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The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

In this issue:

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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From the Editors' Desk

It is said by some people that 'Time flies when you are enjoying yourself'. Well, the summer has flown and I hope that you enjoyed it! It seems quite incredible that this is the issue where we wish you a Merry Christmas – how many shopping days are there left?

Computers are wonderful things but they can cause problems occasionally – and one cropped up with the last issue. We owe a most sincere apology to Edward Murray-Harvey for the apparent attribution of his article to Nicholas Simons. It was due to a miscommunication between the printers and our own computers and we hope that this particular glitch has been fixed. Meanwhile, Edward, we are sorry for the error.

Advertising in Society Journals is always a talking point. As editors, we have responsibility to both the membership and the advertiser. We are always aware that the revenue from our advertisers allows us to have a larger and more colourful journal than we otherwise could afford and the auction houses are very generous with allowing us to reproduce their excellent images. We do try to be absolutely fair in our treatment of the auction houses and incorporate sale reviews and results (when submitted), as we think they are of interest to most collectors. If you disagree, write to the editors!

In this issue we have a most welcome article by Hendrick Strengers on Dutch postcards of mechanical music interest, and a most interesting and comprehensive article on Martinet and Benoit, musical box makers on quite a small scale, by Luuk Goldhoorn. We have received more contributions for future Stray Notes, both from Luuk and from other sources too – look out for them in the next issue! You might also consider how you could contribute to this ongoing venture. Always remember that this is your magazine and this is one area where a whole article is not necessary – just a note of something that has caught your attention would be sufficient, and welcomed.

The journal is slightly late this time because of an ongoing discussion over Don Busby's soft soldering techniques. We are, as you will be aware, publishing Don's articles on how he built a musical box from scratch. Don has promised an explanation of his techniques in the next issue.

Please note that Kevin McElhone, our Membership Secretary, has been forced to change his email address. Please note his new one on the Officers page.

Finally, on behalf of the President, the officers and ourselves, we take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year for 2012 – a special year for our Society!

Front cover illustration:

The Hooghuys Dance organ "Condor"

Contents

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President's Message No. 22

With our 50th Anniversary fast approaching, I hope you will go back with me to look at some of the moments in the history of our Society in an attempt to catch the mood of the occasion or just wallow in nostalgia.

In 1962 the gradual recovery from the wartime years and the general feeling that things were getting better led to a great explosion of leisure activities and well being at that time which in turn led to the founding of a great number of clubs and societies. It has often been said put 10 British people together and they will form a club! It was certainly true at that time and so, not 10, but 28 people got together and decided to form the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Cyril De Vere Green, a well known Harley Street dental surgeon, was heavily involved in founding the Society. The desire to become independent from the MBSI was also in the minds of our founding members. It has to be said though that the MBSI gave great support and encouragement to us to achieve our aims.

Looking back at some of the early records of the Society it is amazing that we survived at all. There was little money and the early magazines relied on a duplicator and great enthusiasm and not a lot else except a great desire to succeed and find out a lot more about this wonderful world of mechanical music.

John E. T. Clark who had been connected with Nicole in their later days became our first President. He gave us our first publication and his book was regarded as the Bible of mechanical music at the time. We were fortunate in that Cyril De Vere Green was able to use his good standing in society to provide a great deal of the wherewithal to keep going in those early days.

Our first Vice President was the redoubtable Gerry Planus. This colourful character was a Barnardo boy who had turned his hand to dealing in antique sewing machines. He soon found musical boxes and they became his passion. There were often more than 30 in his shop. Gerry had a unique sense of humour which often manifested itself in his writings.

Our first overseas member was Lt. Colonel Jackson Fritz who was a Dental surgeon with the American forces over here. He apparently was a collector of some repute who allegedly threw his television set away in favour of his musical boxes. Why dentists seem to be attracted to the Society I will never know! Something to do with teeth!

Arthur Ord Hume became our first editor; a position he was to hold for many years. In later times he jokingly said it was because he was the only one that had a pencil. Arthur's reporting and research undoubtedly set the Society off on the right track. His work has proved to be a good base to build on and fortunately for us, subsequent editors have risen to the task.

Looking through the first few volumes of The Music Box is interesting in that it shows not only how the Society grew steadily, but also paints a picture of how everyday life has changed. We had several famous people who were members of the Society who were quite prepared to have their home addresses printed in the journal and welcome visitors to their homes. This openness and lack of concern would just not happen today.

One constant theme running through the whole of our 50 years has been concerns about keeping up the membership numbers. This has gone on from day one when the membership target was one hundred members. Right up until the present day, Membership Secretaries have always worried about these figures but somehow we have managed to keep going. The pessimist in me says not for much longer and the optimist says we will always have enough new members to keep going. I believe that, in spite of the usual gloom and doom of the present day, we should be optimists and think positively about our future.

Next time I hope to take you on another journey back into the past and see if a few highlights can be found for your information and enjoyment. If you have any entertaining stories of the past please let me know or better still write a letter to the editor.

There should be advance news of our proposed new publication about disc boxes in this issue. I strongly urge all to support the idea and place your advance orders as soon as possible. The book promises to be an authoritative publication on the topic and I have little doubt that it will quickly become the leading tome on the subject of disc boxes.

Arthur Cunliffe

STOP PRESS

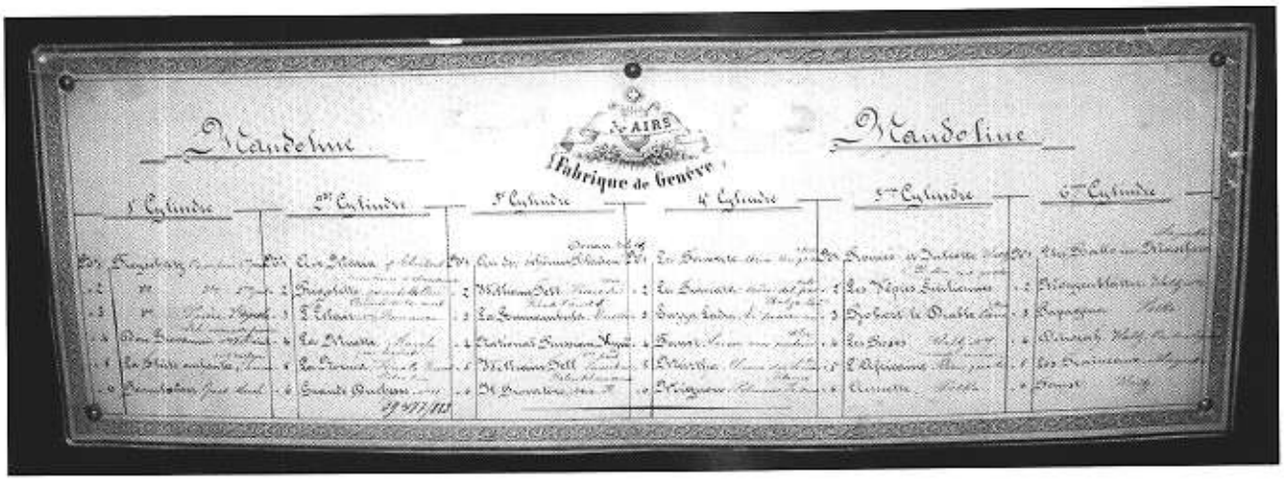
It is with great pleasure I can inform members that Bob Yates has kindly agreed to become our next Joint Vice President.

Bob is a past President of the MBSI and presently hold a number of important posts within that Society. His knowledge and expertise will be of benefit to us and I hope that this will be the start of a long and happy term in office for Bob. His appointment also recognises the excellent and long standing relationship that exists between the MBSI and the MBSGB.

Bob is already known to many of us and, all being well, we should be able to meet him again when he comes over for our 2012 Anniversary meeting. We look forward to seeing Bob then.

Arthur Cunliffe

Register News No: 73



Information on how the musical box industry organised their business is difficult to find and so few facts exist that it is not easy to say with any certainty what really did happen. This has resulted in rumours and speculation which have little or no evidence to support their substance. Take for example the idea that once circulated in the early days of the Society that all boxes that had the double cross type of corner joint were used solely by Langdorff. Fortunately it was quickly realised that the double cross joint was a recognised method of making a case and there were many case makers that used this type of construction. The damage had been done however and boxes wrongly attributed to Langdorff because of this misinformation are still turning up today.

When looking at Nicole boxes we do seem to have a plethora of opinions being banded about without any sound evidence to support them. Take for instance the term "trade box" being used to describe a box that was a sample box taken round by a commercial traveller, presumably employed by Nicole. These boxes were said to always have blue tune card. There is no proof that Nicole ever employed commercial travellers and, if they did, would all their samples have had blue tune cards? I wonder who coined the term "trade box" and who has the evidence to support this theory?

This leads on to the fact that Nicole certainly did use various tune sheets. Some were brass or silvered metal; some were printed on green card, others on blue whilst the majority were printed using a buff card. The late Anthony Bulleid was of the opinion that it was the various printers that were using whatever stock of card they had to hand at the time but I believe that the basic three colour card system of green, blue and buff was used by Nicole for a reason that has long been lost to us. Maybe that is was to enable them to categorise a type of box quickly as to quality, type, cost or distribution. We have no records to consult but there must have been a reason for using the different colours.

Without having any conclusive proof for making the following statements, I believe that boxes bearing a green tune card were reserved for better quality boxes playing either overtures, or well known operatic selections. The only evidence I can present comes from analysing the Register to see what transpires. This at least is fact and not an opinion. There were 47 boxes with green tune cards on the Register commencing at serial number 25,975 and finishing at 36,216. Of these boxes 26 were forte piano, 12 were overture and 7 were 2 per turn. Some were ratchet wind and one was made especially for The City Musical Repository. All seem to have been put into good quality cases with fine inlay to the lids. Make of these figures what you will but over half of them were forte-piano and a quarter of them were overture boxes. Maybe Nicole did use green tune cards for their "better" or out of the ordinary boxes, but who really knows?

Turning now to the boxes with blue tune cards the figures become more diverse and more difficult to analyse. The Register shows that there are 81 Nicole boxes with blue tune cards. These 81 boxes range from serial number 21,731 to serial number 46,667. Only 4 of these boxes play overtures but we have 14 of them playing forte piano arrangements of operatic woks. 6 were ratchet wind which is a sign of either a better quality box or one specially ordered with that type of winding. 9 boxes played Hymns, 6 were 2 per turn and 25 played a mixture popular airs. It is much more difficult to stop an obvious trend among these boxes. However I cannot spot anything to grade them as being less desirable or of a lower quality.

I know at one time many years ago

a tale circulated that blue tune cards were fitted to boxes that were not quite up to standard. Where this came from is unknown, but I believe Nicole would not have released them onto the market anyway as they would not have wished their good reputation to be compromised. I have never had any reports of a Nicole fitted with a blue tune card play badly or of any repairer finding manufacturing faults

Another story circulating about Nicole is that all their records were destroyed in a fire somewhere around the year 1906. Whether this happened by accident or design is not clear, but once again there seems to be no evidence to hand. If anyone has an account of this happening please let me know.

Finally, the vast majority of Nicole boxes have buff tune cards in various designs as noted in the Tune Sheet Book. They range from overture boxes right through to what a great number of repairers call "standard movements." There is little doubt that these boxes were the "bread and butter" work for Nicole and the fact that so many of them have survived is a great tribute to the workmanship of Nicole and to their quality. The Register shows that of all the manufacturers, the survival rate for Nicole boxes is far higher than other manufacturer. The figure for all Nicole boxes on the Register stands at 3,154 boxes.

I believe that it is important to hear your views on this topic. If you have any evidence on how Nicole worked or have any opinions on any of the above topics please write a letter and share your views with all of us.

The picture selected for this issue of Register News is one of a large tune card fitted to an interchangeable box. The owner of the box believes that the box was made by Bremond and the trade mark sign at the top might very well be by that maker. Has anyone seen that particular type of tune card before and can you add to our knowledge? The register does show that Bremond did make interchangeable mandolin boxes but all the others on record have serial numbers that are at least ten thousand lower. The lyre and Swiss cross was certainly used by Bremond but also by other makers. It will indeed be very interesting to hear your views on the subject.

Arthur Cunliffe

Notes from the Archivist:

I have been asked to inform society members that Mrs M Wright ('Peggy'), has granted the Society written permission to use at its discretion any articles written by her late husband and former member Lyn, with the proviso that they are credited to him. This complements similar permission granted to the Society regarding items written by Anthony Bulleid and Graham Webb, in the case of the former by himself, and in the latter, by Graham's widow, Jo.

Reading Bill Cooper's letter printed in The Music Box Vol 25 No3, in which he mentions acquiring a large number of discs prompts me to ask members if they would kindly send any disc titles, with numbers, to the archivist to help in the compilation of lists of tunes? Incomplete lists may currently be found on the Society's website; this is an on-going project as 'new' titles come to light.

Finally, when reading the journals from 'sister' societies I frequently find references to events which may be of interest to our members; sometimes foreign journals carry details of events in the UK – some of which we as MBSGB members may not even know about! Due to respective publication dates, it is not always possible to advise our members of these events before they take place. Those interested in learning about such events in time to attend may wish to look at the various Societies' respective websites from time to time, where they may be able to access information.

Dates for your Diary 2011

Chanctonbury Ring Christmas Meeting

Saturday 26th November 2011
10.30 coffee for an 11am start
Lunch provided
Please contact Ted Brown on 01403823533

Teme Valley Winders Christmas Meeting

Saturday 3rd December 2011
12 Noon start
Please contact John Phillips on 01584 78 1118

A Note from the Membership Secretary

Just a note to encourage as many members as possible to fill in the survey which is printed on the back of this year's membership renewal form. It has been about ten years since we asked members for your comments and suggestions.

so would like to have your valued opinions so that we can better plan for the future. Please return the completed form to the subscriptions secretary.

Many thanks, Kevin McElhone, Membership secretary.

Report of Society Meeting held at Hull/Scarborough

9th – 11th September, 2011

Fifty four of us, including two visitors from the USA, attended the Society's Autumn meeting, based at the Ramada Inn, Willerby, on the western edge of Kingston-upon-Hull. Once again, organiser Daphne Ladell had found us a well-appointed hotel, evidently a popular venue for weddings and other celebrations. On Friday evening, after an enjoyable three course dinner, unexpected delight was snatched from the jaws of disappointment: the booked entertainers had to 'cry off' at the last minute, but thanks to technical wizardry, we were treated to a video of a Polyphon Mikado, as available to view on YouTube via the MBSGB Website. This was followed by an amusing and salutary 'tale of caution' delivered with great aplomb and panache by Joan Rippengal.

On Saturday morning we were transported (in more senses than one!) to mechanical music paradise in the form of the 'Scarborough Fair Collection', the personal collection of Graham Atkinson. What might have been a tedious coach journey was averted by the opportunity to view the lovely rolling Yorkshire wolds whilst catching up with old friends. We were promised a surprise on our arrival, which transpired to be none other than our very own Dorothy Robinson as our guide for the day, accompanied by husband Don, who treated us to several tunes on one of the two Wurlitzer organs in the collection. We were then treated to a short recital on the other Wurlitzer by local enthusiast Paul McCann, who at only 19 year of age showed great promise for a successful career as a cinema organist.

After coffee Dorothy demonstrated a Hooghuys dance organ, its lively music inducing much toe-tapping and at least one couple to dance. This recent acquisition is the famous

Graham Atkinson with the Scarborough Fair Collection Ruth

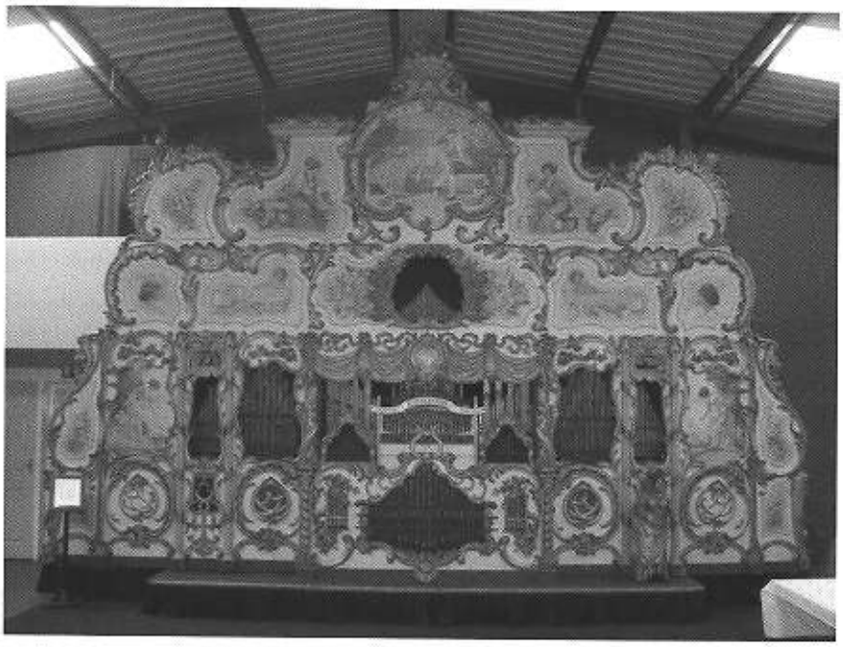
Condor organ previously owned by the Hooghuys family. We were then invited to wander around the collection at will.

The Scarborough Fair Collection consists of a number of fairground and dance organs, about half a dozen fairground attractions (including rides) and several vintage vehicles, including a Stanley steam-driven car. It was noted that until 2009 the world land speed record for a steam car had been held by a Stanley Steamer since 1906, at 127mph. One of the more unusual exhibits is a Calliope. Popular for a short while on the Mississippi riverboats, where it would startle unsuspecting labourers in the fields, its demise was caused to some extent by its voracious consumption of coal. This one is a modern replica running on compressed air rather than steam. It was very pleasing to see so many exhibits displayed in such tip-top condition and hear the instruments in good playing order. The one item looking noticeably distressed, awaiting restoration, was a Tomasso barrel piano.

After a splendid and generous lunch, our tour resumed in a more structured manner as Dorothy led us around the collection, stopping to introduce and then play each organ, including examples by Hooghuys, Ruth, Mortier, Limonaire, Verbeeck, Gavioli, and Anton Pluer. Two further organs, the ex-Benny Irvine Marenghi and the Oktoberfest Voight were off-site between rallies. It was good to see the ex-Graham Whitehead 84 key Mortier in its new home.

