult I find the centre pieces. I don't suppose you know anyone who sells these complete?"

This problem has been with us for years, and we know of no one who stocks brass strip fine enough for this purpose. We have recently approached all the major material suppliers for a quote on having some specially made up, but they all quote a minimum order of something like four hundredweight, or a hundred pounds-worth. We are now having several sizes made up, and will be happy to supply small quantities to collectors. Please let us know the exact size and length you require.

The centre pieces are in no way standard and could not be stocked. Missing pieces must be pierced out by hand from brass of the right thickness, using a jewellers saw. Silversmiths are often good at this, or you might find a professional saw piercer in your local directory. Probably you will also need the services of a professional engraver, and he will probably be willing to get the piercing done for you. In any case, the engraving will probably have to be done before the piercing. It may be possible to use existing pieces of brass inlay for a pattern.

Brass inlay must not be hammered in or it will curl up. It is laid with ordinary hot glue, and a soldering iron may come in useful. In certain cases, a tiny hole is drilled in the brass and it is pinned down with a tapered brass pin, the top of which is rivetted and filed flush so that it does not show.

"The back of my musical box is very badly worm eaten, and quite spongy in places. Is there anything I can do about this, or will I have to find another case?"

Wherever possible you should try to preserve the original. Fortunately there is a preparation for the treatment of woodworm called Xylamon which has been used by leading European museums for many years in preference to other better advertised brands. It does not smell, does not stain the wood (use Xylamon Clear), does not attack the glue or metalwork and is not oily so that you can polish over it within a day or so instead of waiting for months. A variety called Xylamon hardening has been produced especially for museum restorers, and on being injected into the wood through the holes sets hard in about two hours, binding together the remaining fibres and dust as well as killing existing worm and giving protection. The holes can be filled the same day, and it is probably better to do so (for the box, not for the worm!). Both Xylamon Clear and Xylamon hardening are available from Messrs. Carson Paripan, or if you have any difficulty in obtaining it just let us know.

"At the base end of the comb of one of my boxes there are two teeth which have the top 3/8" missing. I propose to repair these but may I ask whether I may join or butt a piece of metal to the existing tooth or should I take out and replace the whole tooth?"

It is perfectly possible to replace only the end of the tooth in the case of base teeth where the break occurs outside the lead tuning weight in a part of the tooth which does not flex. This will not affect the part of the tooth which bends to produce vibration. It is better musically than replacing the whole tooth as the tone will remain the same, but it is difficult to make a neat job of it.

If you make a butt joint, file the broken end on a slop to provide a large area of contact for the new end. Alternatively, if you are very skilful with files, make a mortice joint.

It is very difficult to solder on the new end without the tuning weight dropping off. Try wedging the weight with strips of card between it and adjoining weights before applying heat. Alternatively there are

now some very good metal adhesives used in the aircraft industry, but in general these are dangerous to handle and not available, which is a pity as anything which can hold an aeroplane together should be strong enough for teeth. We are currently experimenting with an adhesive called ISI2 supplied by the makers of L. & R. watch cleaning fluid, and will publish our results in due course. If any of our readers has found a good answer to this problem, please write in to Question and Answer.

"Do you recommend the honing of combs as a fairly common necessity or should it be more of a last resort? If it does become necessary what means would you advise, the same as the books give or something else?"

The honing of combs is definitely not a job to be undertaken lightly as it is very easy indeed to seriously upset the tuning of the comb by removing metal. Even if care is taken not to take more metal off the tips of the treble teeth, because of their lightness any metal at all removed, especially at the end of the tooth where it will exert a greater moment of force, will very quickly raise its pitch to a noticeable amount. It is so very easy for a box to be completely ruined by honing that unless you are really very skilled it is better not to attempt it.

The method described in the books is alright as far as it goes, making use of very fine wet and dry emery paper stuck with water to a sheet of plate glass, but it must be plate glass as ordinary glass is not flat enough and will bend. Proceed with great care, checking the level of the tips constantly with a straight edge. A rule will not do, not even a steel rule, as it is not straight enough. Ideally use an engineers straight edge (very expensive) or a piece of ground flat stock as used to make new teeth (very cheap). Before starting, check that the lower edges of all the teeth are exactly the same height, or when you hone to the same angle the tips will not all finish up the same length, and they must. For this reason the "chisel edge" may in fact have to be blunted. Slight rounding of the tip in a longitudinal axis will not cause the tip to fall off sideways from the pin. Indications that honing is necessary are that a tooth being plucked perfectly in register does not vibrate straight up and down, or that there is an audible grating sound as the pin moves across the flat end of the tip. It is possible that some teeth have a slight groove deliberately made on the underside to cause them not to drop off the pin too soon, and sometimes the underside is hollow ground to help the action of the damper. We have found this on some early Lecoultré combs.

