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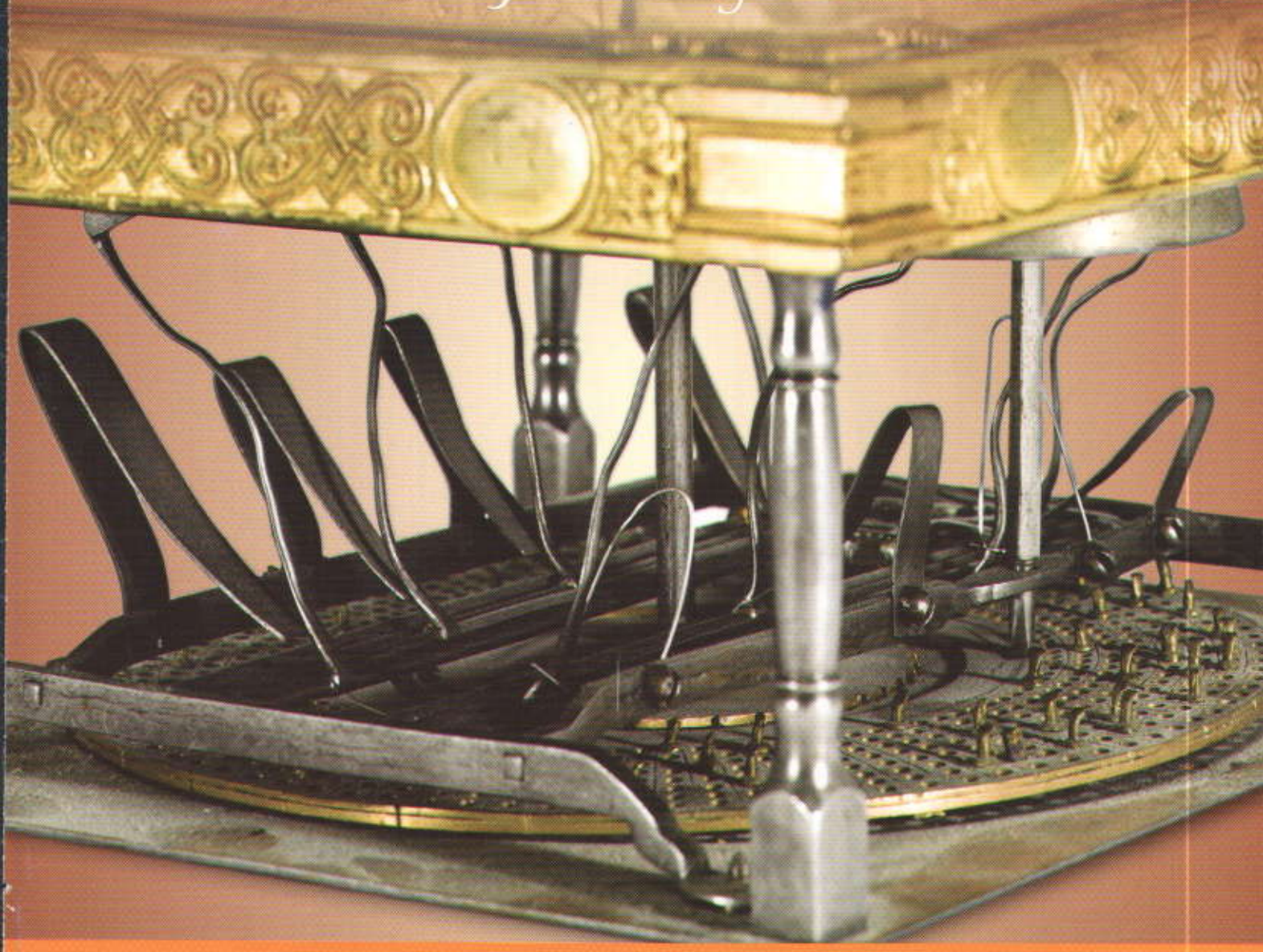
The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music



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The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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From the Editors' Desk

We have been excited about this issue of the Journal since Arthur Ord-Hume offered us an article about the early musical clock coming up at auction. We have always felt that the history of early musical clocks was incomplete and here is another piece of the 'jigsaw'. We are most grateful to Arthur for this and the copious detailed pictures he has taken of it. We also thank Paul Bellamy, who has negotiated with the printers for us to have a Journal with full colour throughout for the first time.

As usual we express our gratitude to our contributors. In this issue Gordon Bartlet has made a new barrel of Victorian tunes for his Faventia barrel piano, Kevin McElhone has found an organ musical box with two gear trains, Luuk Goldhoorn describes a Grosclaude musical box supplied by Weill & Harburg as well as contributing to Stray Notes. Don Busby has reached the point of fitting a gear train to his musical box project, several local meetings have taken place and the main Society meeting at the Cuckoo Clock Museum in Cheshire was a great success. We also have the first address from the new President. Thank you to everyone!

As the elected Editors of your journal, we feel it is our duty to keep you informed of events and to respond to your correspondence and comments. When letters, emails and phone calls began arriving after the AGM we had to take notice on your behalf. Like many of you who contacted us on receipt of your last magazine, we wondered what had happened to the promised voting papers and electoral addresses we had been asked to mention. The ONE journal in the year which HAS to be out on time is the one with the notice of the date of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. Postal voting as such is not mentioned in the Constitution and legal action against the Society was threatened by one or two members if it was implemented unconstitutionally. There being no time to officially implement it, the Acting President, Paul Bellamy, had to make an executive on-the-spot decision that the magazine would have to go without them and that explanations would follow.

Previously no postal ballot would have been necessary as there was a natural progression from Vice President to President, voted upon by the elected committee. In this instance Paul Bellamy had already been endorsed by the Committee and Ted Brown was the endorsed Vice Presidential candidate by that committee. What was different this year was that two other people decided to stand against the Committee's recommendations. Therefore, if the President/Vice President can be challenged like this, surely we, the members, should have a vote, not just the people who are able to attend the AGM.

The present President, Vice President and Recording Secretary are already revising our much-abused Constitution, so this is your chance to contact the Correspondence Secretary (John Ward) with your views and institute a fairer way of electing future incumbents, as advocated by two of the many correspondents whom we feel are representative of the communications we have received. See the Letters on pages 125 and 126.

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President's Message No. 1

Last year the Musical Box Society of Great Britain celebrated its milestone 50th anniversary. This year it reaches another, very different milestone: its first woman President. It is not just a privilege to serve the Society, but an equally daunting responsibility, one I shall do my utmost to fulfil. I was very pleased that the AGM recognised the service rendered by my predecessor, Arthur Cunliffe, during his long term of office... but it is also very humbling to think that the members will one day pass judgement on my own performance!

Having a female President is a break with tradition yet ties in well with the theme I chose for my 'election address' at the AGM: thinking outside the box. Apart from the obvious attraction of this metaphor for collectors of mechanical musical instruments which are often housed in boxes of some shape or form, this term suggests a new way of looking at things, especially challenges and therefore their solutions. This is what I believe will help the Society to survive and thrive in the (relatively) new environment of instant communication via the internet and related new technology. However, 'new approach' does not mean a clear out of any of our other cherished traditions. We shall continue to enjoy our quality journal, and the opportunities for getting together socially afforded by our excellent national and local meetings. Any innovations are envisaged as being supplementary, both to enhance our enjoyment of mechanical music, and to promote it more widely to encourage others to join us.

The need to keep in touch with members, especially those at a distance, and the difficulties of doing so, became very apparent in the last few weeks before our Annual General Meeting. New Committee member Bernard Weekes is keen to improve communications between the Committee and the membership, and amongst members themselves. I am looking forward to his bringing his ideas to us for implementation.