As if we weren't already having enough fun we had the chance to have a go on the various rides. The traditional gallopers didn't fail to please, the 'Caterpillar' afforded the opportunity to 'get up close and personal' in private, whilst more than one member confessed to feeling rather queasy after one particularly frenetic ride. The Dodgems/Bumpers were extremely popular with members queuing for their chance to show off their skill and generally create mayhem.

More organ music provoked an impromptu burst of energetic jiving (or jitterbugging) by Keith Hilson and Alison Biden, who managed to



The Hooghuys 'Condor' dance organ

keep going – just - when the tempo switched to the Can-Can.

We were treated to yet more tea and wickedly delicious cakes, and a number of tunes from the DeCap cafe organ, followed by tunes on the Wilhelm Bruder Sohne, Gavioli and Wellershaus organs, all purchased from the Brian Blockley collection.

Exhausted by all the excitement, we boarded the coach home. Having pointed out the only working windmill in the region on the way out, on the return the coach driver varied his route, taking us past the impressive Beverley Minster.

Saturday evening's programme followed the usual pattern of dinner followed by entertainment, this time in the form of a young musician who played many popular 'oldies' on his electronic organ.

On Sunday morning Kath Turner regaled us with an hilarious account of how she became a mechanical music enthusiast, sandwiched between two other talks of a more serious nature. In the first, entitled 'The Autophone: The First Organette', John Farmer gave a history and description of what is thought to be the first organette produced in the USA, although in Europe the Ariston may have preceded it by about eighteen months. Not the most musical of instruments, the Autophone works on pressure, and 'can wear your hand out playing it!' John rounded out his well-illustrated and detailed presentation with an account of the restoration techniques he has used on this instrument.

Restoration was the theme of the morning's third talk, delivered by Bob Ducat-Brown, who described very clearly the stages of hammer veneering a musical box case. Bob's inspiring and well–illustrated talk was both informative yet comprehensible and easy to follow.

A buffet lunch provided by the hotel brought this successful meeting sadly to its conclusion.

The European Project - News Update

The third meeting took place at Ted & Kay Brown's Old School home and museum during the weekend of 26-28 August, 2011. The presidents and other senior members of the European Sister Societies, hosted by Ted, were Project Co-ordinator Dr Giovanni Di Stefano (Italy), Robert Florizoone (representing Johhny Claes, President Belgium), Dr. Hans van Oost (President, Nederlands), Franco Severi (President, Italy), Ralf Smolne (President, Germany), Michel Tremouille (President, France) Jean-Pierre Arnaut (France), Paul Bellamy (Vice-President, GB). Daphne Ladell and Clive Houghton

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Left to right: Michel Tremouille, Jean-Pierre Arnaut, Paul Bellamy, Robert Ducat-Brown, Franco Severi, Giovanni Di Stefano, Robert Florizoone, Daphne Ladell, Ted Brown, Dr. Hans van Oost, Ralf Smolne.

Teme Valley Winders

Autumn Meeting – 24th September 2011

Some 23 enthusiasts were welcomed by John Phillips, who also introduced newcomers to The Winders, Valerie Lusty (a friend of the Phillips's), Martin and Linna Sheridan (Martin is into clocks and model engineering), and Keith and Jean Reedman (long time members of MBSGB, but first time at the Winders).

Nicholas Simons started off the presentations with a demonstration of a 60th Birthday present he had received from Alan and Doris Pratt. Carefully constructed by Alan, it is an animated woodpecker which tweets then pecks a "60" standing next to it. Alan had used a standard plastic singing bird mechanism, modified to give a different "song" and bird movement. The whole thing was very nicely finished and a tribute to Alan's imagination and skill, as well as being a unique present for Nicholas. The next item from Nicholas was an Ebay purchase, a Tomy Tuneyville Piano. This clever little musical toy plays just two whistles using small plastic discs, which, through a set of "stops" on the whistles, manage to play 8-note tunes.

Another Ebay purchase was Bernard Weekes' boy automaton mounted on a box. The boy rocks from side to side as a musical box mechanism plays inside the box. Bernard had spent some time cleaning off the dust and cobwebs, and making some adjustments to the mechanism. Alan Pratt then took over to tell us about a unique item soon to be auctioned by Bonhams in London. It is a very large (21 inch cylinder) interchangeable cylinder box which comes with no less than 45 cylinders. In addition, the provenance with this box indicates that it has never before been sold.

The Strutt-type epicyclic skeleton clock

It was made for an 1885 exhibition and then returned to the ownership of the then proprietor of Nicole, Mr. Charles Brun. It has stayed within the Brun family until the recent death of his great grand-daughter and now has to be sold by her estate. Although priced at £12,000 - £18,000 it would be difficult to predict the final price of this unique instrument. Alan then continued with a presentation of a few other rare items which have recently been sold, including a pair of singing bird pistols which were thought to have sold for around $5.8 million!

To help us relax after that (expensive) excitement, Nicholas Simons played a couple of piano rolls, including Flik-Flak, a very nice arrangement by Niels Berkers, cut by Julian Dyer. Next up, after a little cajoling, was James Buxton, a clock "Winder" who provided us with an illustrated presentation of his work to produce a Strutt's Epicyclic Clock. James explained how, rather than cut out all the intricate frames and other parts by hand, he had utilise a small CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) milling machine, together with SolidWorks design software and Mach3 control software. The result was on display, a very nice looking clock, and a very interesting presentation.

After tea and cakes provided by Hilda, 14 year-old Benjamin Phillips (grandson of our hosts) gave a short presentation about his new business selling screen cleaner (for computers, TVs, etc.) in competition with the likes of PC World, and finished with an irresistible special offer for those present. A very enterprising young man!!

More piano rolls were then played by Nicholas Newble, including pieces by Irving Berlin and Carroll Gibbons. In between rolls, Nicholas was educated by John Phillips into the "proper" way of opening a roll box, devised by the late Frank Holland. More music was then provided by Martin Phillips (son of John) who played a piece on his Viscount digital organ which currently resides at Eastham. During earlier conversation we discovered that Keith Reedman, by chance, had his Triola automatic zither in his

car, so he was persuaded to bring it in and play a few tunes, and also explained how the instrument operates. Although this is a new acquisition for Keith, he is rapidly learning the special skills needed to play the Triola properly.

John Phillips then brought the meeting to a close with a few words about the musical clock mechanism on display, which had been made by Martin Sheridan, and written up in The Model Engineer, and finally John played a few tunes on his Black Forest clock organ, and his Imhof and Mukle organ. Both instruments are playing a little better now that humidity has risen.

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Winders will be the Christmas Meeting on Saturday 3rd December 2011, starting earlier at 12 Noon with a buffet lunch and Mince Pies. Those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm and get directions if required – Numbers will be limited, so please book early. Any instruments, clocks or items of interest, particularly with a seasonal theme, will be welcome.

John Farmer

The European Project - News Update

Concluded from Page 128

(GB) also participated. Apologies for absence were received from Raphael Luthi (President, Switzerland). Robert-Ducat Brown demonstrated the MBSGB updated web-site.

Representatives arrived of Friday and the business meeting was on Saturday. The event included ample time for socialising. Ted & Kay provided sustenance, including a visit to the local Hostelry on Friday evening and a hot buffet meal there on Saturday evening. There was also plenty of time for Ted to entertain us with his extensive collection of mechanical musical instruments. Daphne Ladel also entertained those who stayed over to Sunday with a meal at her 'Local' and a visit to her collection, aided by Clive Houghton. On Saturday afternoon, Robert Ducat-Brown, GB webmaster, demonstrated the latest updates of the MBSGB website.

The meeting made good progress on actions placed at the previous meeting in Ruedesheim (Germany) and planned further progress on the use of terminology, drawings, etc to develop a multi-lingual dictionary and the classification of mechanical instruments. Dr. Di Stefano also summarised the list of books, CDs, etc donated by the participating Societies which were available to the Project and did not conflict with copyright. It is hoped that eminent authors and others such as museums who posses copyright to their own works will be generous and allow access to and use of their material. To this extent, MBSGB have been given copyright to the work of the late Graham Webb, Lyn Wright, David Tallis and Anthony Bulleid.

MBSGB will host Cylinder Musical Boxes& Organettes and have started to assemble a group of people to collect and prepare line drawings, etc. The component parts will be numbered and the English name listed against the number. When complete, they will be used to initiate foreign language translations by circulating to the LINK representatives of each society via the Co-ordinator. Dr. H van Oost is to consider the category: Mechanical Organs. Franco Severi will consider the Barrel Piano. Michel Tremouille will host a category entitled Orchestrions. Other participants will identify categories of their choice and their "LINK person".

Management: The main communication link will be the President (for GB, the vice-President) of each Society. For work in progress on any selected item in the list of categories, each President will seek a participant to link directly with nominated members of other societies and the Co-ordinator in order to complete the translation of terms. The dictionary for a particular category will be complete when it has translation of terms into: French, German, English, Dutch and Italian. Participants may choose to add other languages at their discretion.

Participation of other groups: Members agreed that other societies in their countries or elsewhere may be invited to join the European Project at a later date but only after work on certain category items are in progress or complete. The terms for joining must accord with the arrangements and agreements (e.g. to share cost) established at the time. Some discussion took place about closer future co-operation. Past attempts were rejected (the Bruchsal meeting). It was accepted that all participants of the European Project co-operate as a partnership/ affiliation of completely independent Societies. The participating members will decide collectively on the extent of their participation.

In conclusion, the hidden benefit of this and previous meetings is undoubtedly the personal and friendly relationships that are not only renewed but also extended. As separate societies, we are now able to find areas of co-operation to our mutual benefit and, more important, to attempt to bring this to the world at large and its future generations in a co-ordinated and professional manner.

Restoration *Matters!*

8 – French Polishing

Fig 1. Using the scraper

One of the advantages of French polishing is that it does not require any special equipment and can be done successfully by most practically minded people after a little practice. I suggest that before starting polishing a musical box, or anything else, that you invest a day and practice on a plain piece of wood.

Before polishing of any type can be started the work piece must be perfectly prepared. All stripping, repairs, filling, scraping, sanding and staining must be dealt with first.

Before discussing polishing we will look at these other matters. Information about repairs can be found in past articles in this series or will be in future ones. The necessity to strip or not will depend on the condition of the article.

It is best to take the musical box or anything else that you intend to polish apart as much as possible. With a cylinder musical box, remove the lid, inner lid if it has one, box dividers, lock and hinges. On some later boxes, such as BHA three bells, there are feet, which can be removed with great care. On boxes such as Polyphon 15 ½ inch, there are a lot of pieces of beading, which can be removed with great care. Number all parts and draw a diagram to show where they go. At the end of the project these can be replaced using hot animal glue; this is so that the next restorer can remove them again. The lid of these boxes is made up of several parts and if you feel that you have the necessary skill they can be taken apart. Do not undertake anything that you are not happy about attempting, as you may risk damaging a valuable musical box.

If you decide to strip the woodwork, I would suggest Nitromors Craftsman's Paint Remover, this is not water based, will not raise the grain of the wood and it can be cleaned off with white spirit. Some other types need to be washed off with water, which may raise the grain. Take care if using stripper as it may affect certain types of inlay, it will certainly dissolve mother of pearl and wax inlays. Clean off with white spirit several times, because if any stripper is left it could come back to haunt you later.

Filling can be dealt with by using many of the fillers available today. My favourites are wax sticks and also shellac sticks. In theory french polish will not stick to wax, but for very small damage it does not seem to matter, especially wood worm holes. The wax is shaved off the stick with a knife and warmed by rolling in your hand, in cold weather it can be held under warm water. Apply by pressing into the hole with a finger or thumb, smooth off with a plastic scraper or back of an old chisel, which may be warmed. When hard polish off with a soft cloth.

The shellac sticks can be melted with a small soldering iron and dripped into the hole, it will dry almost immediately and can be trimmed flush with a chisel or Stanley blade. A little practice is a good idea to find the best way to remove the excess shellac. It can be sanded with very fine sand paper. Both these products are available in a range of colours and you should select the one closest to that of the work-piece, (or darker if in doubt).

Scraping is a wonderful way to get a good finish. The scraper is a flat piece of steel about six inches by three, the two longer sides are given a very slight burr, by using a hard steel rod which is rubbed along the scraper's edge to slightly turn the edge of it. This is then used as shown in Fig 1, to scrape a very small amount of

Cloth size	Wadding size
4 x 4 inches	2 x 2 inches
6 x 6 inches	3 x 3 inches
7 x 7 inches	4 x 4 inches

Fig 2. Rubber material sizes

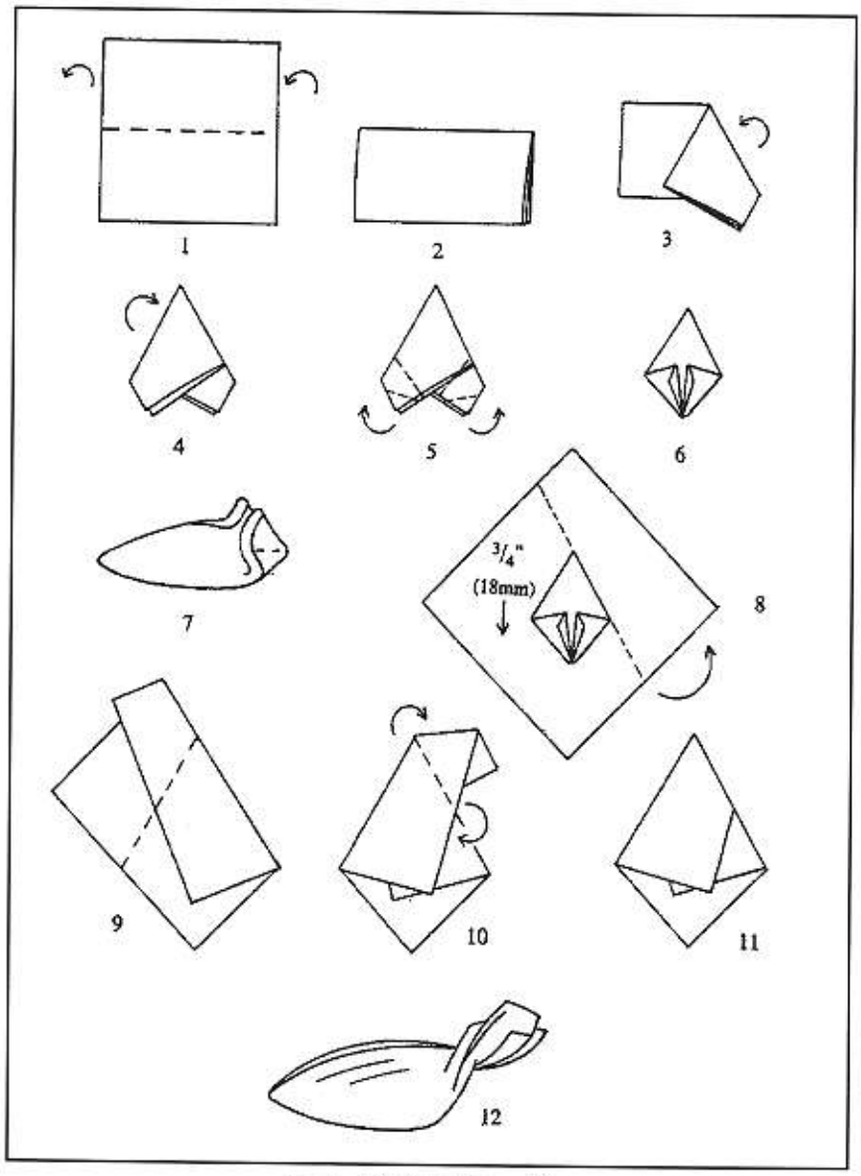

Fig 3. Making the rubber

wood from the surface. It is worth pointing out that fading of wood only penetrates a few thousandths of an inch and can be totally removed by this process. However if you are doing a Pianola, you are in for a very long job.

Any sanding must be done using only the very finest abrasive papers, it is best to have a selection of grades between 100 and 400 grit, as the finer ones will be needed when we get on to polishing. (I will use the old term sand paper, although more advanced abrasives are now used). When sanding take care not to go too deep as the wood may be a different colour underneath. Take a quarter sheet of sand paper and fold the two sides in, just a little less than the centre and work with the grain. Sand paper blocks can be used to smooth filled areas, but should be avoided on large areas, owing to possible unevenness of the surface. Be very careful when sanding edges of the wood, it is easy to wear away the surface and change the wood colour.

Staining if required should be carried out next. Check whether using a stain will alter the colour of any marquetry inlay or stringing especially on musical boxes. Most musical boxes do not require any staining. The sides, back and sometimes the front of musical boxes are often given an artificial wood grain finish and you must decide on the condition of this and how best to deal with it. The art of doing this procedure is called scumbling and uses special paint called scumble, in conjunction with varnish; there is information on the Internet.

In extreme cases you could consider veneering these, especially if it has suffered a lot of woodworm damage (treat for wood worm if still present).

We should now be ready to deal with polishing. In this case, French polishing, although one could also consider using beeswax, which may be more suitable for early musical boxes.

Materials for French Polishing

Polisher's wadding, cotton cloth, several small screw top jars, a one inch and a very small soft paint brush, latex gloves, French or Button polish, linseed oil, methylated spirits, some used pieces of sand paper and some old newspapers. (Suppliers list at end of article)

There are several types of French polish which we might use: Button Polish which gives a slight golden tinge, garnet polish which is darker, clear or white polish and black. You can carry out tests to find the right one for you, probably button or garnet and often black for the inside and lid edges of musical boxes.

Supporting components

Thought must be given to how you are going to support the work between the operations:

Blocks of wood can be used so that polished parts of the box do not touch the workbench.

Small pins can be hammered in to the back of beading and small parts and bent over, so that the part can be hung up on a wire. The best way to deal with finials is to drill holes in a piece of wood to hold them upright, do not make the fit too tight.

The work should be carried out at a nice even temperature, about 15 – 20 degrees centigrade. The area should also be dry. A nice warm summer day should be fine.

Making the rubber

We must now make a rubber to apply the polish. For this you need some polisher's wadding and some clean cotton cloth, Suitable sizes of rubber for musical boxes are shown in Fig 2, however they could be made larger or smaller than these for other jobs. The wadding is shaped and covered by the cloth as in Fig 3, I think this describes it better than written words. In the past cotton wool was used, but the proper wading is far better as it stays springy. When complete an elastic band around the neck will keep it together, Fig 4.