"My Nicole Piano Forte box has a piano comb which appears to play just as loudly as the forte comb. The

box plays beautifully, and there is no sign that the combs have had their positions altered. Would you advise me to take the piano comb back a shade or leave well alone?"

The piano forte effect is produced by an essential difference between the two combs. If there is a tooth on each comb playing identically the same note, the tooth on the piano comb will be thinner and lighter in weight than that on the forte comb, and will play less loudly for a given degree of pluck.

In addition to making use of the difference in loudness between the two combs, the arranger could make a note louder by sounding two or more teeth of the same pitch at the same time. A well arranged forte piano box should play with the degree of loudness required by the musical passage being played at any one time, rather than show off the difference between very loud and very soft just for the sake of doing so.

If your musical box is playing well, and the timing is right, leave well alone; just sit back and enjoy yourself listening to a well arranged box. Moving the piano comb back will make it play more quietly, but it will also allow the teeth to drop off the pins sooner, thus altering the timing. You could try tilting the comb back slightly instead of moving it, and this could make it play more softly without altering the timing, in which case you lay a strip of paper under the front edge of the comb base.

If the timing is out as well as the piano comb playing too loudly, it could be necessary to move the piano comb back. This is a dangerous operation, to be approached with extreme caution. On no account must anything be filed. The steady pins are bent slightly forward to move the comb back, using a pair of pliers with one jaw against the steady pin and one jaw against the front of the comb base. Fine adjustments are then made by tapping the comb forward, which is an even more dangerous operation, a block of brass is laid along the back of the comb base, and this is tapped. Never tap the comb directly with anything at all.

"Some bedplates, including those of some disc machines, are painted silver rather than gold, perhaps because of some part of the movement being nickel plated. May I ask your view of whether it is permissible to change the silver colour to gold? It seems so much more pleasant as a background colour".

There is always the temptation for a restorer to improve on the original, and if alterations are permitted at all, where do we draw the line between what is permissible and what is not? Sometime we find a fault on a box which was there when it was made, and in such a case we do what we think the manufacturers would have intended and we put it right. We recently

found a Nicole Freres with one wrongly tuned tooth; it only played once, on one tune, and had obviously been missed by the inspector, and so we put it right. We found a six bell box in which the cylinder was pinned for six bells, but there were only five sets of linkages with two of the bells ganged together. In such a case it was probably right to put in the missing linkage and restore the box to what the designer intended, thereby making it a better box. We had an organ box in which, as is so often the case with organ boxes, the bellows were badly designed and inadequate and had never been capable of making the box play well; in that case we left the original bellows alone, but the purchaser had new ones made and improved the box; who was right? The guiding principle behind all good restorers is that they must exercise humility before the object. On the whole, I would say leave the finish of a box as the original designer intended, and you will be surprised how the effect of silver paint with nickel grows on you.

Member D.S. Wilkes of Cambridge, New Zealand, has sent us details of two Nicole Freres boxes in his possession including Gamme Number, Serial Number and Programme. He is also restoring a box "recently rescued from a hen house. The movement at first looked beyond repair, but once the bird droppings and feathers were cleaned off there was obviously a good chance". He is using aeromodelers 0.01" control line wire for the pins. This is of course piano wire, but from a novel source. He says; "One thing I have noticed with my Nicole boxes is that the combs do not match the cylinder - they have extra teeth on the treble end. I would be interested in your comments on this."

This is not uncommon with musical boxes, and merely indicates that a box using standard sizes of cylinder and comb plays tunes which do not make use of the extreme treble teeth. Often enough such unused treble teeth are actually removed by the manufacturers, though not on Nicoles, and it may look as though the comb is broken. Sometimes the last tooth is unused and is left thick, giving protection to the treble end of the comb.

Member T.V. Wetherell of County Durham writes:

"I am fairly new to cylinder music box collecting. I suspect that my latest acquisition may be a mandoline type box but I have not sufficient experience to decide this.