One improvement would be for those of you with email to allow us to email you with any urgent information. Under the Data Protection Act you have to 'opt in' for this, and I would urge all of you to do so the next time you are asked – probably when you renew your subscription. By giving consent you will be able to benefit by being kept up to date with what is going on in the Society and with details of any events which might be of interest. We do not pass email addresses on to any third parties, not even fellow members – unless you give us your permission for the latter. Please consider doing this. It's another channel for exchanging ideas and technical information, or making arrangements for getting together. Enhancing the means for contacting other enthusiasts will increase the benefits of membership and further develop the sense of community within the Society.

You should read elsewhere in this issue more about the introduction of a 'members only' area to the Society's website. Although primarily for sharing information of a more sensitive nature, it will also be used for posting important messages. Please visit it from time to time. It will take several months to develop, but meanwhile your regular visits will encourage those working on it to keep on going.

Speaking of members at a distance: I have been a member of the Musical Box Society International for about thirty years. I hope my experience as an overseas member of MBSI will help me empathise with our own MBSGB overseas members and think how we might improve their experience within our Society. My husband and I attended the MBSI annual convention in Philadelphia, in 1999, and in February of last year I attended a meeting of the Golden Gate chapter. We are looking forward to going to this year's convention in Chicago this August, where we hope to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. A number of MBSGB members also belong to MBSI, and it's possible some of our North American and other overseas members who are reading this now will also be attending. If you are one of them, please do come and say hello!

Whoever you are, wherever you are, I urge you to keep in touch – by whatever means - and make the most of this, your Society.

Alison Biden

Essex Group Meeting – 27th April 2013

from Don Busby

Twenty Society members found their way to a temporary meeting place at Shenfield. We were pleased to welcome several members, old and new, who joined us today.

The theme for this meeting was disc musical boxes, with owners demonstrating their own favourite items in a 'round table' discussion of these devices. However, the shorter morning session was devoted to two topics other than disc boxes.

The day started with an electronic keyboard and associated composing software being described by Don Busby. As a non-musician, he is using it as an aid in adapting "Skaters Waltz" sheet music as the air for a second cylinder of his musical box build. It will also help with recognition of airs and tuning of teeth of a 19th Century musical box which he is bringing back to life.

We ended the morning watching the excellent video made by John Farmer in celebration of The Society's Golden Jubilee. From inception of the Society to the present day, we saw Society members enjoying themselves and sharing their interests in mechanical music devices. Sadly, some are no longer with us, others now look somewhat older and greyer than in the film.

After a short break for mid-day refreshment attention turned to the day's topic, disc musical boxes. Firstly, Kevin McElhone, award-winning author of the Society's latest publication, "The Disc Musical Box", explained how he prefers disc boxes to cylinder movements because of the endless diversity of music which they provide. He then played a Fortuna, 2-comb box, designated "F" to indicate size of disc. This German manufacturer made discs with tunes of many other countries to give them wider market appeal. Then followed an 11" Polyphon playing one of a stable of 1500 tunes. A rare Harmonica with bells, which plays projection discs, gave a nice melodious sound with bells "Off": with the three bells "On", quality was added to a second air which Kevin played. Kevin pointed out that some Harmonicas were made with two combs at right angles to each other: Paul Bellamy added that in such cases star wheels played both combs at the same time.

Paul Bellamy showed a Britannia box which he bought largely because he liked its simulated scumble finish which was printed on paper. Paul has used and prefers water-based varnish, as opposed to French polish, for ease of repairing and polishing these surfaces. "San Toy" was an air played by Paul on his box.

Three items presented by Daphne Ladell were, a small hand-held and wound Polyphon with 6" discs; a conical cylinder movement and; a 44-string Chordephon table-top, disc operated movement. Daphne pointed out that the strings do not stay in tune for very long, calling for regular re-tuning. "The Radetsky March" was favoured by the audience when played on this last machine.

Terry Longhurst played an 11¾ "The Britannia" which has a single comb and 56 teeth: it had a very rich and melodious sound. Next came a 'piano stool' disc player producing light, tinkling airs.

A plastic, clockwork toy record player with internal musical movement was tabled by Roger Booty. His second toy was a 10-, perhaps 12-note cassette player followed by a small cigarette lighter by Sankyo which played "Lara's Theme".

Christopher Pointeer also played "Lara's Theme", but on a small disc player housed in a wooden box, by Thorens, circa 1981. A 2002 box by Mr. Christmas, with small discs and 6 bells, had a lighted scene of ballroom dancers under the movement. Sharon Pointeer showed a small bear, patented in 1957 by Levy, L.B.

John Nattrass's 'shed' produced a Symphonion, its discs being interchangeable with Ehrlich Monopol devices. John then played "Daisy, Daisy" on a small disc box, followed by an old Mermod interchangeable cylinder movement without case which played several airs. His last item was a draw-string cylinder movement in a small, flat, polished box, probably a clock base, which played 2 airs.

Kevin McElhone described a clock, belonging to John Odgers and made by Junghans, which had a Symphonion disc movement and a 30 tooth comb.

Daphne returned with a Stella, double-comb disc player, being a Model 80 with 2-40 tooth combs in a stack configuration.

Robert Ducat-Brown played a split-comb, diagonal disc movement with a rendition of "There's no place like home". A second Symphonion disc box, which he had unwittingly bought as an auction job lot with the first machine had a single comb and movement across box centre: it played "Bobby Shafto" and "Onward Christian Soldiers".

Paul Bellamy ended the programme with an interchangeable conical cylinder movement bought in America.

The day closed with members expressing appreciation for Robert's arrangement of venue and a full, interesting programme

The next meeting on 26th October 2013, will be at St. Mary's Church, Doddinghurst, to the North of Brentwood; postcode CM15 0QJ.

The main theme for the day will be "Boxes with bells and automata", other items for display will also be welcome; bring them along.

Coffee and tea will be served from 10.30 for an 11.00 start: please bring your own lunch pack.

For further details and travel directions see the "Forthcoming Events Page" on the Society's website or telephone Robert Ducat-Brown on 01438 712 585.

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain in Cuckooland

Society Members Spring Meeting - 12th, 13th & 14th April 2013.

Members listening to the Bruder Organ

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain (MBSGB) Spring Meeting for 2013 was held at the Cresta Court Hotel, Altringham, Cheshire. Our host was Mark Singleton and the meeting was held over 2 days during which time a total of 63 members were present. The programme had promised an interesting weekend and so it turned out to be; a trio of visits of a very disparate nature, together with some short talks and presentations on unusual items of interest, showing yet again the wide variety of subjects that can be encompassed within our overall interest in mechanical music.

The opening dinner was held on the Friday evening in The Cresta Court Hotel, after which there followed an informal programme of entertainment. Olivia Singleton, Marks Singleton's daughter entertained us with a song she had written herself about her own personal collection of musical automata. Some of these were displayed and played, to the great amusement of members as they performed their eccentric antics accompanied by music from a more modern era than we are accustomed to hearing at these events.

As a second item on the programme, John Harrold showed and talked about a Musical Black Forest Clock many members would remember having seen in the Graham Whitehead Collection at Ashorne Hall near Warwick. John had spent some time recently restoring this clock, which now forms part of the Mark Singleton collection.

On Saturday morning, we left the hotel by coach for the first of our visits, the Anderton Boat Lift, one of only two working boat lifts in the United Kingdom, the other being the Falkirk Wheel in Scotland. A superb piece of Victorian engineering, some would even say over-engineering, the Anderton Boat Lift was designed and built in 1875 specifically to raise and lower canal long boats between the River Weaver on the lower level and the Trent and Mersey Canal on the upper level. Originally designed as a hydraulic lift, it was converted to electric operation in 1908 and underwent further complete restoration between 1983 and 2002.