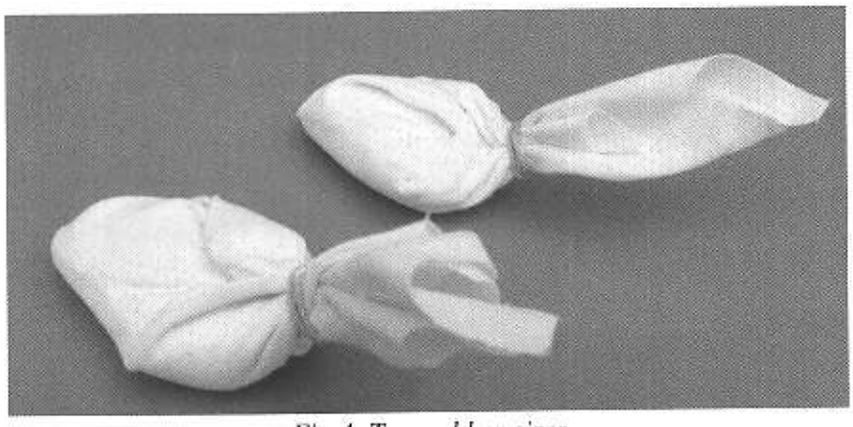

Fig 4. Two rubber sizes

Keep all your little bottles and jars in a box, or plastic food container, especially the jar with the loading brush standing in it, as it can easily be knocked over.

Base rubbers

It is a good idea to wear latex gloves from now on, but change them regularly as polish, which has dried on them may fall off onto the work later.

It is necessary to thin the polish with meths and there are various ways of doing this, the best I find is to mix the correct quantities first and we start by mixing four parts polish to one-part Meths. A set of cooks measuring spoons is very useful. We then need a brush to load the thinned polish onto the rubber 1 inch is about right.

Charge the brush with polish and apply to the rubber, about six brush loads, see Fig 6. Now get a piece of used sand paper placed face down on the table, squeeze the rubber out against the back of the sand paper, then suck it up again into the rubber, do this several times so that the polish is evenly soaked into the rubber. Do not leave any polish behind. Fig 7.

Now start to apply polish to the work with the rubber, by using long straight lines with the grain. The rubber must be moving as it touches the wood, (**the rubber must never be stationary, as it will stick to the surface**). In his excellent book "Traditional French Polishing for Beginners" L J Holmes refers to this as an aeroplane landing and taking off, Fig 8. When the area has been covered put it aside for about 15 minutes and then repeat the process four times, with the rest periods between applications. After the second time leave it a little longer, very lightly rub down with 320 grade sand paper and dust off. Between the earlier coats you may feel that you are missing bits, but these will get filled in.

Bodying up

We now need to carry out the bodying up process and to do this in is necessary to lubricate the rubber with linseed oil, not much is required and it should not be sucked up into the rubber. The best way to apply the oil is to have it in very small bottle, perhaps a miniature gin or whisky bottle. After your rubber has been charged and squeezed out, just hold the open top of the bottle once or twice against the rubber and leave a small amount on the face of it. Then tap the rubber a couple of times on the back of your hand to disperse the oil. The squashing out on the back of the sand paper must be done prior to adding the oil to the rubber.

The polish that has been applied to the work is now in a semi soft state and we need to work this so that it fills the pores of the wood and builds up a shine. Start this by continuing with straight strokes, about four times leaving 10 minutes between and charging the rubber with polish and oil as required. You will feel when it needs more, as it will be harder to move. You should notice a sort of jet stream behind the rubber. Then change to figures of eights for 4 times, fig 9, charging the rubber with polish and oil as it dries out. Leave for a slightly longer time and then change to 4 times doing circles, Fig 10. In

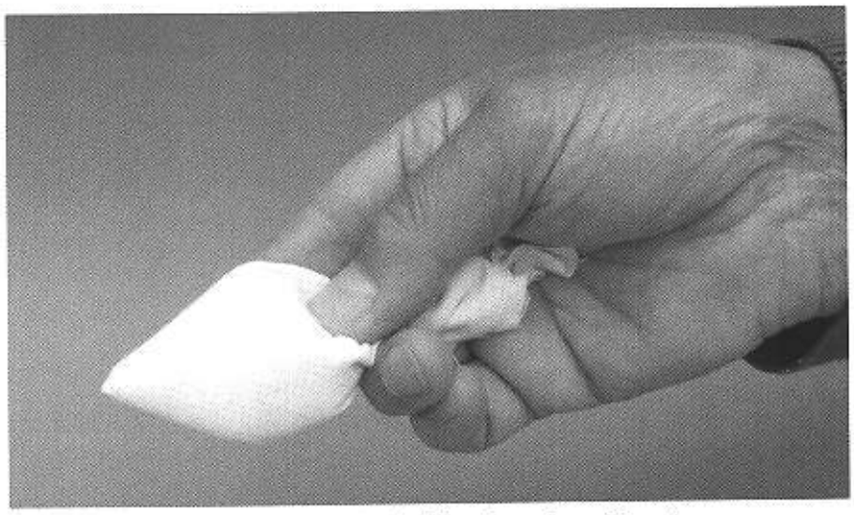

Fig 5. Tuck tail of rubber in palm of hand

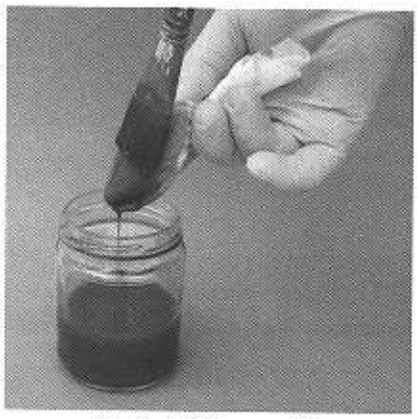

Fig 6. Adding polish

both these cases overlap each figure of eight or circle. The figure of eight should be about 3 inches long and 1 inch deep, work towards you.

Now go back to the figures of eight for a further 4 times. Should the rubber start to stick at any time add more oil to the rubber.

When bodying up edges and beading, use a shuffling motion, roughly an inch forward and half an inch back. The larger the work piece the longer the stroke.

As you may be working on several parts of a musical box or other work piece, the rest times can often be used by working on the various parts. Don't try to do too many at a time, especially if this is your first effort.

Any inside edges or corners should be done using a very small soft paintbrush to reach the areas that the rubber cannot. There is no need to worry about oil when doing these bits, use the thinned polish and deal with the areas between every few coats of polish.

The work must now be left to rest for a longer period of about an hour and a half. If this happens to be lunchtime you have planned it well. Between the coats of polish or at any time that the rubber is not being used, it should be placed in a small screw top jar. Those which contained horseradish, tartare sauce etc. are better than the larger jam jar size, as there will be less air in with your rubber to dry it out.

Removing the oil

The oil, which has been added as a lubricant, must now be removed and to do this we increase the amount of meths, two parts polish to one-part meths. Return to straight lines and go over the work three times (aeroplanes again). Most of the oil should now have been removed, but to make sure, make a new rubber and go over the work again twice.

Polishing inside

Later musical boxes often have black inside and black edges to the lid. This is probably best done after the other areas. It is desirable that the inside of the lid and the edges are done at the same time, especially if the two are rounded, as is often the case. One problem is how to support the lid whilst polishing the edges, as the upper part of the rounded edge must be done with the lid the right way up. One way to deal with this is to use a small screw in each of the two hinge recesses and one where the male part of the lock goes. With great care drill a pilot hole about ¼ inch deep between the two holes already there and screw in a 1¼ inch number six screw. Best to use a hand drill and take great care not to drill too far. This will give three legs to stand the lid on while you polish the edge and can be used to turn the lid over. While polishing the upper part of the lid edges, apply a little hand pressure to the top. Test the strength of this set up before polishing. It is best to leave a 24-hour gap between doing the outside and the black inside.

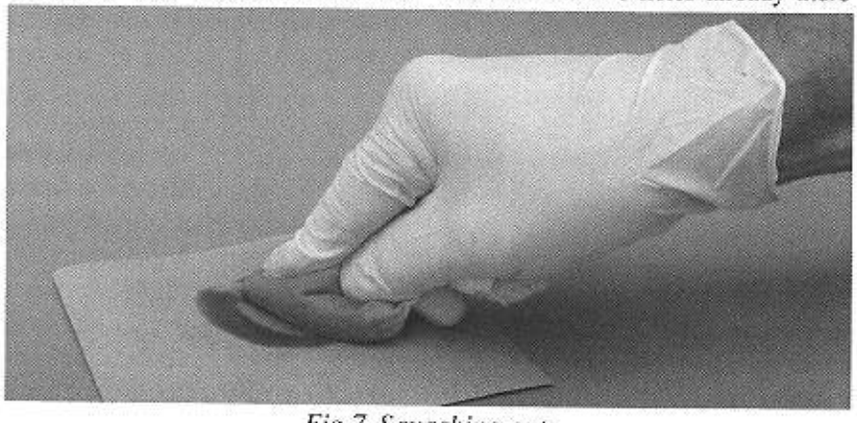

Fig 7. Squashing out

Finishes

In many cases this can now be considered the finished job, although the decision on the next action should be left for a few days. At the end of this time, you may find that the polish has reduced and that there are unwanted pores showing, or that you require a deeper shinier finish. In which case the process should be repeated, after a light sanding.

Musical boxes are normally made from close-grained wood so the finish should be all right. With pianos the process may need to be repeated three or four times to reach a highly polished surface.

The finish after polishing gives a sort of toffee apple appearance and you may like to tone this down. The way to do this is to use a very fine wire wool (0000 grade) and plenty of furniture polish. Go over the work using a very light pressure with the grain, then go over it again using polish and a soft cloth. Only use the best quality wire wool from specialist polish suppliers, some even with five noughts is not very fine. If you are not going to cut back the finish, still apply furniture polish, as this protects the surface.

Cleaning and re-polishing

If your musical box or other instrument needs more than just wax polishing, but it is not necessary to strip the old polish. Or if the sides of the box have an artificial grain finish and you do not wish to strip them, cleaning and re-french polishing may be the answer.

You will need some white spirit in a dish, a piece of wadding or rag, some 0000 grade wire wool and some disposable vinyl gloves. Soak a piece of wadding or rag in the white spirit and apply to the surface.

Then using wire wool, work over the surface with the grain. The idea is to remove all trace of dirt and old wax polish, but not the original surface. This process should be carried out several times to ensure that the surface is completely clean and free from wax. Renew the wire wool regularly as it becomes dirty. Then go over the whole area with a rag soaked in white spirit and when satisfied that it is perfectly clean wipe off the excess white spirit with a soft dry cloth. Leave to dry until the next day, then gently rub down with 320 or 400 grade sandpaper be very gentle, especially around the edges, as it is easy to go to deep in these areas. The idea is to supply a fine key for polishing, not to actually rub the surface down. You can now carry out french polishing as described above.

If there is anything that you are unsure about doing, try it out on the back of your musical box or other project first.

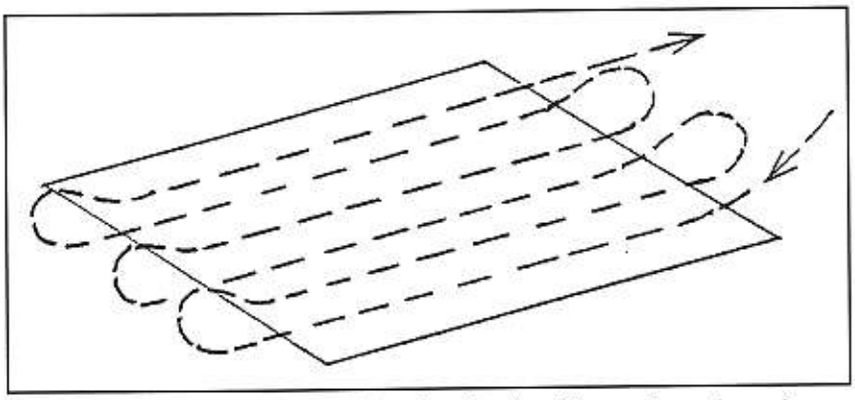

Fig 8. Straight lines should land and take off at ends and overlap

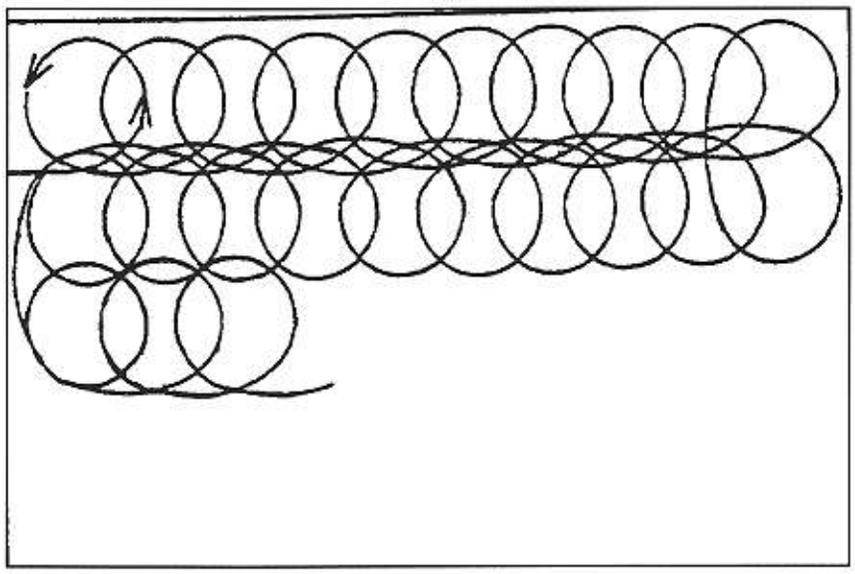

Fig 10. Circles

Author's Note

I have been french polishing for over 40 years and have used many ideas from books; talking to and watching professional french polishers. In 1997 I was faced with re-polishing a Pianola, which was in an extremely bad state. I felt that my methods were a rather confused mixture and that I needed a more positive way of working before attempting this major project. I came across a book "Traditional French Polishing for Beginners" by L J Holmes;

I found this publication extremely helpful. Several of the descriptions and diagrams in this article are reproduced by kind permission of the author.

This highly recommended book for anyone wanting to learn more about french polishing and preparation, is available from:

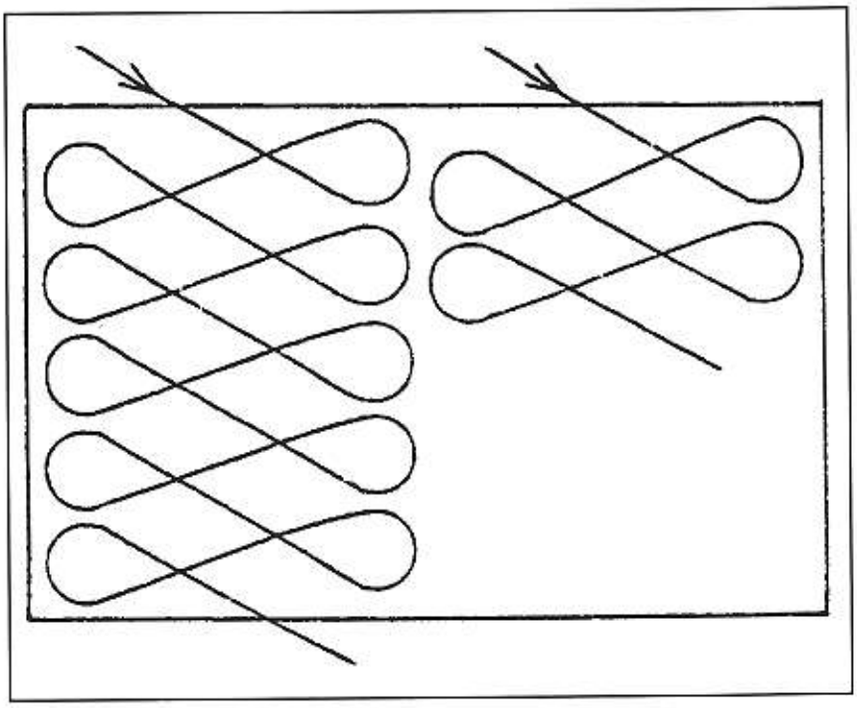

Fig 9. Figures of eight

Stage	No. of rubbers	Dilution of polish
Base rubbers	4 straight clear	4 : 1
Applying oil	4 straight with oil	4 : 1
Figures of eight	2 sets with oil	4 : 1
Bodying up	5 circles with oil	4 : 1
Figures of eight	2 sets with oil	4 : 1
Removing oil	3 straight no oil	2 : 1
Finishing	2 straight clear	
	(New rubber)	2 : 1
Oil still present	Make another new rubber	
Leaving jet stream	2 straight passes	
		2 : 1

Fig 11. Order of work

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Fig 12. Polyphone with polish cut back, all beading and the lid centre were removed whilst polishing was being done. Cylinder musical box with polish left bright

Martinet & Benoit

By Luuk Goldhoorn

There are only a few musical snuffbox makers who signed their works, and one of them was the house of Martinet et Benoit. These manufacturers made, according to the recent literature, quality works. But as in the files kept by our registrar, only three snuffboxes and two cartel boxes with their signature are listed, so their production must have been modest.

Besides these works, another seven snuffboxes are known, making a meagre total of twelve. Two of the snuffbox works have a remarkably big comb of over 100 teeth. Normally 70 was the standard, and even fewer in the second half of the 19th century.

Information about the makers and their products is dispersed over several sources so let us gather them in the following lines.