Could you tell me the precise criteria which define a box of this type? What key observations should the novice make to be certain one way or the other?

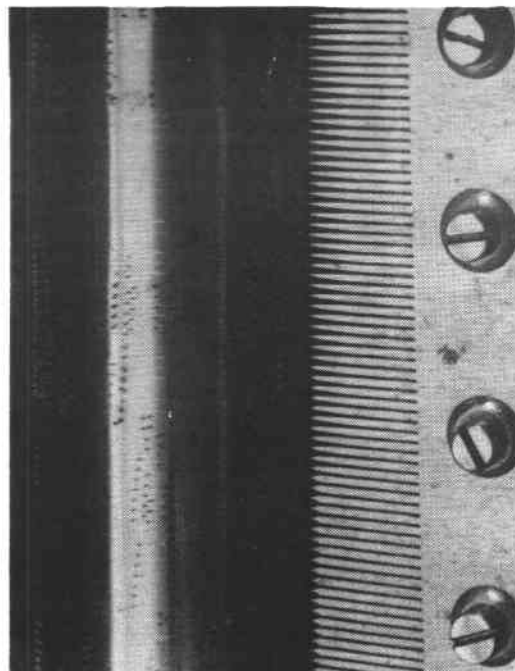
The box in question is a Nicole Freres a Geneve

Pianoforte, No. 27806 Gamme No. 1394. Would this help to determine whether it is a mandoline box?"

Mr. Wetherell, you seem to quote from the tune

The best way of identifying a mandoline box is by ear, as you will be able to hear the rapid repetition of notes in the melody which gives this type of box its name. It will be found by sounding the comb (taking care not to disturb the dampers) that teeth will be tuned in groups of six or more in the melody section of the comb, i.e., in the centre. The mandoline effect is produced by sounding each of these teeth one after the other in quick succession, and this will mean slightly diagonal rows of pins on the cylinder which are clearly visible on a good mandoline box. So if you think that a box is a mandoline, and it does not say so on the tune card, listen to it for rapid repetition of notes, and look out for the very characteristic arrangement of the pins.

If the mandoline effect is carried right down into the bass harmony, the deeper notes will tend to run into one another and produce the illusion of a continuous note. Such a box may well be that sought after rarity, the mandoline organocleide.



Close-up of a cylinder of a mandoline movement.

Editor: Keith and Cliff urgently require more questions so as to keep this series running smoothly. The address is: 93, Hornsey Road, London N.7. 6DJ.

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A sample of the file cards which will be made up by Arthur Cunliffe from questionnaires returned by Members.

BOOK REVIEW

EDISON CYLINDER RECORDS, 1889-1912
by Allen Koenigsberg, 1532 Ocean Avenue,
Brooklyn, New York, 11230, U.S.A. \$12.95.
Illustrated. Softbound.

There are many collectors of mechanical musical instruments whose interests extend to the early gramophone and phonograph. Indeed, it might justifiably be argued that the talking-machine was a logical development, albeit by a different process, of the musical box.

I have always marvelled at the single-mindedness of many phonograph buffs who believe quite sincerely that Thomas Alva Edison's sole purpose in life was to create the phonograph. The fact that he made the first in 1877 and did nothing more to it for almost eleven years, by which time competition was springing up, is to these enthusiasts a poorly-explained lapse of conduct on the part of their demigod. The truth, as is known to those who have taken the trouble to examine in entirety Edison's career and achievements, was very different. Edison always had far more projects in hand than he could cope with. Having stumbled accidentally on the circumstances which made the phonograph possible, he failed completely to see it as a means of entertainment but saw it as an office dictating machine. Almost immediately, though, he entered the race to produce artificial light by the electrical heating to incandescence of a suitable element. Edison made and lost fortunes time and time again, and always had to strive harder and harder for his goal. He had patents stolen, infringed and queried. He was swindled, derided, encouraged and then plunged into the miseries of failure more than once.

Small wonder, then, that the phonograph was a slow starter. Its inventor had far more important things on his plate. And whilst the phonograph launched itself down the lawsuit-strewn avenue to production success, its creator was physically supervising the laying of the first electricity mains in New York. But Edison's talking machine prospered in its own way, and its name went down in history. The man whose working week was frequently more than 112 hours also gave us the very first talking moving picture - as early as February 17th 1913 - with the aid of the phonograph.