Transport of salt from the Cheshire salt mines was a major consideration in the original

decisions to build the lift, but other industries along the banks of the River Weaver also benefited from boats bringing raw materials and taking away finished products to a host of destinations via the Trent and Mersey Canal. Sadly, this has all finished. Today the lift is used almost exclusively by pleasure craft, whilst the banks of the river lie derelict and forlorn, shorn of most of their industrial past.

After we had boarded a suitably covered canal boat, we were given a brief introduction to the lift, its history and its operation; then, the boat was manoeuvred from the Trent & Mersey Canal into one of the two caissons and we began our slow descent, taking 9 minutes to reach the River Weaver, 50 feet (15.2 m) below. A short cruise along the river followed; then, returning to the landing stage at the bottom of the lift, we disembarked and walked up to the café where we took a light lunch and other refreshments.

After lunch, we boarded our coach again for the journey to our next visit – a site of complete contrasts in many respects, the Radio Space Telescope at Jodrell Bank. For those not particularly interested in this, however, there were alternative attractions on the site, a Space Pavilion, a Planetarium and Gardens and Arboretum. Designed and developed after WWII by Sir Bernard Lovell of Manchester University, its technology is based on that used in the Radar systems developed as part of the war effort; it has undergone significant development over the past 60 years and to-day supports an international programme of space research that sees it in use most of the time. Over the years it has been used to help develop our understanding of space phenomena such as meteors, quasars and pulsars, as

Daphne, our Meetings Secretary, shares a confidence with Olivia Singleton and her Musical Toys.

well as being used for tracking space probes. There are 5 telescopes on the Jodrell Bank campus, all different in size, function & purpose: of these, the Lovell Telescope, with a dish 76.2 metres (250 ft) in diameter, was the largest in the world when it was completed in 1957 but is now only the third largest; parts of the gun turret mechanisms from the battleships *HMS Revenge* and *HMS Royal Sovereign* were reused in the motor system for the telescope. It is the most spectacular telescope on the campus and is the public image associated with Jodrell Bank. During the visit we were given an illustrated talk on some of the research currently being undertaken at Jodrell Bank. At the end of our visit, we were treated to a light afternoon tea before boarding our coach for the return to the hotel in Altringham.

The evening banquet was held in the hotel. After this we were entertained by former member, Jack Tempest who, together with Mark Singleton's help, showed us his extensive collection of old toys, some of which were able to show off their tricks and amuse and intrigue the audience.

On Sunday morning we left the hotel, taking a short journey for our visit to Cuckooland. Owned and operated by the Piekarsky brothers, Maz and Roman, this is a unique museum, home to over 700 Black Forest cuckoo clocks. Each clock is different from the others in the collection, and some are known to be the only examples of their kind in the world. Their enthusiasm for and interest in cuckoo clocks began when they were teenagers and over the ensuing 40 years has become boundless; each clock has been researched and, where necessary restored on site; some have come to the collection after many miles of travel. Not all are going, but a selection are set going for the benefit and delight of visitors. Although all have at least one automaton, the cuckoo, many have additional automata, whilst some are musical as well. For those interested in music, there was a Polyphon Disc Musical box and a magnificent 43 Keyless Gebruder Bruder Concert Organ from which we heard a short recital at the end of our visit.

Bidding farewell to the Piekarsky Brothers and their magnificent collection, we went to the nearby "Golden Pheasant" Inn for a three course lunch; then we said our farewells and left for home; although many would have called in on Roy & Pam Evert who had opened their house and collection to members as part of the weekend.

This was yet another enjoyable Society meeting with some interest and very different venues for our visits. Credits on this occasion go to our host for the week-end, Mark Singleton and, to Daphne, our Meetings Secretary, for all the necessary background arrangements that made the week-end so enjoyable and successful.

THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN

Abbreviated Précis Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1st June 2013 at Roade, Northamptonshire.

Note. *In view of the concerns/interest in the exceptional circumstances leading to the 2013 Annual General Meeting, the Executive Committee has taken the view that the outcome would be of more immediate interest to members than usual; hence the very short précis below is published in this edition of "The Music Box". More comprehensive précis minutes will be published in the 2014 Summer Edition of "The Music Box", just prior to the next AGM as is the usual practice.*

Chair of the Meeting: The President/Chairman, Arthur Cunliffe having resigned, former President/Chairman Christopher Proudfoot was eventually elected to take the Chair of the Meeting. 70 Officers and Members were in attendance.

Apologies for Absence. 4 Officers & 16 members sent their apologies.

Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting. The 2012 AGM Minutes were approved; no Matters Arising

Secretarial & Officer Reports. Reports were received from: Subscriptions Secretary, Membership Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Meetings Secretary; Treasurer, Editors, Archivist, Auction Organiser, Advertising Secretary, Web Master, Registrar and Authorised Sub-Committees and Working Parties.

Propositions under Bye Laws Article 1 Section 4: One Proposition had been received but not notified to members in accordance with Article 1 Section 4 and so was not considered. Its sponsor will re-submit next year.

Election of Society Officers for the Forthcoming Year: The Meeting first directed, regrettably, that E-mail/Postal votes received for these elections should not be counted. The following were elected by those members present to serve for the year 2013

President/Chairman: Alison Biden. Joint ***Vice-president:*** John Phillips.
Committee Members: Appointments Filled: Joint Vice-President [US] - Robert Yates. Archivist - Alison Biden. Membership Secretary - Kevin McElhone. Advertising Secretary Advertising Secretary - Ted Brown. Meetings Secretary - Daphne Ladell. Registrar - Arthur Cunliffe. Correspondence Secretary - John Ward. Member without Portfolio - Bernard Weekes. Editors - David & Lesley Evans. Member and Recording Secretary - David Worrall.
Appointments Unfilled: Treasurer; Subscriptions Secretary; Webmaster; Auction Organiser; See also After Meeting Note below.

Subscriptions/Fees for 2014: Membership Fees for 2014 were agreed as follows: Single Member - **£24.00**; Joint Membership - **£30.00**; Life Member - **£Nil**.

Arthur Cunliffe: The meeting voted with acclaim a sincere vote of thanks to Arthur Cunliffe for his years of service to the Society as President/Chairman.

Date & Venue for 2014 AGM - Saturday 7th June 2014 at 11a.m. in The Village Hall, Roade, Northamptonshire.

Any Other Business:

- The incoming Executive Committee was requested to consider: ways of attracting younger age groups into the Society; allowing members to attend its meetings; ways of disposing surplus RACCA Piano souvenirs; similarly, the items bequeathed by the late Ken Stroud; and to ensure good guardianship of Society finances.
- The offer of a Life Membership Award to Paul Bellamy, in recognition of the contribution he had made to the Society, was approved with acclaim.
- Members were asked to indicate willingness to have their contact details used for legitimate Society business, other than Subscription renewal and Journal posting.
- Votes of thanks were passed for all who helped running and organizing the Society.

The meeting was declared closed at 15.08 p.m.

After Meeting Note: The incoming Executive Committee first co-opted and then, at its meeting on 12th June 2013, appointed John Farmer as Acting Treasurer & Subscriptions Secretary.

Teme Valley Winders

Summer Meeting – 15th June 2013

Alan Godier on damping

The rather mixed summer weather was braved by some 21 attendees, including Alan Godier, from London, Roy Ison and his wife, from Lincolnshire, and new attendee Roy Hayward, who is 89 and was accompanied by winder Derry Clifford from Worcester. John Phillips welcomed everyone at the new start time of 11a.m., and introduced the first speaker, Alan Godier.