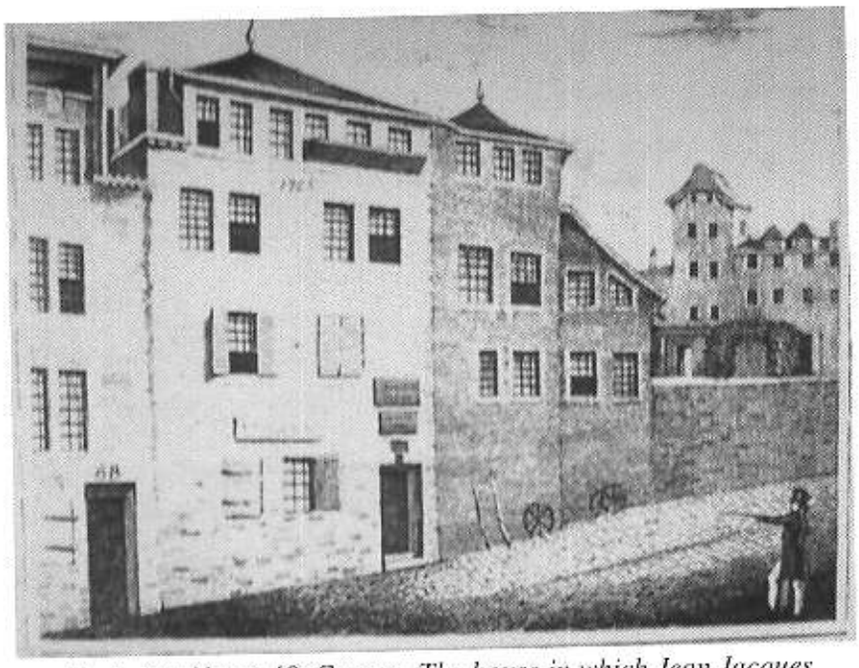

Fig 1. Rue Neuve 10, Geneva. The house in which Jean Jacques Rousseau was born, later occupied by Martinet & Benoit

The Makers

Looking in the available literature about musical boxes, the names are always coupled, but in the horological books Benoit is a frequent name found for watchmakers, but the name of Martinet is not found. Only in Patrizzi's book 'Dictionnaire des Horlogers Genevois' are both names found, although in the opposite order: first Benoit and than Martinet. Their profession is given as *Établisseurs*, which in the horological field is synonymous with fabricants (i.e. manufacturers). Also a place and a date is given. In 1828 they lived on No. 10 Rue Neuve in Geneva.

Patrizzi lists another twenty men with the name Benoit living in Geneva between 1699 and 1895, one of them is Louis Benoit who lived from 1732-1825 and decorated the automata of Jaquet-Droz and Maillardet. The name of Martinet does not appear independently in Patrizzi's book, so we may conclude that Martinet was the business man and Benoit the maker.

In the archives of Pierre Germain, Martinet et Benoit also appear. He also lists a Gebel Benoit at rue Neuve 10, and adds the year 1850, so the same address as in Patrizzi's book. The year1850 is most probably a typing error and 1830 was meant. But this error was perpetuated, and in all the later published books and catalogues this year is given. Why 1850 can't be true will be explained in the section about their products.

Gerrnain also tells us that a Jean David Benoit is listed in the address books of 1861 and 1862, and, most remarkably, a Benoit et Piguet as manufacturers of *pieces à musique* in the address book of 1840.

Fig 2. The name stamp

Fig 3. Martinet & Benoit No. 2181. See also colour page 140

A third source is found in the Gentleman's Magazine from December 15, 1831. There we read that Gebel Benoit et Compagnon lived on the second floor of the house in which Jean Jacques Rousseau (father) was born, in 1712. Their business was given as "*horlogerie et pieces à musique*". (Fig. 1)

Arthur Ord-Hume published this in The Music Box Vol. VI12 p.90. He adds in a comment a.o. 'musical boxes by this maker are of a high quality'. In his book Collecting Musical Boxes (and following editions) he describes Martinet et Benoit as musical box makers around 1850 and Gebel Benoit as a maker of singing birds around 1805. It is of course possible that the father Gebel made singing boxes and the son, also called Gebel, the musical boxes. But as the years 1805 and 1830 are not to far from each other I presume that there was only one Gebel Benoit who in his later years also made musical boxes.

There exists a second contemporary source: *les Indicateurs d'adresses*. In this list, which was irregularly published in Geneva from 1826 onwards the name of Benoit is found in the 1840 edition as a maker of blancs, living at Temple 185. In the same edition is mentioned the firm of Benoit et Piguet as makers of "*pieces à musique*" and living at Longemalle 152. But the firm of Martinet et Benoit is not listed as a manufacturer of musical boxes. That doesn't mean that they didn't exist, there could be numerous reasons why their names were not published. Most probably they wished to be announced as watchmakers, as their musical box production was only a side line. Unfortunately I can't prove this statement as I only had access to the part in which the musical box makers were listed.

The Products

Let us now turn our attention to the products which have survived. As mentioned above, five works are documented in the Register, two cartels and three snuffbox-types. Another seven snuff box types are known to the writer, so in total twelve musical boxes. They all have their name on the comb (fig 2) and, except one, a number which runs from 2181 to 4007. Maybe they built more works but if the comb was not stamped it would hardly be possible to assign such a work to the maker.

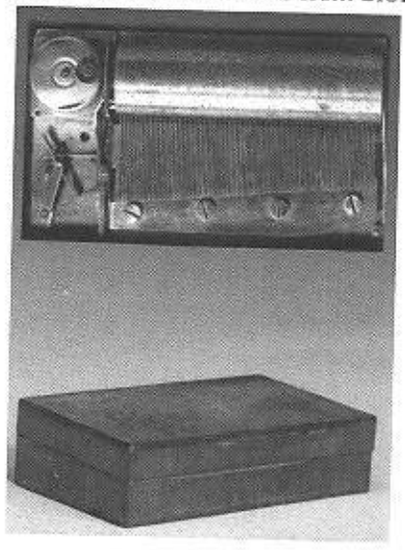

Fig 4. No. 2604

In this range of about 2000 numbers, the Register listed only five. The reason for this very low score is due to the fact that the main part of their production was of snuffbox types, and this type of musical box is far less represented in the Register than cartel boxes. And that in its turn has to do with the fact that the number is not always clearly seen.

Except from what is documented in the Register, no further details of the cartel boxes are known. The first,

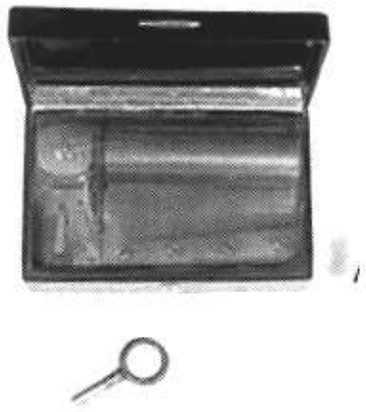

Fig 5. Number not known, ex Marchal collection

with number 3830, is a four tune key-wind box with protruding levers, playing amongst Rossini's Wilhelm Tell on a 5.5" cylinder. It was sold at Christie's on the 28th of July 1994, lot number 168.

The other, with number 3948, is also a four-tune work, which is housed in a cathedral clock.

Remarkable is that these two numbers are in the upper part of the list of numbers. The protruding levers indicate a year of manufacture before 1835. It is of course not impossible to build musical boxes with protruding levers in 1850, but to bring those on the market is another story. That is my first proof that the year 1850 in Germain's archives is a typing error.

Fig 6. Unnumbered movement with 116 teeth

More details are known about the ten musical snuff box types. Three are in a tortoiseshell box, another three are housed in an undecorated tin box and have therefore been used in a necessaire, a work-box or something else, one is in a decorated tin box and the housing of the other three is not known or no longer existent.

The combs of the inspected snuff boxes all have steel dampers and, instead of lead, bass teeth weighted with brass. That was a construction from the early and mid 20's, so one wonders what the reason for such an outdated procedure was. This is my second proof that 1850 was a typing error.

The earliest one, with number 2181 (fig. 3, courtesy of Roy Ison), is in an exceptionally beautiful case, plays two tunes on a comb with 72 teeth Then follows number 2555 which also plays two melodies, one of them the well-known Ranz des vaches. (No photo is available). But those two turn out to be the only standard works: the others play three airs or one air in two revolutions. That they were of high quality is proved by number 2604. (fig. 4). It was sold in 2006 as part of the Ward collection and erroneously described as a three-tune work. In fact it is an overture work playing the overture of L'Italiani in Algeri in two revolutions and therefore fetched £1920. That was far surpassed by the 3-air work (La Dame Blanche, Barbier de Seville and another) from the Marchal collection, sold at Chartres in May 1997, which fetched □3600 without buyer's premium. That has partly to do with the original transportation case which was part of the lot. (Fig. 5)
Their products also belong to the

Concluded on page 144...

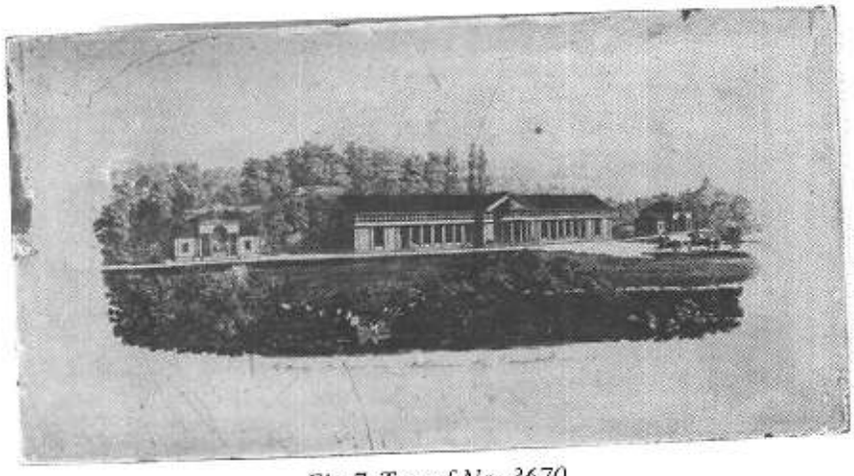

Fig 7. Top of No. 3670

List of the 12 works described

Snuffboxes

Number	Airs	Illus.	
None	1	Fig 6	unpainted tin box: overture in two revolutions. 116 teeth
?	3	Fig 5	tortoiseshell, sold at Chartres, ex Marchal collection
2181	2	Fig 3	tortoiseshell with gold inlay
2555	2		unknown housing, Ranz des Vaches and another
2604	1	Fig 4	unpainted tin box, steel dampers. 7 cm cylinder. Overture L'Italiani in Algeri, in two revolutions 84 teeth
3102	3	Fig 9	tortoiseshell, La Dame Blanche, Flower waltz and another, 73 teeth
3204	3	Fig 10	unpainted tin box, Overture Oberon, Home Sweet Home and another, 73 teeth
3308	1	Fig 11	tortoiseshell. Overture Bid me Discourse in two revolutions, 84 teeth
3670	1	Fig 7,8	decorated tin box. Overture Der Freyschűtz in two revolutions, 123 teeth
4007	3?	Fig 12	no housing

Cartel works

3830	4	keywind. Comb, cylinder 15.5 cm. Exposed controls. Rossini Wilhelm Tell, Oberon, (*Ex John Mansfield Collection, sold Christie's July 1994 – Ed*)
3948	4	keywind. In a cathedral clock.

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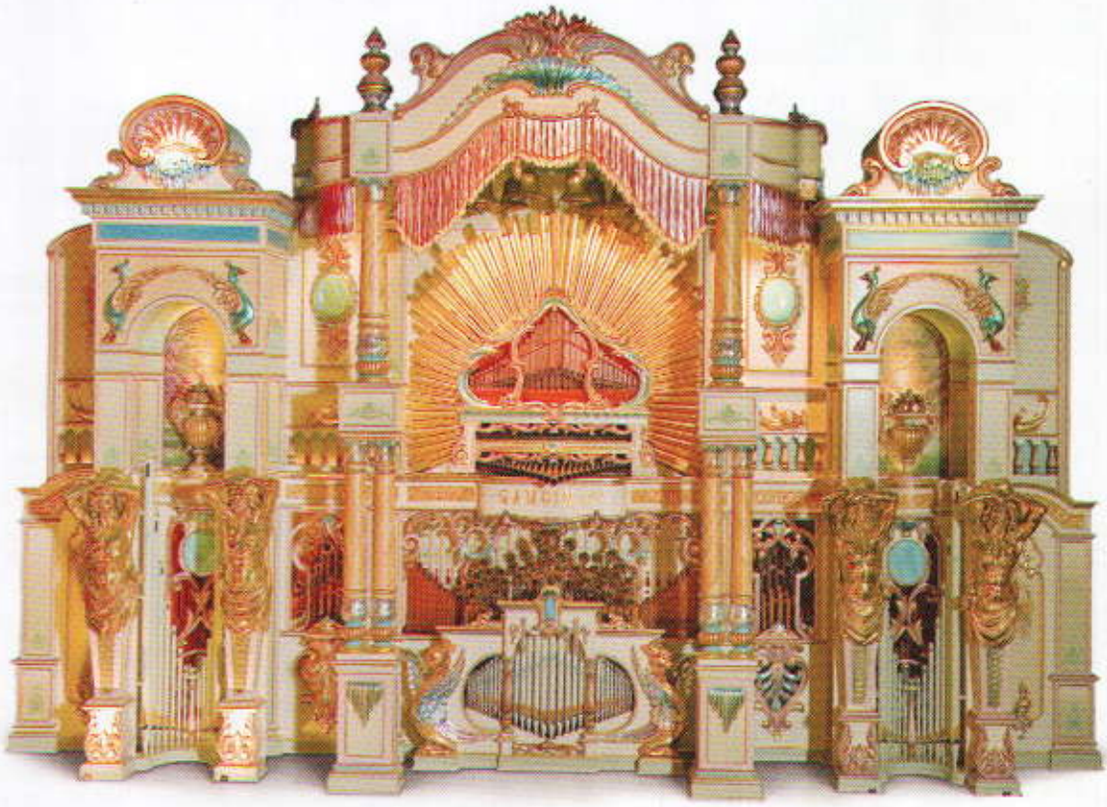

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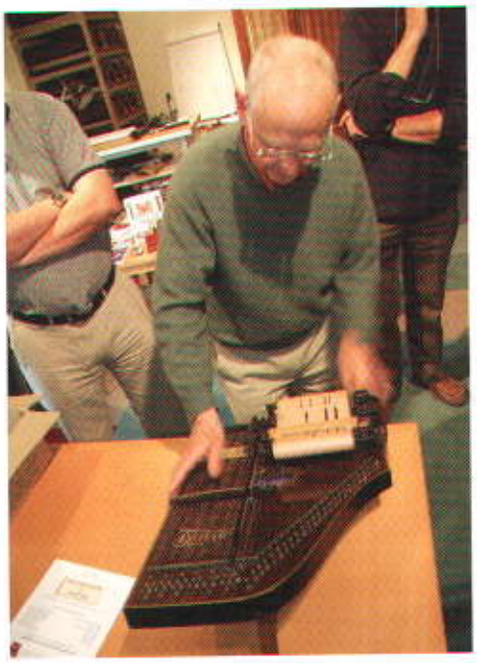
A beautiful Martinet & Benoit musical box - see article on page 137



Keith Reedman's Triola zither excited interest at the Teme.Valley Winders meeting - see report on page 129

A Polyphon trade card - see 'Stray Notes' on page 145

Period humour! See 'Stray Notes' on page 145

Make your musical box look like this - see French Polishing article on page 131

How many tunes does it play, Mister?

Martinet & Benoit *Continued from page 139...*

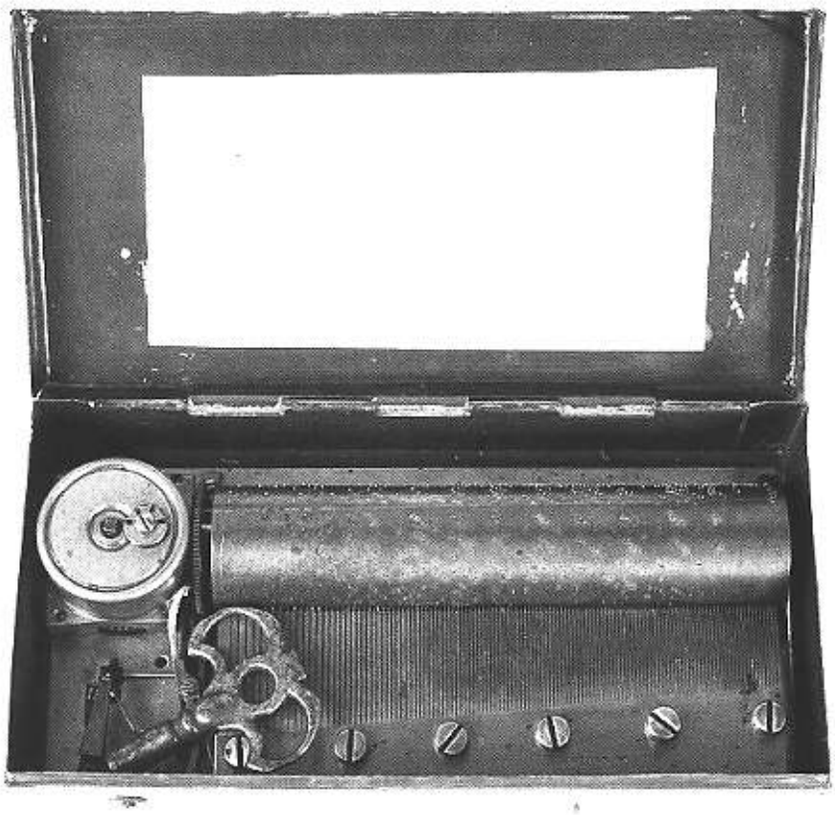


Fig 8. Movement of No. 3670, with 123 teeth

upper part of the market. Two of the tin boxes have over 100 teeth. One with 116 which has no number (fig. 6, courtesy Roy Ison) and the other with as many as 123 teeth (figs. 7 and 8). A world record! This one, with number 3670, is in a decorated tin box depicting the Kurhaus (health resort) of Bad Cannstatt near Stuttgart in Germany. This building was inaugurated in 1837, and the picture of the building could not of course be made before that date. This looks like an anomaly. All the parts of this work must have been made to special order, so there must have been a good reason to do so. Maybe the festivities around the inauguration?

In figure 9 the work with number 3102 is depicted. No details are known. Number 3204 (fig. 10) is the work described by Ord Hume. Another overture work with number 3208 is in figure 11. The last one, bearing the number 4007, is a recently discovered work in bad condition. The comb with about 75 teeth has a lot of rust. (Fig. 12).