And so it comes as a pleasant surprise to see some of the history of the phonograph set down fresh and for the first time in Allen Koenigsberg's book. The major part of the book is a listing of the Edison two-minute cylinders recorded in the United States. The author

has had access to hitherto unpublished information from the Edison Company and has been able to index the artists who recorded for Edison, the recordings themselves, and to include much early information. The opening 13 pages are devoted to an illustrated history of the phonograph and reproduces with explanations the controversial 'first drawings' of the tin-foil phonograph which it is now almost certain were annotated years after their first appearance.

For the phonograph collector and historian this is a valuable book. One wishes, however, that a better system of binding could have been used rather than the unsightly plastic comb which makes the pages close untidily. A very fine set of reproductions of Edison box labels and record slips concludes the body of the work. The Bibliography lists only some of the relevant titles, omitting some singularly important ones.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Wetherell of Sunderland writes:

I wrote to you some time ago asking how to identify a mandolin box and you passed my letter on to Keith Harding. I have not heard from him and I notice from the current issue of *The Music Box* that my query is not included. However, I have done some further research and feel that I do indeed have a mandolin box and therefore I am sending you the details of it.

This is a Nicole Freres Box. No. 27806. Gamme No. 1394. I suggest it is a Pianoforte-Overture Box. The four tunes are:—

1. Overture — CENERENTOLLA — ROSSINI
2. Overture — FIGARO — MOZART
3. Overture — DAME BLANCHE — BOIELDIEU
4. Overture — L'ITALIENNE — BELLINI

The tune sheet is silver engraved with the titles, the movement number, gamme number and the word 'Pianoforte'. Engraved along the bottom of the plate are the words "Fabrique par Nicole Freres pour Whytock & Sons, Dundee" (more about this later).

The mechanical details are as follows:—

Three left hand control levers (including instant stop).

There is a detachable lever ratchet wind which engages a square spindle protruding from the left side of the box. I think this is unusual. Nowhere have I seen reference to any type of detachable winder other than a key.

The winder is kept in a small wooden compartment at the right hand end of the machine which has a wooden cover.

The remainder of the mechanism is covered with a glass lid. The controls and spindle are covered with a hinged flap.

The bed plate is brass, stamped with the words Nicole Freres a Geneve in the top left corner and 27806 in the top right corner.

The cylinder is approximately 3½ inches in diameter and 16½ inches long.

The piano (right hand) comb is approximately 4½ inches long, is secured by four screws and has 67 teeth. The separate forte (left hand) comb is approximately 12 inches long, is secured by ten screws and has 168 teeth. All teeth are intact.

These are the details of the case:—

The outside of the lid is heavily and very ornamentally inlaid with brass strips and many coloured enamels. The inside of the lid is inlaid simply with satin wood, as are both ends.

The front of the box is inlaid with brass and enamel thought not so heavily as the lid.

The case is made of rosewood and measures 26½ inches long and 10¼ inches wide x 8 inches high. There

is also a wooden stand with turned legs and castors obviously dating from the same time and fitting the box exactly and obviously intended to be part of the outfit.

Apart from the dirt of ages the box is in excellent condition. It appears to me that it has been in the same family all its life and has been well cared for.

The enamel of the lid has suffered somewhat, presumably due to the effect of sunshine. The mechanism looks very good, all the teeth, pins and dampers are intact although obviously needing some adjustment.

To try to trace something of the history of the box I wrote to everyone in Dundee by the name of Whytock. It appears that the firm in question was a large old established firm of jewellers, silversmiths etc., but they ceased business a few years ago on the death of the last member of the family.

The Editor writes:

It would seem that Mr. Wetherell has got himself a beautiful and rare piano forte overture Nicole. Whether or not it is Mandoline as well it is not possible to say from his description. The ratchet winder mentioned, although unusual, is not rare. The interesting thing is to find it with a box such an early serial number. It is normally associated with the interim period before the complete changeover from key to lever (c. 1860). Perhaps we can prevail on our lucky member to let us have a photo. of the box for publication. Question and Answer are in fact answering Mr. Wetherell's query in this issue.

Member S.O. Ripley of Eastbourne writes:

Can any member help me to identify the following key-wind cylinder musical box?