Alan gave a very informative talk and demonstration of the dampering of musical combs. The intricate nature of the work meant that it was difficult for the audience to see what was being done, but a video camera and large screen projector were used to try and overcome this (with varying degrees of success by the cameraman, John Farmer). Alan started by explaining the principles of dampers, and the fact that early combs used feathers. He also explained the different sizes of damper wire, and how the dampers were graduated from bass to treble. Alan produced sketches on a flip chart to enhance these explanations. He then went on to show the range of specialist tools he uses (some hand made by himself), and examples of damper wire. The practical demonstration was carried out on a fairly large comb which made it a little easier to see. Alan showed the removal of the old pins and wire, and then the insertion, fixing and shaping of new dampers, sometimes requiring new taper pins. He made it look all too easy! Finally he talked about some of the problems which can arise, such as soldered dampers, and dampers fixed into blind holes. He also stressed that all other work, except final tuning, must be completed before dampering, and gave a brief overview of the final tuning process. He may even give a separate, detailed, talk on tuning at a future meeting.

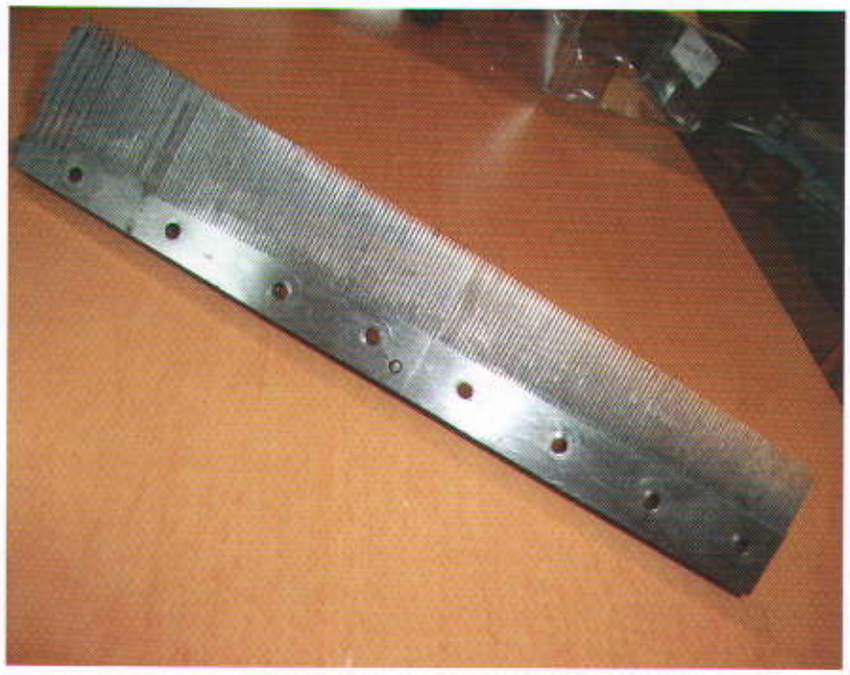
A break was then taken for lunch during which Hilda Phillips and helpers provided tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits for afters. John Farmer followed, first with a practical challenge to the audience – how to safely remove the broken spring for a 15 ½" Polyphon. The original spring had burst and was in at least four parts. The discussion which followed came up with various solutions, including making extensions for the holding pins around the spring, so it could be eased out and then fed out between the pins, and bolting it to a bench and using pipe grips to ease it out from the centre whilst wearing suitable protective clothing. Fortunately, a member of the audience who has experience of the problem, offered to carry out the work. John then demonstrated a Griesbaum Whistler in the form of a seated man (possibly Charlie Chaplin) which, according to its internal markings, dates from c. 1936 – 1945. Some thought the tune was a little like "When the Saints...", but John had established that it was "How dry I am", from Irving Berlin's 1919 song "The near future", although it may have existed before that as a children's ditty. John's African Grey Parrot had chosen to mimic the Whistler in recent weeks and later John was able to show a short clip of his "Whistling Bird".

Piano music followed from Nicholas Simons who played "Kinklets" by Arthur Marshall (1915), and a jazz piece "Christopher Columbus". John Farmer then asked Nicholas to use his pedalling expertise to play "Sugar Cane Rag" by Scott Joplin, and this was followed up with a Duo-Art arrangement of Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith". John Harrold

demonstrated a 4 air Nicole Mandoline cylinder box in the 41000 series. The comb in this example has groups of 5 teeth for the same note, but some larger boxes can have as many as 12 teeth in a group. To complement this, John Phillips played a Bremond 6 air Harpe Aeolienne, a Harpe Harmonique, and an Organocleide by Le Coultre.

Bob Dyke demonstrated a 9 5/8" Polyphon with 6 bells, and wasn't sure whether the bells were in tune. The first, modern, disc, did sound a little "off", but this was because the bells were sounding late. Playing an original disc proved that the bells were, in fact, properly tuned and the instrument played very nicely. The problem was thus believed to be in the punching of the modern disc. Alan Godier came to the front again and demonstrated the different sounds of the Polyphon and Regina disc boxes by playing the same disc on four different machines, one after the other. Alan believes this is down to the extra hardness of the teeth on the Regina, amongst other things. He then showed a musical comb from an F. Nicole clock base dating to around 1820. The comb was about 8" – 9" long, but at that time comb steel was only available up to about 4" long, so the comb had been made by fixing two 4" together on a wrought iron base, then adding a further small comb which was bolted on to the end. This latter small comb had integral steel tuning weights, whereas the other combs had soldered brass weights.

On a lighter note Nicholas Simons showed two 12 note Rolmonicas, one in Bakelite and marked Rolmonica Music Company, Baltimore, and the second (a recent acquisition) with a pressed steel back and Bakelite body, and marked Baltimore Rolmonica Co. It is unclear which model is the earlier. Nicholas then demonstrated a 16 note Bakelite Chromatic Rolmonica. To finish off John Phillips played some music on his 48 note Racca, now sounding better after he recently tuned it. The meeting finished around 4 p.m. with a vote of thanks to Hilda for the refreshments, and a vote of congratulation to John Phillips on his appointment as Vice President of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain.



Early comb construction from F Nicole clock base

Seated Griesbaum Whistler

The next meeting of the Teme Valley Winders will be the Christmas meeting planned for Saturday 7th December 2013, starting at 11 a.m. with a break for lunch (bring your own sandwiches, Hilda will provide liquid refreshments). It is essential that those wishing to attend contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm. Bring along seasonal items if possible.

John Farmer

16th Century Disc-playing Musical Clock

A Rare and Unique Masterpiece Emerges - by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume

Once in a while something turns up that is not just unexpected but is found to be a specimen of a hitherto unknown genre. And on rare occasions it is so unusual that history has to be re-written. Just such a piece emerged earlier this summer when a 400-year-old musical clock appeared in a leading London auction house,

It proved to be far more than just a mere musical clock and may well be one of the earliest examples known to horologists and mechanical musical instrument experts alike. On top of that it was found to incorporate a disc-playing musical mechanism. But even that was not all, for the disc was capable of being repinned like a carillon drum.

Overall view of the clock showing the side dial. The case is 17½ inches high and each side is decorated at the top by a large imitation semi-precious stone, two being red and the other pair blue-green.

Overall view of the clock which illustrates the side dial having both Arabic and Roman numerals. The single iron hand is exquisitely sculpted. The date can be determined as between 1580 and 1600. While all in original, unrestored condition, the seminaked naiads on the upperwork are later additions and one is detached.

As a preface to looking in detail at this remarkable find it is best to re-acquaint ourselves with the outline history of the evolution of the musical clock.

It is well known that Augsburg, capital of the Holy Roman Empire, was the early centre of production of quality musical and automaton clocks in the 16th and 17th centuries. Musical programmes almost invariably formed a part of the centrepiece and automaton clocks made there by makers such as the Bidermanns, Hans Schlottheim, Mattheus Rungell and Achilles Langenbucher. These were crafted initially with monomusus (single-tune, fixed programme) cylinders or wheels and, later, the polymusus (multi-tune, changeable fixed programme) cylinders such as those of the Bidermann spinets.