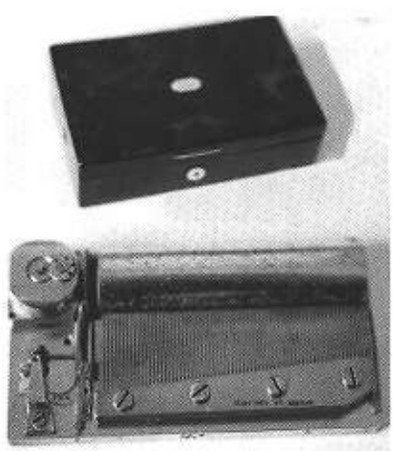


Fig 9. No. 3102

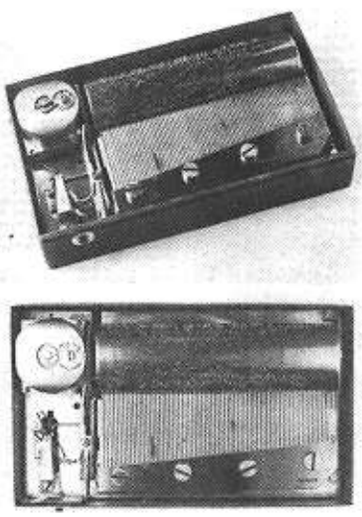


Fig 10. No. 3204

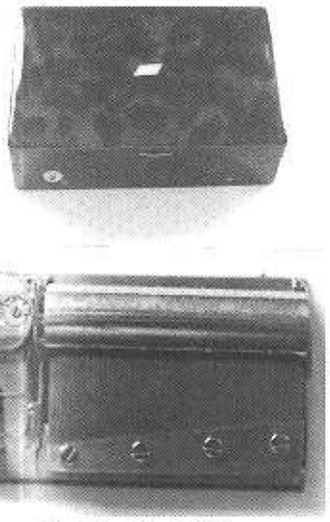


Fig 11. No. 3308

Conclusion

Gebel Benoit and Martinet were in the first half of the 19th century involved in the horological branch in Geneva. Besides watches they made a small number of musical boxes. Numbers on snuffbox works run from 2500 to 4000, while two cartel works have survived with numbers in the 3800 and 3900 series. All the signed works can be dated to the 30's. They specialized in the upper part of the market making amongst others, overture works. The combs were made from a thick piece of steel, weighted with brass for the bass teeth They used steel dampers The reason why they used such old fashioned procedures in the thirties could be that they started the making of (unsigned) musical boxes in the early 20's and did not change their methods, because it was only a side line The quality of their works is highly estimated by the nowadays collectors.

It remains for me to thank Roy Ison for his cooperation.

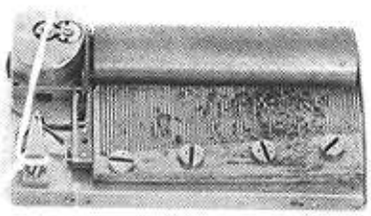


Fig 12. No. 4007

Stray Notes

A new occasional series originated by Luuk Goldhoorn

11. A nice invoice

Invoices for musical boxes or repairs are scarce, and so it is nice to find one from a Polyphon dealer, where on the back a beautiful scene of all kinds of Polyphons was shown.(12 X 18 cm). Unfortunately the invoice itself had to do with a chin holder. How nice it would have been had it accompanied a Polyphon.

Fig 11. Polyphon invoice

12. Different handwriting on tune cards

Why do tune cards have so many times different hand writings? Mostly the name of the tune is written in beautiful letters, but quite often you see the kind of tune, mazurka, waltz etc., in another, not so beautiful handwriting. On number 192 in Bulleid's Tune sheet book, even three different styles are recognized. Was it all done by the same writer, just with different letters?

Sometimes there was not enough space and so the writing went through the border figures. See b,e, numbers 99 and 129, In our eyes this seems slovenly, but maybe the original buyers didn't mind.

Fig 12. Tune sheet, possibly by S. Troll

13. Comics

Looking at this postcard one wonders if this joke arrived at the recipient. Musical boxes which played more than two tunes were almost antique when this kind of car was produced.

14. Another comic

This one is difficult to understand, and not because it is in the French language. Humour changes, and it is sometimes difficult to understand what made people a century ago laugh.

Philippe Rouille was so kind as to translate it. The text is a caricature of a country "garde-champêtre" language. This officer - who has probably never seen a motor car before - mistakes the driver in furs for a monkey ... and the capped servant for a barrel organ player. The caption of the post card reads: "Our good peasants. An interesting interpretation of parish (or communal) decisions. – 'So, now, go on !!... You, the musician with your monkey!... Just try and move!! It is forbidden to play a barrel organ while showing off poor beasts in the town square!...'"

15. Rossini

Why the composer Rossini was depicted in connection with mechanical music is not clear. After his last opera in 1829 (Wilhelm Tell) he composed between 1859 and 1868 two religious works and the péchés de vieilesse, salon music. but look at this picture - he is depicted as a street musician (date unknown). In a second picture (not illustrated here) he is shown dancing on a manivelle (1868).

Fig 15. Rossini

16. Regulator

When you see a different construction of a specific part in a musical box, it mostly can be understood, but it is not always clear why it was done. Look at this construction of this regulator.

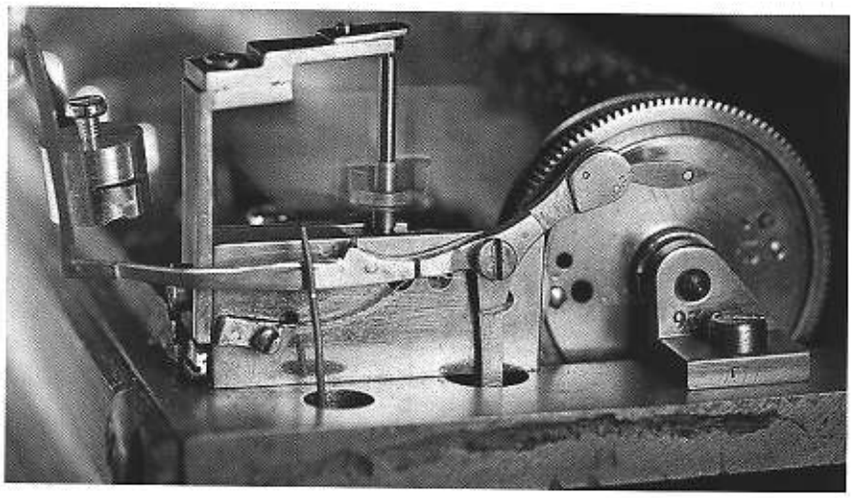


Fig 16. Odd idea for a governor

Fig 18. Advertisement from M J Paillard & Co, New York

Fig 19a. Place des Alps

Whatever possessed the maker? And which problem, (if any) did he want to solve?

17. Invoices

A nice addition to any collection of musical boxes is to find invoices. It is a long and difficult way to gather those, but because of the printing it often gives extra information about the manufacturer and his products. Invoices dated before about 1880 (if you find one) are simple sheets of paper with very few printed data. Here are three examples from Holzweissig, Vidoudez and Thorens.

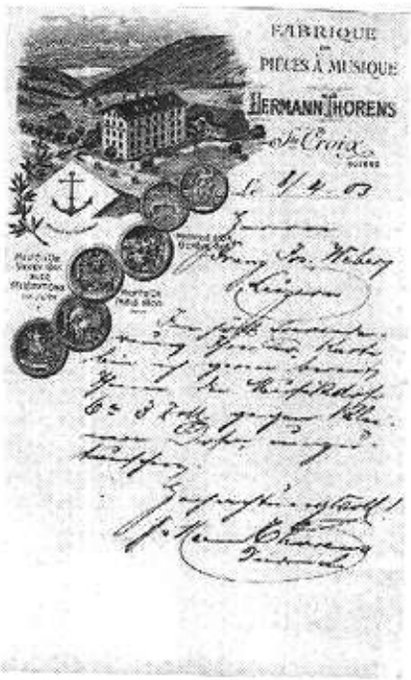


Fig 17 (left and above): Invoices from Holzweissig, Vidoudez and Thorens

18. Early advertisements

In the 50's ads from dealers of musical boxes appeared in the newspapers, but without a picture. In the 60's pictures scarcely appeared. To find an ad for a snuff box type is exceptional. But Paillard advertised with this.

19. Place des Alpes

One of the most, may be even the most, photographed part of Geneva is the Place des Alpes. In one of the buildings was the firm of Conchon. Not a manufacturer of musical boxes but a dealer. On the top of his building a big board was erected telling the people that he sold musical boxes. Here are two cards, one was traced from an original card and served as a trade card. Unfortunately it is not dated. The other one was used in 1911 and in that year musical boxes in Geneva were already "antique". At least they existed only in novelties.

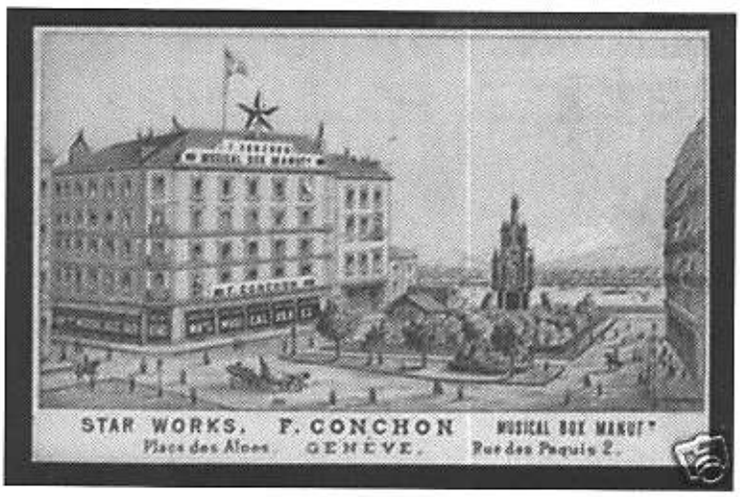


Fig 19b. Star Works

3 Old Dutch Postcards

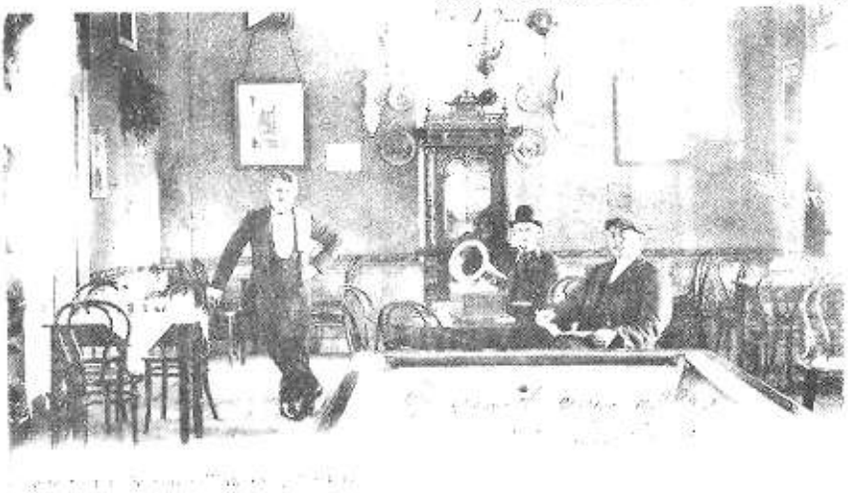
Hendrik H.Strengers

The Health Resort at Hellendoorn

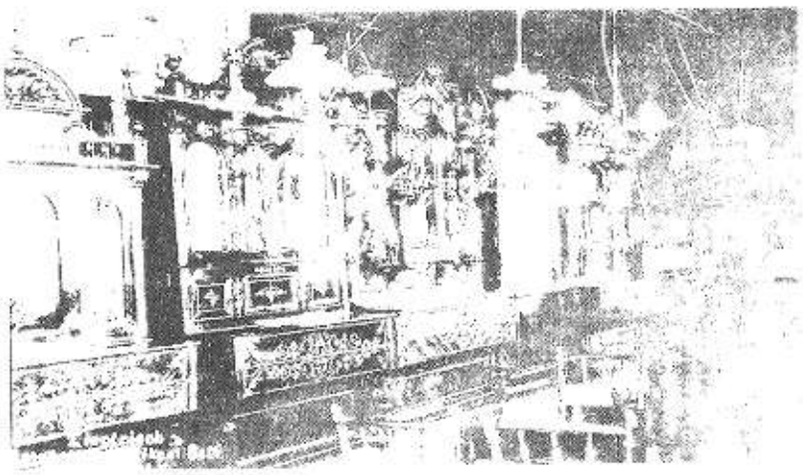
Health-resort at Hellendoorn.
In the spacious entrance-hall of the sanatorium at Hellendoorn in the Netherlands stood an orchestrion with a triangle in front of the pipes.

It had a wooden cylinder. Beside it you can see a small organ with paper rolls and at the right side a piano. Nowadays the name of the institution is "Verpleeghuis (=nursing-home) Krönnenzommer". The annual report of 1911 mentions: "A great addition for the recreation at the end of the day is an orchestrion, presented by a grateful patient". It is very likely that this instrument was built by Welte in Germany (See: Catalogue M.Welte & Sons, 273 Fifth Avenue, New York, ca. 1909: Orchestrion Nr.4). The manager of the nursing-home wrote that this orchestrion has disappeared before 1940.

The Hague.
Ca. 1910 you could find the "Electric automatic musical café" at the Trekweg 69 (or 691) at The Hague. The owner was G.v.d.Lely. In spite of intensive research nothing could be found concerning this café. Remarkable is that the instruments show a kind of cabinet at the front, probably for the operation: start, stop and coinbox. I cannot identify any instrument. The picture was taken by H.J.Kops, van Leeuwenhoekstraat 10, The Hague.



The Old Finch restaurant, Leyden



The Electric Automatic Musical Café, The Hague

Leyden.
This postcard was sent on July 4, 1904 to "Den zeereerwaarden Heer (The very reverend Sir) Rector J.M.Goes" of the "Saint-Jacob's House of God" at Haarlem with the text: "Gegroet van de weesmeisjes (=Greetings from the orphan-girls)". The group had made on that day an excursion by

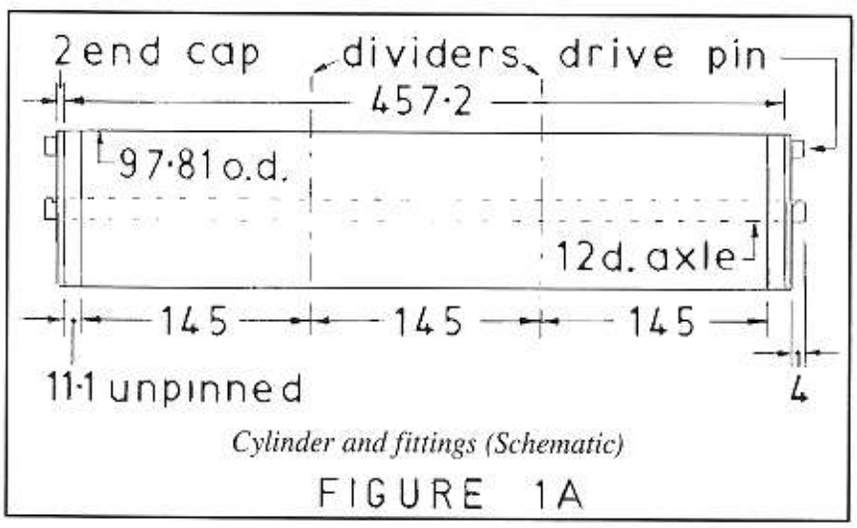
Concluded on page 157...

Making a Musical Box

by Don Busby

Cylinder End Caps, Dividers and Arbor

The basic cylinder resulting from rolling a sheet of brass and soldering the abutting edges needs end caps, dividers, an arbor and means for turning it before it can be drilled and pinned for music. Earlier studies resulted in estimated values for the inner and outer diameters of the cylinder: actual values were measured on the finished plain tube. The data, which showed a small amount of variance, were used as a guide for turning the pieces which are the subject of this article: a more uniform cylinder resulted when they were fitted. Measurements of the finished item led to a full specification for the cylinder and its fittings needed for bed plate design and manufacture of a device for pinning.



Cylinder and fittings (Schematic)

FIGURE 1A

This article deals with design, fabrication and fitting of end caps, dividers, arbor and drive pins to complete a cylinder. Since it is intended that the musical box shall have changeable cylinders, it is vital that the length between outer faces of end caps is the same for all cylinders: the same also applies to protrusions of arbor and drive pins from end caps. The interface of these with the musical box and a machine for pinning will be explained in a later article. A schematic representation of cylinder and fittings is given at fig 1A. It was decided to make and fit end caps first, in order to define inner and outer diameters at cylinder ends before making dividers to suit. Fig 1B shows finished components before assembly.

In order to ensure that circumferences of end caps, dividers arbor and cylinder are concentric, a lathe tool shown in fig 2 was made from a blank end arbor; all cylinder fittings were turned on this. Fittings were made from Ground Flat Stock (GFS), 4 thick for end caps, 1 thick for dividers. From 100 wide GFS, pieces 100 square were cut and centres marked. A centre hole was drilled and reamed to dia 12. A second hole of dia. 4 was drilled on a centre 11 from that of the larger hole The smaller hole has two purposes, first to prevent the work piece from spinning whilst being turned, finally to secure a plate which locks end cap to arbor to prevent vibration and lateral movement of cylinder along its arbor. It should be noted that the cylinder arbor serves to centralise the end caps and dividers and to hold the cylinder centrally in arbor plates of the musical box, also on a machine for drilling pin holes. These interconnections will be fully defined in a later article, but it is worth noting here that a gap of 1 will be left between end caps and supporting arbors for ease of changing cylinders. Driving torque to turn the cylinder is applied via a driving pin at each end of the cylinder, the arbor rotates with the cylinder and plays no part in driving it. The 12 dia. holes in each end cap might be used to feed cement into the cylinder by withdrawing the arbor slightly, before finally locking as described above. The square blanks were sawn roughly circular, then carefully ground to dia.100 removing high points, making sure not to harden the GFS by overheating. Two end caps were made first, to dimensions given in fig 3. First the o.d. was turned to a circle from the rough blank and left as near as possible to 100 before turning half

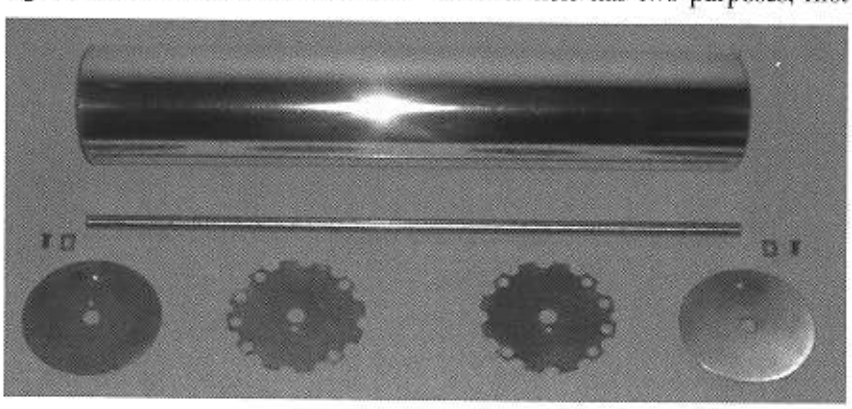
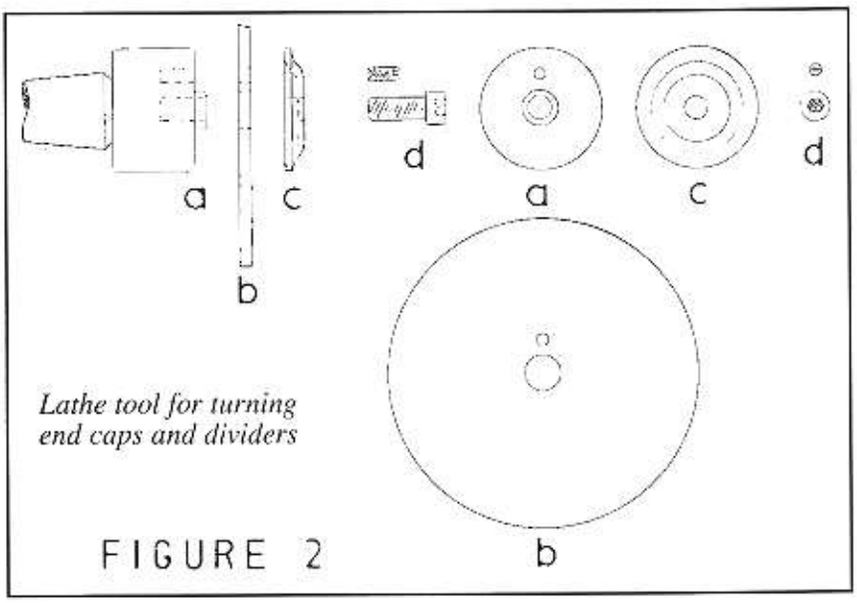


Fig 1B. Cylinder components



Lathe tool for turning end caps and dividers

FIGURE 2

the thickness of the GFS plate to the i.d. The i.d. was first taken down to a little above the anticipated value, after which small decrements were removed, interspersed by frequent measurements and testing for fit with the brass cylinder. Turning ceased when a tight fit was obtained. Next, the o.d. was reduced, again to just above the expected value followed by small decrements with frequent measuring and testing for flush fitting with the brass.