The case is in fruit wood. The movement has three control levers enclosed by a flap. The bedplate is in brass with the number 20193 stamped on it. It has a one-piece comb and the cylinder is 4½ inches long. It plays four tunes and the only mark is a letter J on the comb.

I should like to see a series of reproductions of tune sheets published in the *Journal* as I feel sure it would help more members to identify the makers of the boxes they own.

Member J.C. Austin of Chesterfield writes:

I was looking through my Scrap Book the other day and came across the Enclosed Newspaper cutting which appeared in the *Daily* in 1934, and I wondered if it would be of any interest to you for material in the *Music Box* as it expresses some peoples feeling for Music Boxes some 38 years ago.

A BOX OF MEMORIES

By G. M. MURRAY

WE found the musical-box in the lumber-room. When we discovered that it was not in good working order we had no idea that the canned-music mechanicians of to-day would be frightened of it. But they were.

Once dusted and downstairs, the musical-box was responsible for moments of sentiment. On the polished rosewood lid appeared a pattern symbolising Music—a mandolin chastely wreathed in forget-me-nots and surrounded by fat-faced cherubs. The dust had covered it, and the years had swept it from memory; those frantic years which had drowned the pretty melodies of the musical-box in floods of rag-time, jazz, hot rhythm, and "scat" singing.

There was magic in the rosewood case. It brought back days when the world was younger. Memories of gaslight and tasselled sofas—not so very far away, really—when the little silver drum, the brass cylinder and steel comb of the musical-box were, in the eyes of children, marvels of the drawing-room.

ITS name held something of the simplicity of a period which called a spade a spade. Tunes in a box. What other name could there be but musical-box? And such tunes. The mechanism cast dainty drops of melody into a room seething with complex chords.

We turned the wireless off to listen.

The first notes came slowly, uncertain, perhaps, of their welcome. Then the frail brass regulator, shaped like a butterfly's wings, gathered speed, and the box produced a series of tinkling notes such as Titania might have shaken from a lily-of-the-valley. At intervals the bells sounded and the absurd

drumsticks struck the parchment with the stiff precision of a drummer in a band of toy soldiers.

But age had told on the musical-box. After a few gay bars it faltered and stopped, as if shy in the presence of overpowering modern rivals. The striker of one bell was raised, and two drumsticks were frozen in mid-action, stricken by the spell of the Sleeping Beauty.

We took the musical-box to a music shop for repairs. The manager came forward, looked at it, and paused.

"I used to have one of those," he said at last. "Bought it when the children were young—long before the war. It used to play—"

He stopped, drew himself up, quickly assuming the business manner. But he would not repair the musical-box. Not quite in his line; no facilities for mending it. Sorry. . . .

THE man at the bicycle and gramophone repairs was startled when the rosewood box jangled down on his counter. A youngish man, he had not seen one before. After gingerly raising the lid he would not venture his fingers into the strange interior. No, he couldn't undertake the job. Knew nothing about such things. Best take it to someone who understood musical instruments. It was with a look of relief that he saw it leave the shop.

The musical-box travelled to a sewing-machine expert, a garage-keeper, an ironmonger, and an odd-job man. It might, in the last resort, have gone to a blacksmith, "to see what he could do with it."

But we found the watchmaker, a venerable man with a white beard, and spectacles on the tip of his nose. He received the musical-box into his shop with open arms. Was it fancy, or did his beard tremble just a little, his mild eyes glisten, as he set it down tenderly on his bench among some orphaned mainsprings? Certainly he spoke in sentimental vein for several minutes.

Never mind what he said about the musical-box. He fixed it.

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- 613 Armand Muflarz, 93 Chemin Des Pechaurs, 94, Villeneuve, St. Georges, Paris, France.
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IMPORTANT SPECIAL NOTICE

Members are asked to take note that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will not be held at the Great Western Royal Hotel, as previously announced. It will take place at the KENSINGTON CLOSE HOTEL, WRIGHTS CLOSE, LONDON, W.8. The particulars of this Meeting will be circulated as usual.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

JUNE 2nd and 3rd, 1973. The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the KENSINGTON CLOSE HOTEL, WRIGHTS CLOSE, LONDON, W.8.
SEPTEMBER 8th 1973. A Provincial Meeting will be held in LIVERPOOL.
OCTOBER 13th 1973. The Winter Meeting in London.
MARCH 9th 1974. A Provincial Meeting at Manchester.

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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.

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