Only the tower carillon allowed the facility for the pantomusus (user-changed, repinnable programme) barrel where at the whim of the operator, new music could be set on the old drum. Indeed, this feature is thought to be as old as the tower carillon itself: here one can cite the Vabrie carillon drum of 1542 which even at this early date had established the prime feature of the repinnable drum, namely the parallel rows of evenly-spaced holes in its surface and the use of pins of various shapes and form to create notes of various musical length. Even the elemental drum of the Jooris Lievens mechanism of 1594 was but a structurally lighter version of the Vabrie while preserving all its musical capabilities.

The front or main dial is a veritable tour de force with perpetual calendar, the signs of the Zodiac, the phases of the moon and a 24-hour dial presented in two halves of 12 hours each. Note the two heraldic emblems on the lower part of the iron door, that to the left being the Holy Roman Empire and on the right the Town Coat of Arms of ancient Mosbach.

A detail view of the heraldic emblems carved into the front panel of the clock.

The strikework and music-locking plate on the back of the clock –opposite the main dial. The horizontal linkage to the left lower edge of the wheel controls the musicwork, the far left detent being capable of being locked for 'strike/silent' or for use as a 'play-at-will' control via a button on the exterior of the rear door.

The rear of the clock (opposite to the main dial) illustrating the rather coarser style of engraving. Close examination will show that the engraver made several mistakes in this work particularly the upper right edge of the rectangle in the lower part of the right-hand half.

Then we have pieces such as the Schlottheim nef in the British Museum which dates from 1585 and still plays the single original music pinned to its music wheel, and the barrel-and-finger spinet made about 1630 by Samuel Bidermann which still plays its original wooden barrel set with six melodies from that far-off period.

Of course, Augsburg was not the sole source of master horology in these days and we need to cast our gaze much wider to take in a broader picture. We then discover that the idea of the repinnable pantomusus programme for a domestic-sized musical clock is thought to have first been used in the Low Countries by Nicolas Vallin in 1589 after which the technique (which must have been more expensive to manufacture than a monomusus programme) was occasionally used by domestic carillon clock makers. One of

The locking plate for the strike mechanism together with details of the finely-decorated brasswork which mounts and partially contains the two striking bells. The main, larger bell is of a most curious cross-section while the strikework for the upper, smaller bell can just be seen under its rim.

the best examples is that of an unknown Amsterdam maker in or about 1730. An amazing longcase clock survives that features a cascade of bells visible above the dial in a towering cabinet (see Plates IV/39-41 in The Musical Clock). Played from a repinnable drum, this demonstrates a full-size bell-striking instrument in miniature and is complete with roller-board, pull-downs and wire-driven hammers. This piece of 18th century work, though unique in its style, is more than one and a quarter centuries later than the subject of this paper.

Discs were used as programmes for playing music in some of the contemporary automata but it is important to note that there were of the monomusus form.

The regime of the 16th-17th century musical and automaton clock and its makers was specific and proscribed. Makers were few and far between. Clocks at this time were quality works of high craftsmanship aimed virtually exclusively at nobility and the aristocracy (for they were the only ones who could afford to patronise such art), the handsome clock was a status symbol. This was the era of the centrepiece clock which was made to be free-standing either on its own casework or on a plinth so that it could be appreciated from all sides. These prospect-clocks were also suited to enhance the home with a glass mirror for mirrors, too, were also an expensive status symbol. A prospect clock placed close to a mirror which reflected the decorative rear of the case was an unwritten declaration of wealth and social standing. And the very best works had the added novelty of music and, sometimes, automated scenes.

There existed a coterie of makers who specialised in such items. All were master clockmakers, yet the majority did not leave their names for posterity. Invariably their work has come down to us as representing the most prized examples of the high craft of the clockmaker.

Here it is opportune to move forward several centuries and consider musical mechanisms that are played from a programme disc. Recent revived interest in the late

Every part of this rare and unique musical clock displays exquisite craftsmanship. This square base is made from a single strip of metal then formed with the domed panel upon which is engaged a Biblical scene, this one showing the Crucifixion. Notice the two birds. Around the lower edge is a continuous frieze showing hunting scenes.

One of the non-original naiads surrounded by the rock crystal facetted balls that embellish the remarkably fine casework. Given that the clock was clearly associated with the ancient monastery town of Mosbach on the River Necker, one might assume that the naked women were not present in the era of the monks…

19th century/early 20th century disc-playing musical box has drawn serious historians to that remarkable pantechnicon of science and mechanics – the New York Patent Office – where details are preserved of so many experimental musical mechanisms, not all of which went into production.

It was the diligent research by historians such as Glenn Grabinski in the United States that brought to our notice the extraordinary disc-playing musical mechanism of Peabody that bridged the void between Lochmann and Parr's Symphonion in the 1880s and Debain's Antiphonel two decades earlier. This discovery, an event heightened by the amazing survival and location of the actual original working patent model, will be the subject of an eagerly-awaited paper soon to be published by Mr Grabinski and will also be assessed in Q David Bowers' forthcoming book on the history of disc-playing musical boxes and their mechanisms, serves to alert us that there is still much to be learned.

This side of the base reveals a fine engraving of The Last Supper and a pair of what looks like gilded dolphins as well as birds. The quality of this pierced work is breathtaking when it is seen as being all within one continuous piece of metal. In two small places, the enormity of the task has proved too much as there were mistakes. These have been repaired from the inside with minute additional pieces of metal as patches, each so skilfully worked that from the outside they are invisible to the naked eye.

For the serious, dedicated historian and researcher, such events highlight the increasing need to question and explore an ever-widening field as well as not to expect the Internet to have all the answers. They also remind us of the sobering reality as to how little we knew yesterday.

It was thus with an acute sense of impending assertion of that dictum that I received an invitation by Jonathan Hills, director of Sotheby's Clocks and Barometers department in London, to appraise an unusual clock that played music from a disc. What happened next proved to be a veritable roller-coaster of discovery for it quickly emerged that this was not just a disc-playing musical clock but that the disc was repinnable. It thus set the bar several notches higher. With the grateful assistance of Sotheby's and Mr Hills' department, I was granted privileged access to examine this rarity before it went under the hammer in a sale on July 3rd.

While here concentrating on the importance of this piece in mechanical musical circles, it is first necessary to describe the clock in horological terms so enabling it to be placed in proper historical context.

Contained within a richly-gilded decorative case of architectural form and standing just 17½ inches high, the clock is mounted upon a base that measures 9 inches by 8 inches. The upperwork incorporates and embraces two superimposed bells and is embellished by the addition of multi-faceted cut and polished rock crystal spheres. Each of the four prospects is set with one large central imitation precious stone. Incongruously, there has been at some time added to each corner a small cast brass semi-naked naiad in classical pose: these are not part of the original decoration.

The mechanism comprises a four-train quarter-striking full calendar clock having two dials positioned on adjacent faces, that on the front displaying a relatively plain 12-hour face, the chapter ring displaying, first, the hours one to twelve in Arabic numerals, and second, an outer ring marked in Roman numerals. On the other dial, spaced 90-degrees from the former, there is a twice-twelve-hour dial forming part of a complex and extensive calendar disc to which I shall return to in a moment. On both these clock faces, front and one side, the time is indicated by a single iron hand, each of similar design, sculpted and shaped to a common design.

There are four distinct fusee-wound spring barrels, each affixed centrally to robust high-grade iron strips. Four turned pillars separate the top and bottom plates of the mechanism but these themselves are hidden behind finely-decorated cast and chased brass corner pieces. The accompanying illustrations explain how the mechanism fits together.