The next stage in preparing end caps is to add a driving pin to each. These pins are centred 10 from the outer circumference of the end cap, in line with centres of the axle and 4 dia. fixing holes. First, a 2 dia. hole is drilled 2.5 deep to give centre clearance for a 12 dia. slotting mill to cut 2 deep. Finally, a 6 long piece of 12 dia. silver steel rod is sweated into position.

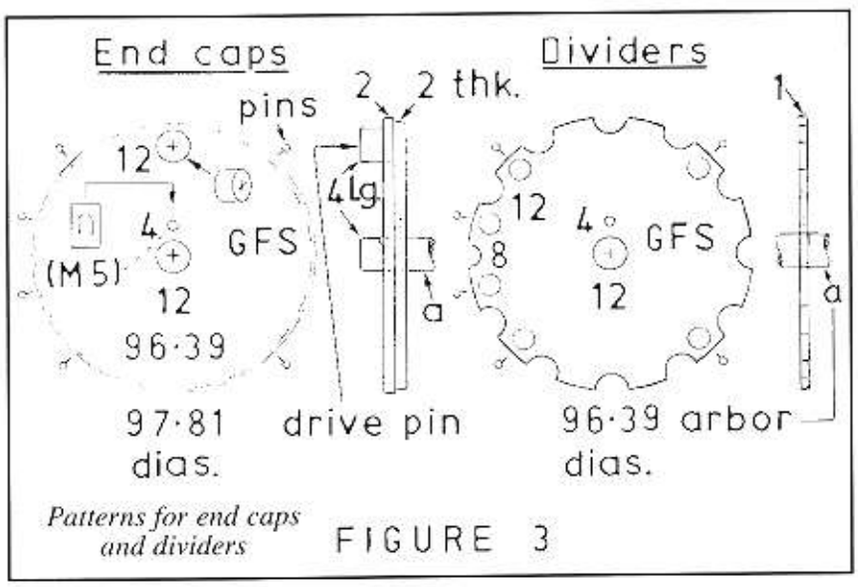
When making a divider, the i.d. of the end cap gave a guide to finished size, the items first being turned to just oversize. Positioning and trimming of dividers to size was carried out by the following method as illustrated in fig 4.

Cylinder, arbor and *lower* end cap were placed on a wooden base which had small recesses for the arbor and drive pin. At this stage the arbor is overlong by 10. The D length of plastic tube (hatched) ensured correct placement of divider in cylinder. The *upper* divider was placed over the cylinder to check for fit: at first it sat on top of the cylinder and, taking account of its measured diameter and the known i.d. of the end cap, relatively large reductions were made to the diameter of the divider, measurements being taken on the lathe. In the final stages it was necessary to remove the piece from the lathe to check for fit, manipulating the uncapped brass to a circular shape around the divider. After several iterations, with diminishing cuts, the divider at last just entered the brass. Using length of tube C and minimal force, the divider was coaxed further into the cylinder, but it was found still too large to pass easily very far from the open end.

A word of warning now will not be out of place: HAV Bulleid, at ref 1 writes, "one sometimes winces to see cylinders with humps where a strong arm restorer has forced in an oversize divider"! He also recommends that dividers should have a diameter the same as the i.d. of the cylinder +0.000"/-0.002" (0.0508). Since our divider was still too tight on cylinder i.d., it was safe to reduce its diameter by 0.050 or 0.025 at the cross bed index each time, so keeping it within tolerance. The divider was put back on its lathe arbor, reduced and checked against the cylinder several times, until it could be driven gently into place. The best way of retrieving the divider at each iteration was to take the assembly from its wooden stand, invert it and shake gently so that impacts from plastic tube D drove the divider to the end of the brass.

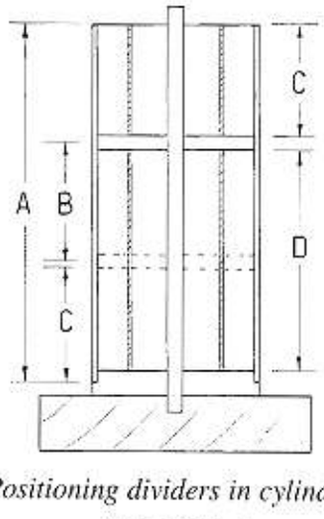
Checking the fit of the second divider was a repeat of the above with the cylinder brass inverted on the second end cap and the first divider removed.

Next, the dividers were scalloped to the pattern shown in fig 3, one scallop being of a different size to ensure correct orientation within the cylinder. It had originally been filed somewhat smaller to allow access past solder fragments inside the joining seam. Scallops were milled out on a dividing head on the lathe, see fig 5. Witness holes 8 dia., centred 6 from



Patterns for end caps and dividers

FIGURE 3



Positioning dividers in cylinders

FIGURE 4

Key to figure 4

(a schematic cross-section)

A=457.2	Length of brass
B=145.0	Divider centres coincide with outer edges of comb segments 3 and 4
C=155.6	Outer face of divider to end of brass
D=298.6	Inner face of upper divider to innern face of end cap
	Plastic tubes were cut to lengths C and D, ex 63/67 roofing down-pipe

the circumference of the divider, were then drilled in those lands between scallops which were to abut pins.

Before the dividers could be finally placed within the cylinder, holes coinciding with lands which were to abut pins as shown in fig 3 were drilled through the cylinder wall on a pinning machine, which operation will be described in a later article. Drilling was done with dividers removed, end caps fitted firmly in place and, arbor length reduced to its final value to fit into the pinning machine. Initially, it was the intention to drill and pin through the cylinder into the sides of dividers. However, trial drillings gave a success rate of only 50%, even with the advantage of

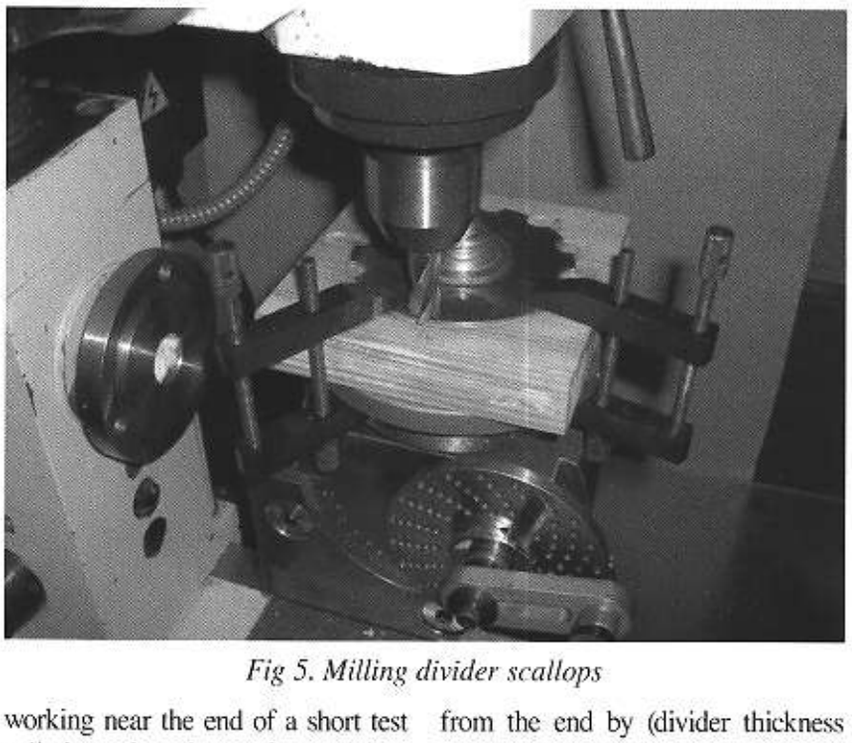


Fig 5. Milling divider scallops

working near the end of a short test cylinder: what chance for a divider 150 in from the end! Because of these poor results and, with advice from a fellow member of the Society, the method of 'pinning' dividers into cylinders, as depicted in fig 6A was chosen. As can be seen from the figure, the circle of 6 pins located around the circumference of the cylinder at positions defined in fig 3 are to serve as a 'stop' when finally placing a divider. Based on trial results it was decided to use a 0.4 dia. drill bit and Meadows and Passmore (M&P) No. 1 gauged steel pins which taper from 0.3-0.6 dia. over their length of 10. The centre of a divider is 158.1 from the end of the cylinder, see fig 1. The line of holes must therefore be off-set from this, away from the end by (divider thickness + hole dia.)x0.5 i.e. by 0.7. For the purist, a deduction 0.01 needs to be made to this off-set to compensate for pin taper through the cylinder wall.

After drilling divider pin holes in the brass of the cylinder and driving pins firmly into place, dividers were finally fitted. Using the facility shown in fig 4, tube C was placed directly on the wooden base. The *upper* end cap and arbor were placed in the cylinder and the *lower* divider, with small scallop correctly orientated (straddling the cylinder seam), was inserted into the lower end. The cylinder was then placed over tube C and gently lowered to the wooden base, centred on the arbor, so driving the divider upwards to the circle

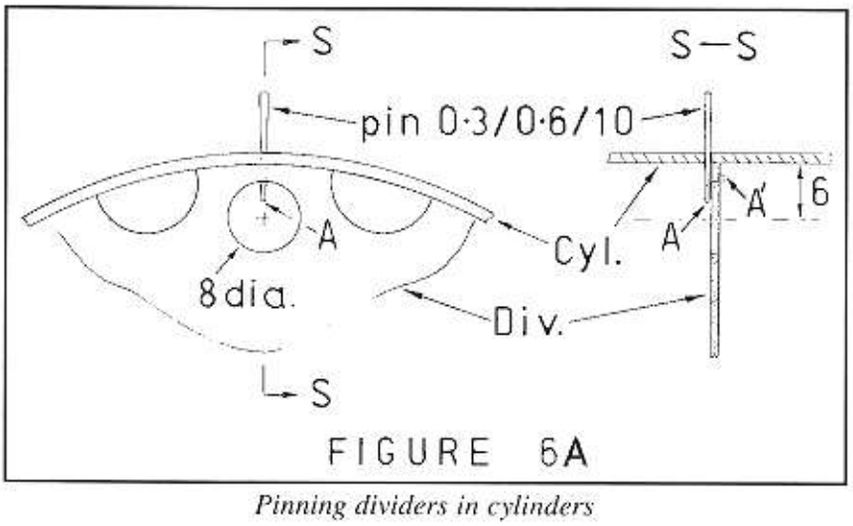


FIGURE 6A

Pinning dividers in cylinders

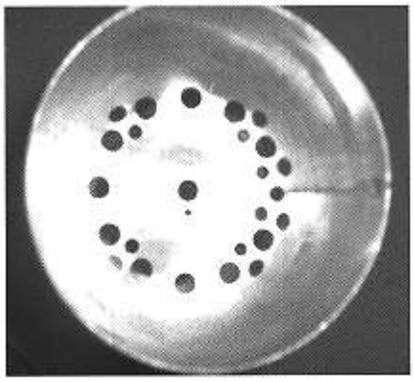


Fig 6b. View of divider in position

of pins, placing it at the position indicated by dotted lines in fig 4. Next, all metal components were lifted, leaving the wooden base and tube C. When satisfied that the divider was correctly positioned and orientated, as witnessed through the 8 dia. holes, pin ends were pulled through these holes, bending them 180° to hold the divider against the circle of pins, pending final securement by cylinder cement. As shown by fig 6A, the end of the pin, A, is thus displaced to A'. The fit of dividers within the cylinder is such that bending pins through the witness holes is not absolutely necessary, but better safe than sorry!

The second divider was fitted by an identical procedure, that already secured now becoming the upper divider.

A view down the cylinder at fig 6B shows a divider being checked for fit prior to drilling and pinning it into position. Reflections from the wall of the cylinder cause the scallops to appear as circles. Also, reflections of witness holes are seen in elliptical form.

Attention now turns to the end caps. For the time being only the treble end cap will be secured to the cylinder and this, only at 2 pin positions. Reasons for this are that pinning for music and feeding cement into a cylinder are, as yet, unknown quantities to the author. Also, the treble end cap takes up drive from the pinning machine, whilst the bass end cap is a good enough fit to follow: the machine arbors rotate independently of each other. Further, end caps will need to be accurately aligned to allow for interchange of cylinders: this is best achieved on the synchronised arbor slots of the musical box itself. In addition, the current 90° displacement of cylinder seam (the anticipated music rest area) from the drive pins on the end caps might need to be adjusted when setting up the comb on the bed plate. After measuring i.ds. to the end cap side of dividers, the one end cap was fitted by 2 drillings through cylinder brass into the GFS of the end cap, at the centre of the i.d., 1 in from the brass edge, on the pinning machine before adding pins. This time, 0.6 dia. drill bits produced holes 3 deep to take M&P No. 2 gauged brass pins which taper from 0.5-0.8 dia. over their length of 10. Pins were shortened from their narrow end by trial and error until a firm fit was achieved.

All pins will be left proud of the cylinder surface, cut to 1.5 long, and only as music pinning is being completed will end cap pins be taken down flush with the end cap o.d. Divider pins will be ground down to music pin length: this will facilitate removal of dividers if this becomes necessary in years to come.

Finally, axle locking plates were fabricated and fitted to end caps as follows. A rectangle of GFS (15x10x1) was centrally slotted 5 wide x 9 long, see fig 3. Flat bottomed slots 1 wide and 2 deep were cut into the axle butting up to outer faces of end caps. The 4 dia. fixing holes were drilled and tapped M5 and the cylinder was secured to the axle using M5 button head socket screws to hold the locking plates tight in the axle slots.

The question now arises as to how truly circular is the circumference of the cylinder and, is this concentric with the arbor? Again, the pinning machine came into its own by providing a platform on which to test the above questions. Plain arbors of 19 dia. were drilled 5 deep, 12 dia. to take the cylinder arbors: part of the remaining 3.5 thick rims was filed out to accommodate the cylinder axle locking plates and screws. The two plain arbors were fitted into the pinning machine bearings, one being spring-loaded to hold the cylinder in place. Next, using a dial gauge as shown in fig 7, readings were taken to produce the graph at fig 8. On the graph, points A to G coincide with edges of the comb segments. Considering first the 7 similar looking plots: in each case the dial gauge was set to zero diametrically opposite the cylinder seam. Readings were then taken at 30° intervals around the circumference, avoiding the seam by taking readings 5° removed from it. It can be seen from fig 8 that the circumference deviates by about 0.15 from the mean which seems an acceptable result. There is obviously a degree of oblateness, concentrated around the seam, particularly noticeable at position B. Careful pinning should eliminate any problems.

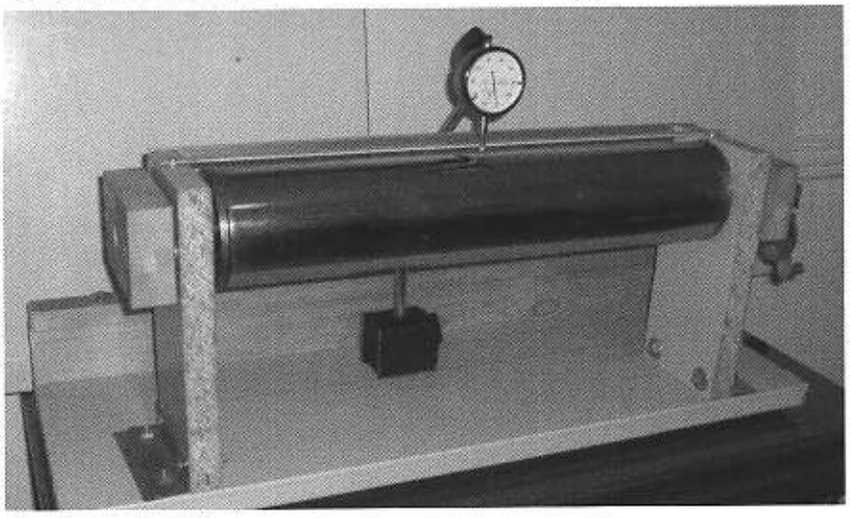
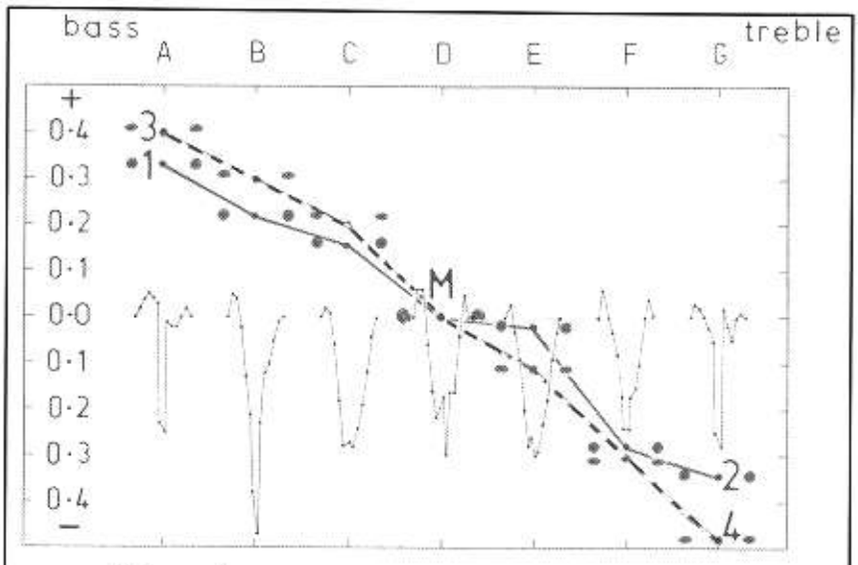


Fig 7. How true is the cylinder?