The exterior, of more or less square section, is framed in richly-gilded architecturally-inspired case surmounted by a pair of superimposed bells that strike the hour and quarters. The mechanism is protected on all four sides by engraved iron doors and panels, while the lower portion, concealing the musicwork, has pierced iron panels and a central domed and gilded engraved panel.

Because of the shape and design of the clock it is difficult to describe the piece as having a front, since the clock displays the time upon both front and one side. However, whereas one face has the simple brass dial engraved in Arabic and Roman numerals, the adjacent one is a very different and more complex prospect. This is embellished by a large and robustly engraved dial displaying a calendarium perpetuum. This is very similar to that of the c.1625 clock made by Caspar Fuldt in Nürnberg (see Fig 8 on page 32 of Die deutsche Räderuhr) .

Around the brass dial are inscribed the symbols of the Zodiac with accompanying astrological signs

in Latin text. The months are also shown in Latin form. At the top of this dial and engraved on the detachable iron doors is the legend MERI/DIES; opposite at the bottom is SEPTE/NTRO; to the right is OCCE/DEN/S; and to the left is ORIE/NS. These are, of course, the points of the compass in the Latin of Pliny – septentrionalis for North, meridies for South, occidentalis for West and oriens for East.

The arrangement of the dial having South at the top and North at the bottom may clash with our senses today but four hundred years ago there was no convention. Indeed, an example of this apparent inversion of the compass points is illustrated in Britten (Old Clocks & Watches and their Makers, 6th ed. 1932) as Fig. 37 (page 49) which, incidentally (and quite irrelevantly) indicates 'China as the centre of the Universe'. This image is described as showing (in typically vague Britten terminology) 'Ancient Oriental Calendar Timepiece or Heavenly Calendar Dial'.

A manually-adjustable moonwork aperture shaped like a heart displays a moon-plate that rotates beneath it and thus shows various phases of the lunar month. This feature is almost identical to that found on the musical and automaton clock in the British Museum and made in 1598 by Isaak Habrecht (see Plates IV/2-4 in The Musical Clock).

The four sides display iron doors which are engraved in the naive style of the 16th century, that on the side having the astrological and calendarwork showing two heraldic motifs. The left one depicts the entwined eagles, symbol of the Holy Roman Empire, while on the right appears to be a two-headed bird containing a small central cartouche bearing the single initial 'M'.

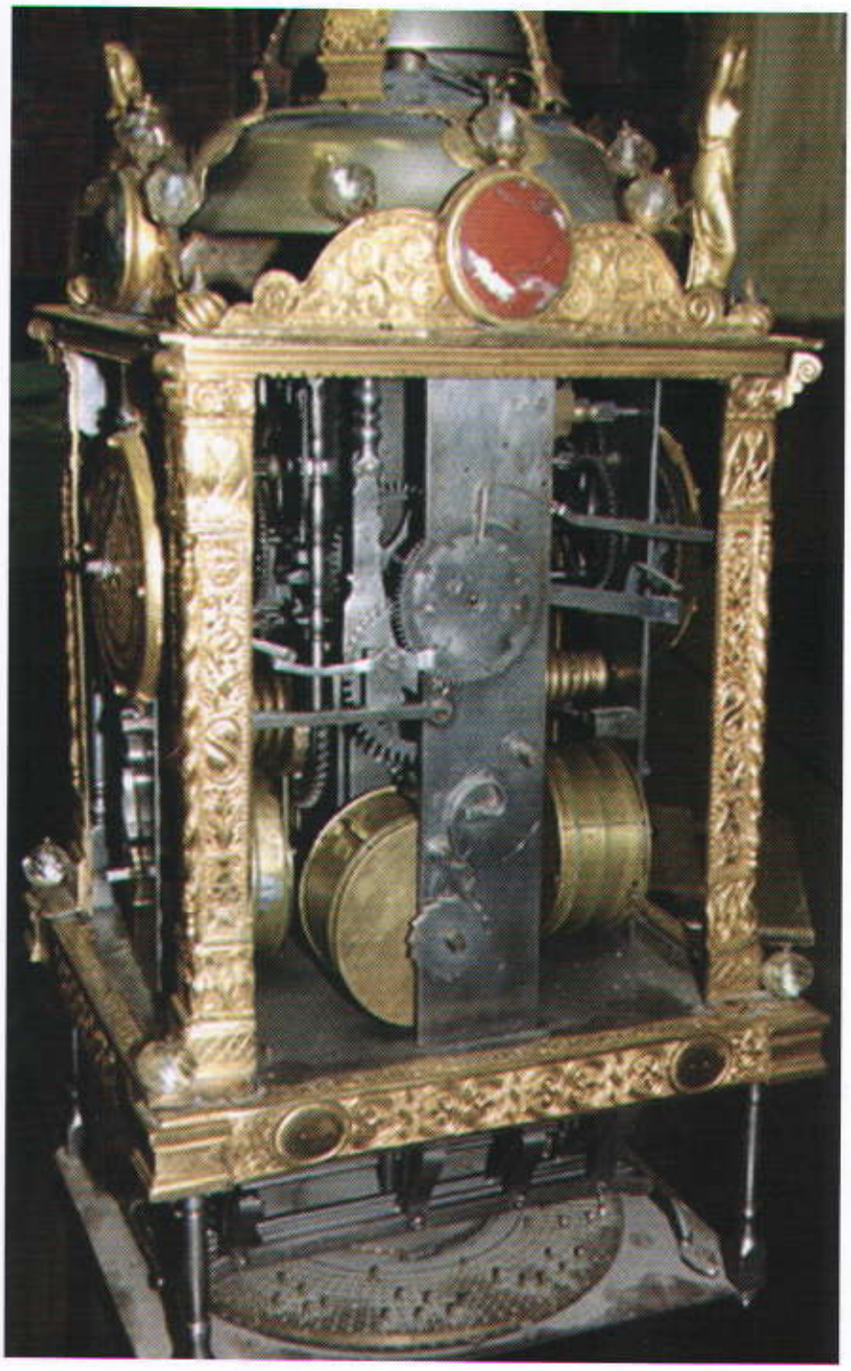
Each of these door panels is secured in place with a tiny swivel catch, one in each corner. The doors are thus removable and are not hinged. The engraving on the front plate is high quality while that on the other three are of somewhat lesser competence suggesting that at least two, possible three hands were deployed in this work.

Lifting the whole clock clear of its base reveals this quite extraordinary and unique original musical mechanism that plays on eight bells arranged in a horizontal plane under the lower part of the clock proper.

Besides having the best display of engraving this calendar face is likely to have been thought the front of the clock because it features the small control button, now missing, for governing the strike-silent movement.

Below the clock stage there is the musical department, normally closed off behind pierced iron panels each bearing a central engraved image. Interestingly this is crafted in such a manner that without dismantling the clock it would be virtually impossible to detect that it contained a musical movement of any sort.

This lower part of the clock, while integral with the frame and mechanism



Another view of the concealed musical mechanism. So neat, small and compact is this that it is virtually impossible to determine its presence from the outside. It is thus a triumph of the clockmakers' art.

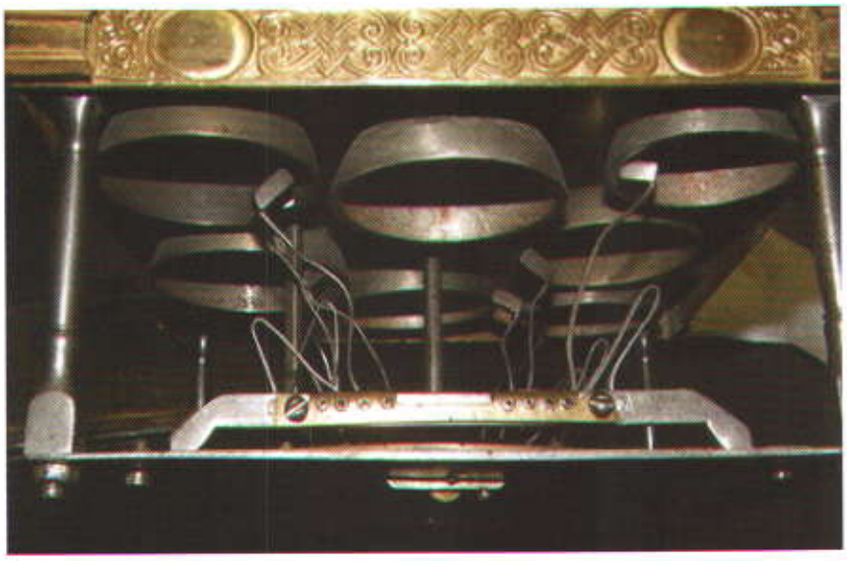
of the whole, is concealed in a quite separate pierced and decorated base formed from one long metal strip folded three times and joined to form a box. The finely-pierced and tooled metal had a central domed cartouche which has been hammered out prior to the surrounding piercing. These areas have been gilded and display finely-engraved images, that to the front being the Good Samaritan and others including the Birth of Christ, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion.

Each of these four sides differs in individual detail and includes one or more tiny coloured birds on a dark green-painted ground while the centre bosses and surrounding edges are gilded and engraved. The lower edge of this base connects with a richly decorated gilded brass moulding, each of the four sides etched and chased with a continuous hunting scene. Into this square base fits the lower part of the clock mechanism which is the piece that concerns us most here. Normally hidden from view, this comprises a horizontal brass disc some six inches in diameter and about one-eighth of an inch thick. This is pierced with a series of radial rows each of eight holes into which small flanged brass pins have been inserted to represent the musical programme.

Mounted above the disc is a steel frame supporting eight transverse rods which carry projecting levers to engage with the musical programme pins in the disc beneath, and small levers to move the hammers which strike on eight separate bells attached beneath the lower horizontal plate of the clock. Flat steel strips bent to a 'U' form serve to provide the striking force of the bell hammers: two of these have been lost over the years and at some time have been replaced with piano-wire hairpin springs. There is no doubt that the musicwork has received plenty of use over the long life of this remarkable clock, for the pins on the programme disc reveal a high degree of wear and tear.

The force exerted by the action springs contributes to a downward pressure on the music disc when playing which means the bearing of the vertical spindle carrying the disc is subjected to considerable and variable down force during rotation. The force is not concentric but offset by the bell-striking roller array. To accommodate this, the base of the clock frame carries six small metal rollers arranged in pairs radially spaced at 120 degrees and protruding through the base to support the music disc. While the actual spindle bearing is a plain hole and clearly inadequate to prevent the disc from eventually tipping and rubbing, I remain unsure that this quite advanced feature is original to the rest of the mechanism: it may have been added at a later date.

The musicwork is arranged to play after the strike. A fore-and-aft trip rod extends the depth of the mechanism from just outside the



Viewed from one of the roller-board support bridges, this picture shows the principle of operation. Also visible, centre bottom, is one of the externally-located brass rollers fitted into slots in the iron base plate and provided to prevent the music disc from fouling the base as it rotates under the downwards pressure of the action springs.

right edge of the dial. A tiny push-pull button, now missing, would have operated a 'strike-silent' operation, while the music could be played by choice at any time by turning a small rectangular button on the rear door of the clock, this serving to trip the locking plate.

At the period in history when this clock was made, steel was a scarce and costly commodity only available in small pieces hence its use by clockmakers was restricted to important parts of prestigious works. Here we find steel used for the turned posts and the various movements within the clockwork as well as for the carefully-shaped bridges that support the rollers in the musicwork. The rollers together with their lifting-pieces, are all of well-polished steel

Because of the very nature of the mechanism it cannot be said for certain that the clock performs the same music with which it was originally provided although it is fair to point out that repining the disc would have involved such a degree of dismantling that reprogramming might have been an unlikely occurrence. The possibility exists, therefore, that the musical programme of this clock (unlike, for example, that of the British Museum's Vallin clock with its repinnable drum), might just be original. In its present state, however, it is neither possible to determine the melody pinned nor even the pitch of the bells.

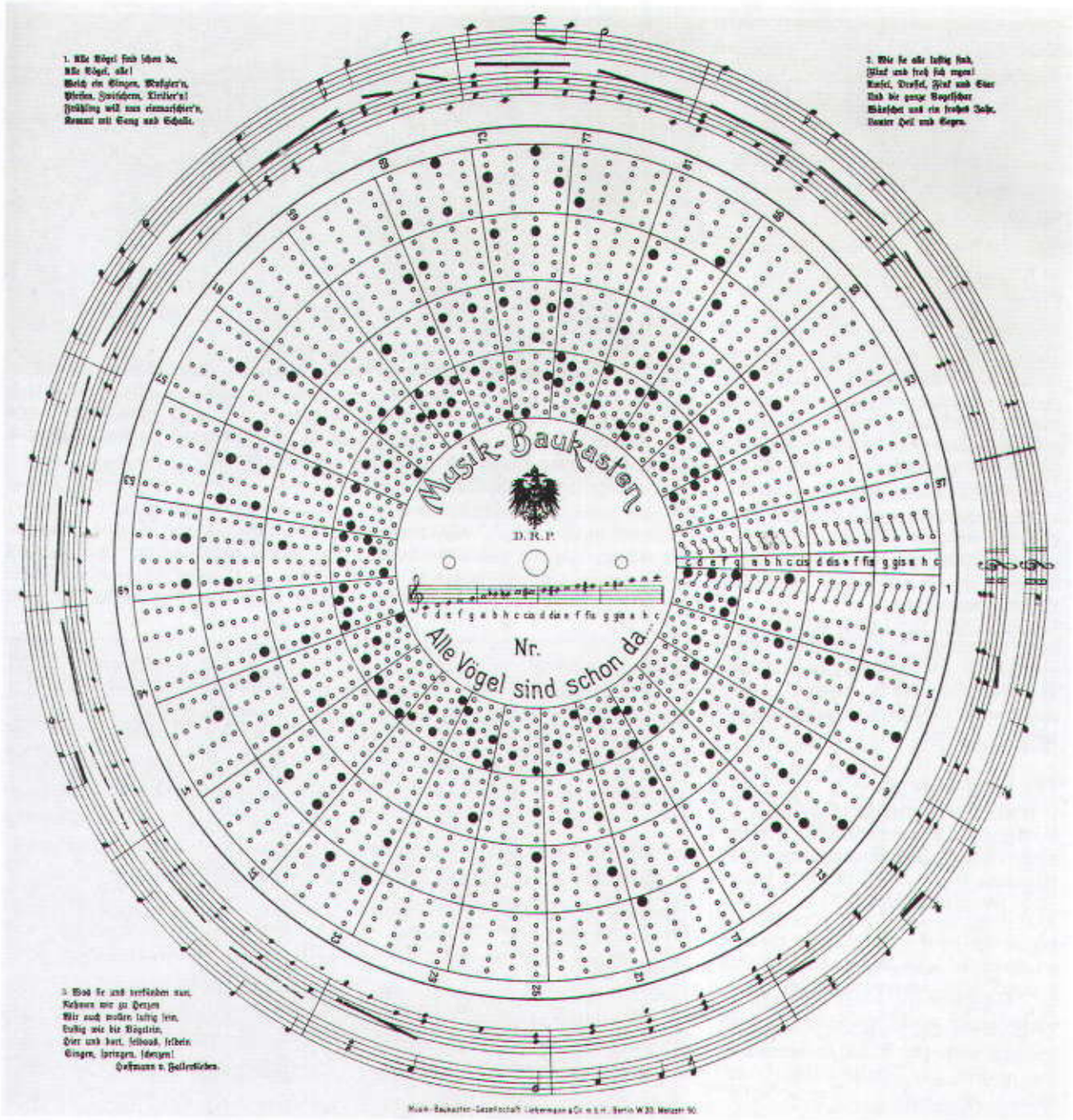
Examining this clock one is faced with two questions: who might have made it and for whom? The second question may readily be solved by that right-hand emblem on the clock front for the coat of arms with the central letter 'M' turns out to be that of Mosbach, an ancient and important, if small, settlement that grew up around a Benedictine monastery in the 9th century. Approximately 40 miles due North of Stuttgart, Mosbach is a one-time free city that became part of the Electorate of the Palatinate, its town coat of arms being built around that letter 'M'. However, around 1600, the city and its surrounding territory became part of what was called Oberamt Mosbach – literally Higher Mosbach – after which time the emblem incorporated the letter 'O' placed above the 'M'. This places our clock very nicely before 1600.