This true!

FIGURE 8

Is the cylinder concentric with its arbor? This was checked by zeroing the dial gauge at position D, again at 180° removed from the seam. Without rotating the cylinder, gauge deviations from zero were taken at all other positions. This produced the plot 1 through M to 2. Is this cylinder arbor error? After turning the cylinder end to end, readings were repeated to give the plot 3 through M to 4. We can now conclude that these two similar slopes are due to a slight height difference between the pinning machine arbors and are not caused by a cylinder arbor displacement. The latter would have resulted in the 3 to 4 line having a positive gradient. It is interesting to note the cross-over of the two plots at M which is assumed to be a very slight misalignment of cylinder with its arbor, considered to be of no consequence.

With completion of the first cylinder and formulation of its detailed specification, work was able to proceed on two fronts. Firstly, bed plate mounting of cylinders could be developed taking account of experience with pinning machine arbors. Secondly, pinning of tunes could commence, even though it would be some time before they could be played. The next article describing the pinning machine will include its use for drilling divider and end cap pinning holes in the cylinder

References

1 "Cylinder Musical Box Design and Repair" H A V Bulleid ISBN 0-930256-16-6

A NOTE OF WARNING

In the last issue (Volume 25 No. 3, Autumn 2011) the soldering of the seam of the cylinder was described. Don Busby used tin/lead 'soft' solder with a melting temperature of 183 - 235oC. It has been pointed out that this is not all that much higher than the melting temperature of the shellac based filler that was used by the original makers. It should be noted, in the interests of safety, that the old makers did NOT use soft solder. They always used hard solder (i.e. the equivalent of today's silver solder) with a melting temperature of around 600oC. Use of soft solder greatly increases the probability of the seam splitting and the cylinder bursting during the filling process. The resulting flinging of very hot molten shellac filler around the workshop renders the likelihood of serious injury increasingly likely. Those adopting the technique should be aware of this, and do so at their own risk - Ed.

See letter from Alan Clark in the Letters section.

News from Other Societies

Compiled by Nicholas Simons and Alison Biden

Mechanical Music, Vol 57, No.4, July/August 2011
(See also www.mbsi.org)

In his President's message, Dan Wilson suggests MBSI members might like to join the MBSGB's 50th anniversary celebrations next spring in Kent, the Editor, Rosanna Harris gives a round up of the articles, and Ardis Prescott, Membership Chairman, once again encourages members to try and recruit more. The Museum Chairman, Joe Berman, in his report, gives a nod to the pan-European project (information gleaned from a previous issue of our own magazine), and reports on the agreement between MBSI and its past President William Edgerton, to begin cataloguing, scanning and digitising materials in MBSI's library. These will ultimately be available to all enthusiasts.

Frank Metzger delivers the sixth part of his series on the Courvoisier clocks, a testament to serious detective work, and not a little coincidental luck. This is followed by part three of Tom Meijer's series on Belgian music makers, featuring Marcel Bartier and Urbain van Wichelen, with a note on the latter's son, Achiel, known as 'Willy Rockin.'

In a short article Etienne Blyelle describes a long-playing cylinder musical box without extra gears, made by Paillard. The following item, by Bill Wineburgh, poses the question of Who Made the Arion Disc Musical Box (hint: Barnett H Abrahams/Britannia appears to have a hand in it.) He was ably assisted in his research by our own Daphne Ladell and Ted Brown, amongst others, including Luuk Goldhoorn.

'The British Electrical Mechanical Exhibition,' Rod Cornelius tells us in an article under this slightly misleading title, was a large exhibition of mechanical and automatic exhibits which toured Australia and New Zealand in the 1920's. Rod goes on to trace its history, as well as describe some of the exhibits, most likely made by the French specialist, Henry Phalibois. Steve Boehck then reports on a number of outreach events conducted by the Sunbelt Chapter of MBSI, before the magazine is given over to the regular chapter reports, mostly consisting of accounts of gatherings at various members' collections. The National Chapter, however, held its meeting in May at the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park, where they displayed a good number of hand cranked organs and were a great attraction for the general public.

Last of the 'news' items concerns an article by Bill Harris on his successful search for a façade for his Mortier orchestrion. By an extraordinary quirk of coincidence, it would seem that the pieces of the 'Taj Mahal' front he acquired from various sources originally came from Lille in France – and once formed the original front of his very own orchestrion. (Tom Meijer believes only two examples of this model were ever made.)

Mechanical Music, Vol 57, No.5, September/October 2011

The first three items (Editor's Notes, Museum Committee Chairman and Membership Chairman reports) highlight the influence and power of the internet in disseminating information and garnering new members. Larry Karp describes a Josephine Baker automaton (probably of French make, and the only one of its kind known to date), Tom Meijer continues his series on Belgian music arrangers (first published in Het Pierement) with an article on Abel Frans, while Frank Metzger winds up his series on the Courvoisier clocks with an Appendix. Charles H Wilson updates a previous article of his on how to make a replacement tooth and Luuk Goldhoorn speculates whether 'Gaillard' is a misspelling of 'Paillard.' There are the usual chapter reports, and Dave Bowers writes about a visit to the Porter Music Box Company. Amongst the books reviewed our readers might like to know about one written by Christopher Proudfoot and Brian Oakley, entitled His Master's Gramophone, and a revised version of Dr Herbert Juttermann's Mechanische Musikinstrumente.

The Key Frame (Issue KF2-11)
(See also www.fops.org)

This issue starts with an interesting report from Cuba on the indigenous organ building trade there. Only one factory remains in existence and this has been making mechanical organs since 1886. Jan van Dinteren writes about his early visits to the UK and organ preservation at the time. He describes visits to Victor Chiappa, the last remaining organ builder from an earlier time, and includes a copy of an invoice for a music book for a Gavioli organ, £19 in 1972. The regular Musical Roots article covers Arnold Safroni, who wrote Imperial Echoes march, and Tolchard Evans, who is remembered for Lady of Spain and Lets All Sing Like the Birdies Sing, amongst many others.

David Smith, the editor, provides a major report on the recent Waldkirch Organ Festival which includes many high quality colour pictures. It's good to see that not all trade across the Atlantic is westwards, with an article about the repatriation of a large Mortier dance organ, at one time owned by MBSGB member Alex Duman in Glasgow.

Vox Humana
(See also www.moos.org.uk)

No more magazines so far from the MOOS, but a newsletter detailing a good number of events. From the sound of it, the MOOS members are a busy lot!

Reed Organ Society Quarterly, Vol XXX, No.2., 2011
(See also www.reedsoc.org)

This magazine begins with a number of tributes to the late Robert 'Fritz' Gellerman, who until his recent death was a leading light of the Society, followed by yet another instalment in the history of Clough & Warren, detailing the building of an organ for Franz Liszt. Christopher Cusumano, in a shameless example of anthropomorphism, then regales us with an account of several decades in the life of an organ affectionately known as Hugo, who now lives in the Ithaca College of Music. Music for Marche Funebre with notes on its composer, H J Stewart, occupy the centre section. An Estey organ, an eleven stop George Woods & Co reed organ and a Moline are the subjects of a further four articles, and the magazine closes with an account of a Kotykiewicz Harmonium recital in Washington, now accessible on YouTube (search Mustel 1887 Kotykiewicz.)

Organ Grinders News, No. 78, Autumn 2011
(See also www.boga.co.uk)

This edition contains reports of various gatherings of the Association and results of charity collections, and notifications of forthcoming events. Banbury Town Council is looking for four organ grinders to play all day on 3rd June 2012 as part of the town celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – what an opportunity for the pubic to be exposed to this interest!

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 199, Summer 2011
(See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk)

The PPG have recently lost their editor and this has resulted in a rather late journal of only 24 pages. Felix Klempka, previously of QRS the music roll manufacturer, tells an interesting story of his association with Eubie Blake, the ragtime pianist who at the age of 90 recorded six piano rolls in 1973. Eubie enjoyed his new-found fame, appearing at piano conventions and on TV, until his death at 100. The PPG Vice President describes his introduction to player pianos and elsewhere we can read reports of social visits to Reg Richings and Duncan James. After 40 years of hosting meetings, Reg has finally pulled the plug at the age of 89. His meetings will be missed by all who enjoyed the atmospheric environment, completely lit by gas.

Non-English journals

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 2nd Quarter, 2011
(See also www.aaimm.org)

In an article entitled The Last Street Singers, Maurice Hamel gives an account of some of the most popular street entertainers in Paris from their origins in the nineteenth century until 1935 when the article was first published. Space prevents me from detailing this fascinating piece of history; suffice to say these 'singers' functioned as political and social commentators on events and scandals of their times. Philippe Rouille muses on why people feel the need to comment while music is playing, rather than listening to it in silence, while ex-pat Henri Noubel introduces us to the mechanical music scene in the Czech Republic and reports on the first ever Czech organ festival. There is a brief account of the Treasures of the Forbidden City, followed by a report on the AAIMM General Meeting. Etienne Blyelle describes a rare long-playing movement achieved by a Thorens helicoidal cylinder driven by a Paillard longue-marche motor which he was privileged to see at the Musée Baud workshop. Raymond Messelier then treats us to a history of the Hooghuys organ building dynasty and the development of its business from church organs through to fair organs, from pinned barrels to punched card music, with succeeding generations innovating and improving on their product. The ubiquitous report on the European project, regular reviews and obituaries complete the contents.

L'antico Organetto (Associazione Musica Meccanica Italiana), Vol 13, No 1, April, 2011
(See also www.ammi-italia.com, or www.ammi-mm.it)

A lyrical paean to the power of music opens this issue of the magazine. What becomes a veritable essay on the subject closes with mention of the various instruments on show at the exhibition at Villa Silvia, on the theme of the 'Risorgimento.' This is followed by a feature titled The Barrel Organs of Anton Bayer, which is as much about this Viennese organ builder who transferred to Naples, where he was appointed as a mechanic to the Royal Court and then constructed organs commissioned by the Bourbon monarchs. The article is derived from a university thesis in musicology by Francesco Piscitello, who acknowledges the help he received in his research from, amongst others, the AMMI. As the next article tells us with justifiable pride, AMMI has also been responsible for the conversion of the Villa Silvia at Cesena, from a virtual ruin into a museum of mechanical music where its rich Italian heritage can be preserved. The early history of the gramophone with its tangle of borrowed inventions, patents and law suits reveals that the Lumière brothers produced a version – bought up by HMV - which nowadays is most sought after due to its rarity and quality of sound. There is also news of a new museum dedicated to the barrel piano in Oignt, France, advertisements, book reviews and announcements.

The Workshop of Dr. Wyss

or The Technical and Musical Genius of the Manufacture of the Musical Box

A beautiful, original new book on a hitherto ignored subject

By **Jürg Wyss, Marc Hösli and Jean-Claude Piguet**

Reviewed by **Philippe Rouillé in 'Musique Mécanique Vivante'**

(Review translated by the Editors)

It is under this title that the History Circle of the area of Ste. Croix (the Jura of Vaud, Switzerland) and the Museum of Arts and Sciences of Ste. Croix published this book (*in French only – Ed*) after having accepted with enthusiasm the exceptional gift of an impassioned person: the reconstruction of a traditional workshop which gathers together the majority of the machines necessary for the manufacture of musical boxes. This craft- and industry-related inheritance has been patiently collected by Doctor Jürg Wyss over more than 25 years, his medical practice with Ste. Croix having allowed him to meet a great number of the artisans in this sector.

This book fills a great gap in the literature on the musical box which has not, up to now, covered the industrial aspect and the production and manufacturing machine tools of the components of the cylinder and disc musical box. It is necessary to pay homage to the perspicacity of Doctor Wyss, who, impassioned by mechanics, has the intelligence and sagacity to save these industrial parts and machines which are becoming obsolete and to donate them in operating condition. (Whereas there already exist many books, sometimes luxurious, on horological tools, those of clock and watchmakers).

After a short introduction on the musical box industry, written by J C Piguet (author in addition of a remarkable work on "The Music Box Makers of Ste. Croix", which appeared in French in 1996 and in English from MBSI, 2004), the book undertakes a description of the movement with classical music and its principal constituents, profusely illustrated.

Some very rare small errors are inevitable (and Etienne Blyelle himself regrets not having been able to correct them right before the printing, thus on Antoine Favre p. 12, whose invention does not replace the gongs of repeating watches), but they are details compared to the very high overall quality of the work.

The following chapters review the various machines necessary to the production of parts, which include: governor, the comb, the cylinder, the barrel, the spring and the supplies (screws and bolts, wheels). The manufacture of the discs for musical boxes is mentioned only on a few pages. The principal stages of manufacture are described and explained with clarity. Details abound, proof of the long work of Doctor Wyss who, in addition to the rescue of these tools, established their use and operating mode by questioning many people who worked in this branch of industry and who are all thanked by name at the end of the work. In certain chapters the evolution of the machine tools is also shown with completely hand-used examples, manually operated and mechanical ones in XIXth century through semi-automatic ones to completely automatic and those managed by electromechanics or electronics in XXth century, with the continuing trend toward industrial mass production.

Many images or old photographs of factories and workshops supplement this book. Very detailed contents make it possible to forgive the absence of an index, which had been difficult to establish. There is a bibliography of about thirty titles. A beautiful work, essential for all those interested in musical boxes.

ISBN 2-88194-213-X
"L'atelier du Dr Wyss"
16x24cm, 160 pages, diagrams and many illustrations, mostly in colour.

Obtainable from:
www.editions-monvillage.ch
P O Box 162
1450 Sainte Croix
Switzerland.
Tel: +41 24 454 46 80

Barrel Organs in Vienna

An article in 'Politik', the Prague German-language newspaper, published 25/1/1863.

Discovered and translated by Dr. Karl Stapleton and contributed by Keith Reedman

Article, signed 'e-ý. f', entitled

"The musical season 1862-1863"

'Vienna, 9 January. If music is an indicator of joy, then Vienna is today one of the happiest cities in the world; wherever you go in the city, you come upon music being played. I do not wish to speak of those instruments of murder that would slowly kill all musical pleasure in anybody unfortunate enough to come within their range; the false, amalgamating notes that conceal themselves in these instruments of torture, known as barrel organs, bore their way like the points of daggers of an iron maiden into the ear of the hapless one whose destiny forces him to pass by. The bandits who with police concessions are allowed to carry out their attacks, in houses and in the street, on one of the finest of the senses, have multiplied of late and now even compromise the wellbeing of every resident. Beneath every gateway, behind every tree on the Glacis, (this was an open sort of park-like area encircling the older central part of the city – built as a defensive feature to provide an open field of fire for defenders) in every bush . . . there lurks one of these highwaymen, ready to attack the harmless wanderer with some disgraceful finale from a still more scandalous opera, or with a grim polka or even some blood-drenched folk song; flight, immediate flight is the only thing that can rescue you from the barbarity of these ruthless villains'.

Three Old Dutch Postcards *Continued from page 147...*

train to the garden-restaurant "De Oude Vink (= The Old Finch)". In my youth – about 65 years ago- the pleasure-garden was still there, but now it is all gone! The picture shows three men: at the left the head-waiter, before the instrument a man with a hat and at the right a reading man with a cap. Just above the left shoulder of the head-waiter an advertisement-board hangs on the wall with the text in translation: "Obtainable at the bar sweet chocolate A.Driessen" (At the time a beloved brand). Before the great music box one can see a beautiful Gramophone Monarch Junior dating from 1903 or 1904. Most interesting is of course the standing music box. It is a "Monopol Gloria", playing two 26 ½" (= 67 cm) discs simultaneously (See the Book "San Sylmar, 1978, page 233).

With a magnifying-glass the melody of the discs can be read:" Sei nicht böse" from the operetta "Der Obersteiger", composed by Carl Zeller (1844-1898). The premiere took place at Vienna on January 5, 1894.

It's Goodbye from Knowle and Hello to Oxford!

by Laurence Fisher and Alan Pratt

In the summer of this year, Bonhams announced that Knowle as a saleroom would be closing but still be retained by them as a regional office for the West Midlands area. The location is very handy for clients in the West Midlands, where a sizeable volume of business regularly originates.

Knowle has been for many years something of an institution. The low ceilings, the weird layout, the famous octagon room where it all gets noisy, the race to drive there quickly on sale day in order to park your car along the side of the building the chance to meet up with your friends and have a good day out.

The date for the saleroom element of Knowle closing is the 21 December, meaning the forthcoming 29th November sale will be the last mechanical music auction to be held there.

Alan and I are delighted to report that the final arrangements of the saleroom venue move have been completed and from January 2012, the two-per-year sales of popular mechanical music will be held at the Bonhams Oxford branch in Kidlington, which lies just 2 miles north of Oxford town centre. The building was constructed in the 1960's and originally used as a car showroom. It's spacious, well laid out with separate viewing room and saleroom and brightly-lit viewing gallery which has one entire wall glazed – very bright natural and electric light for proper lot inspection, and perhaps the greatest bonus - our car park which surrounds the building is line-painted for 132 car spaces. And it's all on one level; the ground.

To top it all, there is a splendid 16th century pub a short walk along to road, The Boatman, sat right next to the canal.

Now because of Oxford's popularity, and the various other collectible departments' requirements, it was decided that a revamp on the dates was in order. We always get more business in the September-December period, so to make the sales even-out a bit, the 2012 sale dates are in early spring and mid summer.

The confirmed 2012 sale dates for Popular Collectors sales at Oxford are 8th February and 25th July.

The forthcoming 29th November sale at Knowle will go ahead as planned, although we could have easily shifted the contents of that into the first Oxford sale. Instead, we thought it nice to pay one more, poignant, visit to an old friend, The Old House on Station Rd. And we can promise some very interesting lots to meet all tastes. We very much look forward to seeing you at the last Knowle sale and then come and see us for the first Oxford one. We hope you will like our new home.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined us since the last journal was printed.

If you would like to get in touch with members near to you please look at the new members list or contact the correspondence secretary. If you would like to start a NEW Local area group please contact Kevin McElhone on 01536 726759 or **kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com** or Ted Brown on 01403 823533 as either will be pleased to advise.

You will get far more out of your membership if you come along to a local or national meeting, you might make some new friends and hear wonderful instruments... If you are not sure then just book in with our meetings organiser as a day visitor the first time.

3109 Mrs.Mary Payne Kent
3110 Mr.D.B.Prosser
West Midlands
3111 Thomas C.Cave
Tyne & Wear
3112 Mr.C.Pointer Herts
3113 Robert Ball Isle of Wight
3114 Judith Nicklas Yorkshire
3115 Federal Office of Culture
Switzerland
3116 Mrs.Valerie Lusty Worcs

Please note Kevin's new email address as above.

Letters to the Editor

From Paul Bellamy:

Bill Cooper asks about cutting small snuffbox comb teeth (Letters, Volume 25/2). There seems to be little information on record concerning the tools used to slit early comb steel in its unhardened and un-tempered state. Circular slitting saws were used (and still so today) in the latter part of the 19th century but the date when this was common practice does not seem to have been recorded. I saw a reference to slitting saw use occurring about 1840 but cannot recollect the source of this information or in what context.

There is no doubt that early comb teeth were hand cut using a very thin blade supported in a frame (we would probably call it a fretsaw but no doubt there were other names). It is quite easy to see the effect by taking a high quality close-up photograph and enlarging it on the home computer but a good magnifying glass may suffice. The slots are very uneven, not just in a slightly wavy form down the length of the cut but also some variations in width. A saw cut deflects a tooth away from the uncut part of the comb blank because the stress induced by shearing away metal, as the blade forms the slot, has least resistance in that direction. If one deflects a tooth and takes a photograph of the exposed edge there are clear signs of irregular cut marks that do not seem to equate with those produced by a circular saw blade. I sent some teeth to the Oxford University research laboratories and the view was that they were hand cut, probably in a jig.

Thin steel-cutting blades derive from watch making practice, being made out of clock spring material such as the spring steel used for the balance. Springs were rolled to thickness in a small rolling mill and teeth formed before the material was hardened and tempered.

The width of the slots can be as narrow as 0.008 inches. For a standard comb with bass teeth to the left (near the spring motor) most cuts seem to start from the bass end. I carried out an experiment using a thin standard mini-handsaw blade ground down in width (but not as thin as 0.008 ins!) The teeth tend to bend to the left when slit from left (bass) to right (treble), as described above. Teeth need to be re-aligned to give equidistant tip-to-tip spacing. This was done after hardening and tempering because this process can cause further distortion.

If one looks very closely at early comb teeth, there are usually very fine marks alongside both side edges of each tooth. Some marks look like a fine ladder, others like a sequence of tiny round indentations. They may be seen on either the top or the under surface. The ladder marks (striations) were made by a very fine chisel-tipped punch and the round ones by a round-tipped punch. In both cases, the punch marks slightly compress the steel, deflecting the tooth away from the points of impact. They were made by hand, angling the punch into the edge and lightly tapping against a small narrow anvil. This practice seems to disappear about 1840, perhaps when circular slitting saws came into use and the slots more uniform.

Comments are welcome for any information to confirm or counter the above observations, with sources for more accurate information on the types of tools used in the early period of comb making are welcome. The later period is well served by the works of Bulleid, Piguet and others.

From Alan Clark:

Dear Sir,

A point has occurred to me regarding the article in the last issue (Music Box Autumn 2011) regarding building a musical box, specifically the soldering of the seam on a cylinder with soft solder. In later episodes no doubt he is going to tell our members how to pin this cylinder, and he is then presumably going to suggest it is filled with cylinder cement and spun in the lathe.

I have worked in health and safety for many years as part of my job as an MOD scientist. Good health and safety is to foresee what might happen and stop it before it does. As the occasional unofficial, volunteer Health & Safety officer for the Musical Box Society, I must question Don Busby's use of soft solder in that application. He quotes the melting point of his solder as 183 to 235deg C. Ted Brown estimates that you need to get the cylinder cement to well over 100deg C before it starts to soften. (*I conducted a test on a sample of original cylinder cement and found that the melting temperature is 190°C, well within the melting range of soft solder – Ed*).Ted thinks that my fears of the cylinder joint coming apart whilst it is spinning are very valid. I would not want Don, or any other member, being cut to shreds and plastered with burning hot cement.

The obvious dangers are these:

a) No original maker ever used soft solder.
b) Punching the thousands of pins in may weaken the soft solder joint.
c) The mass of cement needed to give a reasonable layer will be quite high, and when it starts to spin it will be off-centre and far more likely to burst the cylinder.

Given the facts that anyone attempting to follow Don's procedures will be completely unsupervised and of no known level of practical skill, I think that the society should give careful thought as to what level of safety guidance should be included with these articles.

(*An idea for a future article – safety in the workshop? – Ed*)

Letters to the Editor

From Arthur Cuncliffe:

Dear Editors,

I noticed a letter in a recent edition of MMD (*Mechanical Music Digest - an Internet forum - Ed*) someone was making an enquiry about plasticised paper that was very hard to tear. He thought it came from Germany. I too would find this sort of material useful when making new rolls for a Triola.

Owners of these instruments will know that the original rolls were quite delicate and with age they can tear easily and wander out of line. That spoils the edges of the roll and of course you get tracking problems and the rolls are quickly spoilt.

My question is, does anyone know of a source of paper suitable for making Triola rolls?

If you have come across the problem of Triola tracking have you got a cure to stop the paper riding up on one side of the take up spool?

Notes From the Archivist:

For me as a mechanical music enthusiast, there is no shortage of fascinating aspects to the subject. Perhaps one which is not immediately obvious, is the relationship between various individual issues which from time to time preoccupy fellow enthusiasts. As one who has contributed to the discussion on MMD, probably guilty to some extent of taking a stereotypical view of 'the young', it was good to see Laurence Fisher sharing his thoughts in the Autumn journal on the perennial question of how to interest the next generation.

Gordon Bartlett, in his article, demonstrates how most musical boxes have held or increased their value since they were new; what he hasn't shown is how some values appeared to have peaked a little while ago.

Another topic which is frequently discussed globally is the problem of repair work being economically viable. Gordon alluded to this, but chose to leave it out of his equations. As labour costs go up, there is a disincentive to collect all but either very high quality and/or high value instruments, because the cost of putting and maintaining an instrument in good playing order may render it, in financial terms, a 'bad' investment.

Fortunate is the person who in recent months has not seen at least some of their investments fall in value! How fortunate therefore is the collector who can enjoy his or her musical box for the music it produces, as it has a value beyond a monetary one.

It is time for any who don't already do so, to start thinking in these terms when contemplating owning an instrument, and incorporating them into any argument for or against 'investing' in mechanical music. Laurence is timely in reminding us not to overlook the musical aspect. It is virtually impossible to put a value on pleasure, especially when it is subjective and will vary from individual to individual.

This is the message we should be taking to potential new collectors, young and old alike. As the thinking on use of financial assets changes, and a 'softening' of the lower end of the market in mechanical music makes it more accessible to potential new collectors, now is the time our interest can become more inclusive to a wider public.

From Arthur Cuncliffe:

Dear Sir

In the last Autumn issue I wrote about a 19 ¼" Polyphon. I enclose a photo of this instrument. The penny in the slot was jammed with seven old pennies, the chute had been taken off some time ago and some of it cut off, why I cannot imagine. I had quite a problem to get the penny to tip. It also had been taken to bits and put back incorrectly.

I wonder why the right hand side has a penny in the slot, but no chute and nowhere for a penny to be inserted?

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19 5/8" Table Polyphon (fully restored). 15 1/2" Mira disc box, double combs, with disc box & large qty of discs. 13 5/8" table Symphonion, spilt combs & large qty of discs, 9 5/8" Polyphon model 71G with 6 bells. Conchon cylinder box, 15" cylinder, hidden drum & bells, 10 airs. All in good playing condition. Tel: 01654 703222. Email nicholas@newble.co.uk

CLASSIFIED **WANTS**

Wanted: Miniature British barrel organs, serinettes and chamber barrel organs. Any condition considered.

Michael Macdonald, Tel: 0141 637 1014

The Mark Singleton Collection:

I am currently looking to purchase high quality items of mechanical music and Black Forest clocks from single pieces to whole collections. Top prices offered for top pieces. Please call Mark for a chat. 07905 554830 or 01253 813128 or email fantissimoto@aol.com.

Mantel Orchestrone rolls, originals or re-cuts.01403 823533

RATES FOR DISPLAY ADVERTS

SPECIAL POSITIONS (offered as available)

Outside back cover (tone or two colours) Full page only £249

(full colour, one photograph to maximum size of 8" x 6") Full page only £560

Inside covers Full page £218

POSITIONS INSIDE JOURNAL (as available)

Full page £150. Half Page £86. Quarter Page £54. Eighth Page £36.

5cm box in classified area £32, 3cm box in classified area £22

These charges include typesetting, but are exclusive of any artwork which may be required. Half tone, artwork and design can be provided at additional cost. Black and white half tones £15 each. Design and artwork quotes on request.

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A further 5% discount is given if payment is in advance.

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Full page 10 5/8" x 7 1/8" (270mm x 180mm), Half page 10 5/8" x 3 1/2" (270mm x 88mm) or 7 1/8" x 5 1/16" (180mm x 135mm), Quarter page 5 5/16" x 3 1/2" (135mm x 88mm).

More on page 159.

Looking for something special - or have some items for sale? Remember, Music Box goes to over 600 enthusiasts worldwide.

At present you can advertise FREE to these people! Contact Ted Brown for details.

Closing date for the next issue is

1st February 2012

Deadline dates for Display Advertising Copy

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

Editorial copy **must** be submitted at least 8 days prior to above dates

Posting of magazine:

27th February; 27th April;
7th August; 7th November

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE:

1st February 2012

Minimum cost each advertisement £5.00.

Members: 16p per word
(bold type 8p per word extra)

Minimum cost each advertisement £9.50

Non-members 32p per word
(**bold type** 16p per word extra)

CASH WITH ORDER PLEASE TO:

Advertising Secretary Ted Brown,
The Old School, Guildford Road,
Bucks Green, Horsham,
West Sussex RH123JP
Tel: 01403 823533

NOTICE

The attention of members is drawn to the fact that the appearance in The Music Box of an advertiser's announcement does not in any way imply endorsement, approval or recommendation of that advertiser and his services by the editors of the journal or by the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Members are reminded that they must satisfy themselves as to the ability of the advertiser to serve or supply them.

Printed by Flo-Print Colour Ltd
www.floprint.co.uk

Musical Automaton "The Pearl Fisherman" by Henry Vichy, Paris, c.1895
Sold: € 40.500,-/ US$ 55,500.-/ £ 34.800,-/ ¥ 4.600.000

Automaton "The Soldier" by Henry Vichy, Paris, with "Lioret" phonograph, c.1895
Sold: € 44.200,-/ US$ 60,500.-/ £ 38.000,-/ ¥ 5.040.000

»Mechanical Music Instruments & Automata«

– The World's Leading Specialty Auctions –

Fine Musical Gold Snuff Box, c. 1810 (Lot 443)
Sold: € 17.215,- / US$ 24,600.- / £ 14.980,- / ¥ 1.980.000

Barrel Organ »Adolf Holl, Berlin«, c. 1910 (Lot 396)
Sold: € 23.363,- / US$ 33,400.- / £ 20.325,- / ¥ 2.687.000

Fine Interchangeable Mandoline Musical Box by "Samuel Troll, Geneva/Switzerland", c.1880
Sold: € 16.500,-/ US$ 22,600.-/ £ 19.200,-/ ¥ 1.880.000

Large Singing Bird Bocage Automaton, c. 1880 (Lot 388)
Sold: € 13.945,- / US$ 19,940,- / £ 12.130,- / ¥ 1.603.675

Gold Repeating Pocket Chronometer with Musical Movement, c. 1820 (Lot 377)
Sold: € 11.400,- / US$ 16,300.- / £ 9.920,- / ¥ 1.311.000

Regina Style 35 Automatic Disc Changing Musical Box, 1899 (Lot 427)
Sold: € 13.526,- / US$ 19,340.- / £ 11.770,- / ¥ 1.555.500

Rare Black Drummer Automaton, c. 1900 (Lot 469)
Sold: € 8.607,- / US$ 12,308.- / £ 7.488,- / ¥ 990.000

Invitation to Consign

Whether you have one piece or an entire collection, the spectacular prices realised in 2010 & 2011 show that now is the right time to sell your quality mechanical music instruments!
We offer you a dedicated auction service, with global marketing and international representatives in many countries.

Free shipping for any major consignment from the U.K.! ***You just pack – we do the rest!***

If you live in the U.S. or in Canada, please make use of our own convenient container shipments **free of charge** from our Long Island (N.Y.) location direct to Germany.

For confidential consignment inquiries, please feel free to contact us directly in Germany or via one of our international representatives (pls. see below)!

All items illustrated above show the realised results of our auctions held in November 2010 and May 2011!

☛ Consignments are welcome at any time ☚

– Next closing date: February 15, 2012 for next sale on May 26, 2012 –

AUCTION TEAM BREKER

– The No. 1 in »Technical Antiques« worldwide –

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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT OUR INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

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U.S.A.: *Lee Richmond*, Tel. (703) 796-5544 * Fax (703) 766-0966 * BREKER@TheBestThings.com · **Japan:** *Murakami Taizo*, Tel./Fax (06) 6845-8628 * murakami@ops.dti.ne.jp
Australia & New Zealand: *Dieter Bardenheier*, Tel./Fax -/64/(09) 817-7268 * dbarden@orcon.net.nz · **China:** *Jiang Feng*, Tel. (0086) 13862062075 * jiangfengde@gmail.com
France: *Pierre J. Bickart*, Tel. (01) 43 33 86 71 * AuctionTeamKoln@aol.com * **Russia:** *Polyguide Ltd. Moscow*, Tel. (925) 740-66-03, Tel/Fax (985) 999-93-55, ml.mediaservice@gmail.com

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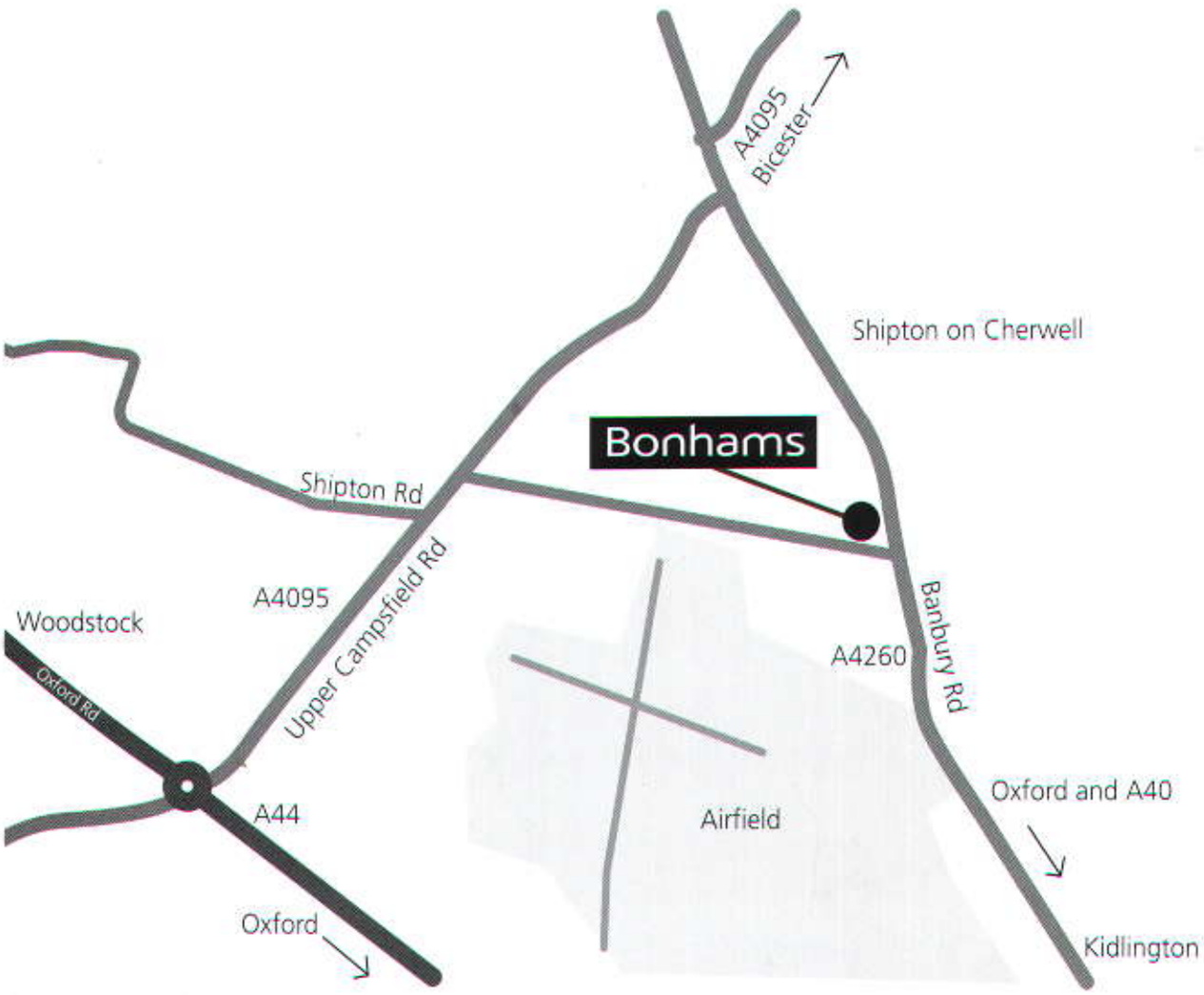

The Collectors Sale

Wednesday 8 February 2012, Oxford
Entries now invited

The Collectors Sale, previously held in the Knowle saleroom, will now be held in our Oxford saleroom.

On-site parking for over 120 cars.

Closing date for entries
Wednesday 21 December 2011

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