To the question of maker, we find ourselves considering the very few craftsmen of the age who had the ability to conceive of and to realise such a mechanism. The style of work is that found in Southern Europe (which includes north Switzerland and the centre of the one-time Hapsburgs) of around 1580 to 1610. It was thus with a mixture of excitement and surprise that investigation confirms that the maker did indeed leave his mark.

Opening the two front doors, behind the legend for septentrionalis or North, we find a small brass ornamental depending panel upon which are displayed the initials 'I + H'. The first letter may be read as either the modern form of the capital 'i' or the ancient form of the letter 'j'. Master clockmakers of the late 16th century with the initials 'IH' or 'JH' are restricted to the brothers Isaak and Josias Habrecht. It is important to observe that this mark is not visible without removing the front panel.

Isaak Habrecht (1544-1620) and his brother Josias (1552-1575?) were the sons of Joachim Habrecht and were born in the small village of Diessenhofen in the Canton of Thurgau. The family appears to have moved North a short distance to Shaffhausen where, in 1540, Habrecht Senior was given the freedom of the town having established himself as a master clockmaker. The family must accordingly have made a number of clocks but it remains strange that so very few of their pieces have ever turned up. This was, of course, an epoch when makers did not necessarily mark their pieces. Because the name of the maker was not essential for either kudos or commercial reasons, a master clockmaker had no need to mark his work.

While Isaak enjoyed a long life, his brother died aged little more than 27 leaving unfinished a clock for Kaiserwerth Castle having been summoned to Cologne by the Elector for its commission. In their short time of working together, though, the two brothers had made the mechanical parts for the Strasbourg Cathedral clock which was inaugurated in 1570.



The principle of the repinnable disc is seen in this illustration of one of the actual music-sheets sold with Graf's Musik-Baukasten – a disc-playing musical box patented in 1910. The key feature was that you could set your own choice of music. It featured almost exactly the principle of the 1590 clock displayed here, the user placing pegs in holes on a thick pierced plate which then operated a conventional comb-and-starwheel musical movement.

Isaac went on to produce a son, Abraham, in 1608. He worked in Strasbourg and Ratisbon, today known as Regensburg in Bavaria and was also in the sphere of mechanical and musical clocks.

The Habrechts were among the top makers in a coterie that included the greats of Nürnberg in the closing decades of the 16th century such as Hans Gruber and, a little later, master craftsmen such as Christoph Lencker, as well as the masters of Augsburg cited earlier.

Clocks marked by any of the family are rare indeed and, other than the Strasbourg Cathedral work, number just two that have been satisfactorily identified – that British Museum piece and the one in Denmark. This new find is thus of the utmost importance as it brings to light not just the earliest-known example of a disc-playing carillon and the earliest known example of a repinnable programme disc in a mechanical musical instrument, but it increases by one the number of attributable works by this mediaeval master.

The example that is easiest to study is that in the British Museum dated around 1594-98 and it was this one which, some forty-five years ago now, I was privileged to be allowed to dismantle and examine under the

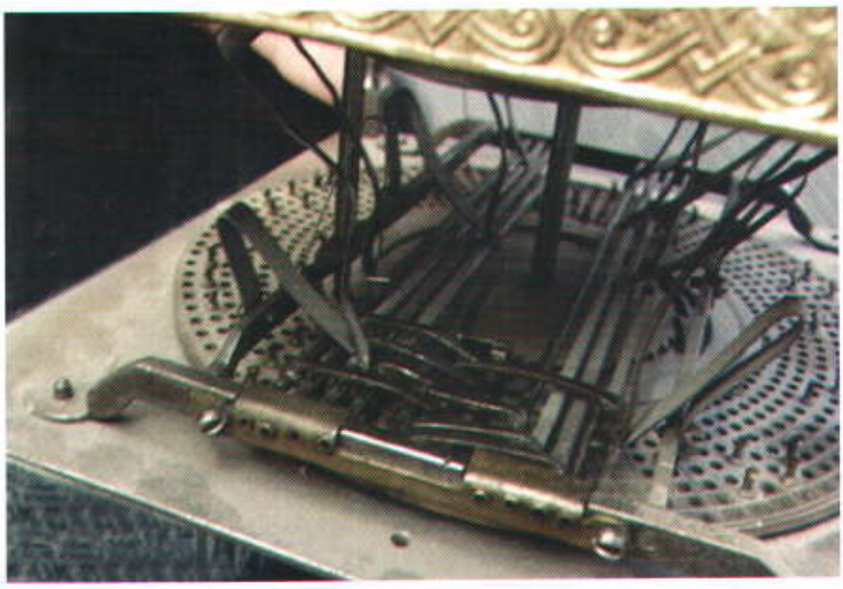
watchful gaze of the late Keeper of the Ilbert Collection, Phillip Coole. Of tower layout, the clock was fashioned in superimposed tiers, the monomusus programme being a wide-rimmed wheel upon the rim of which the music was pinned and played upon a carillon of bells. The moonwork is very similar to that of the newly-found Sotheby's clock.

A second and broadly similar clock exists by Isaak Habrecht and this, from 1594, can be seen and examined in Copenhagen, while the work of both brothers which survives in Tobias Stimmer's Strasburg Cathedral automaton clock is well-recorded elsewhere.

A general question might arise as to its authenticity, with particular reference to the maker's mark. While not every part of the clock may be original, evidence suggests the whole to be perfectly genuine and made about 1580-1590. The many counterfeit Tompion clocks and watches usually promote the faked name prominently: here it is carefully hidden from casual sight – not a reliable indicator of a faker's work.

One conjecture could be whether or not there was at some period a more conventional form of musical programme such as a drum or cylinder. The absence of any openings in the lower plate of the upperwork other than the disc pivot establishes that at no time could there have existed any other form of musicwork. Above all, there is simply so room for it – vide Schlottheim and his almost fanatical quest for compressing his musical mechanisms into the smallest-possible spaces.

To summarise this unique document from a past age, it is found that nowhere has this particular clock or its musical mechanism been recorded. Historically this clock is a classic example of what, in the Trade, is known as a 'sleeper'. It has remained in private hands in a mainland European location for countless years and had consequently gone unseen by both horologists and mechanical musical experts alike. With plenty of evidence of extensive use across the centuries, the possibility that it still plays its original 16th century musical programme is as exciting as it is uncertain, for there is no way of proving how many times, if any, the disc pins have been repositioned. Their extreme wear, clearly visible today, supports the hypothesis that it has remained musically unchanged for some considerable part of its life. One can go no further than that without additional evidence and that does not exist.



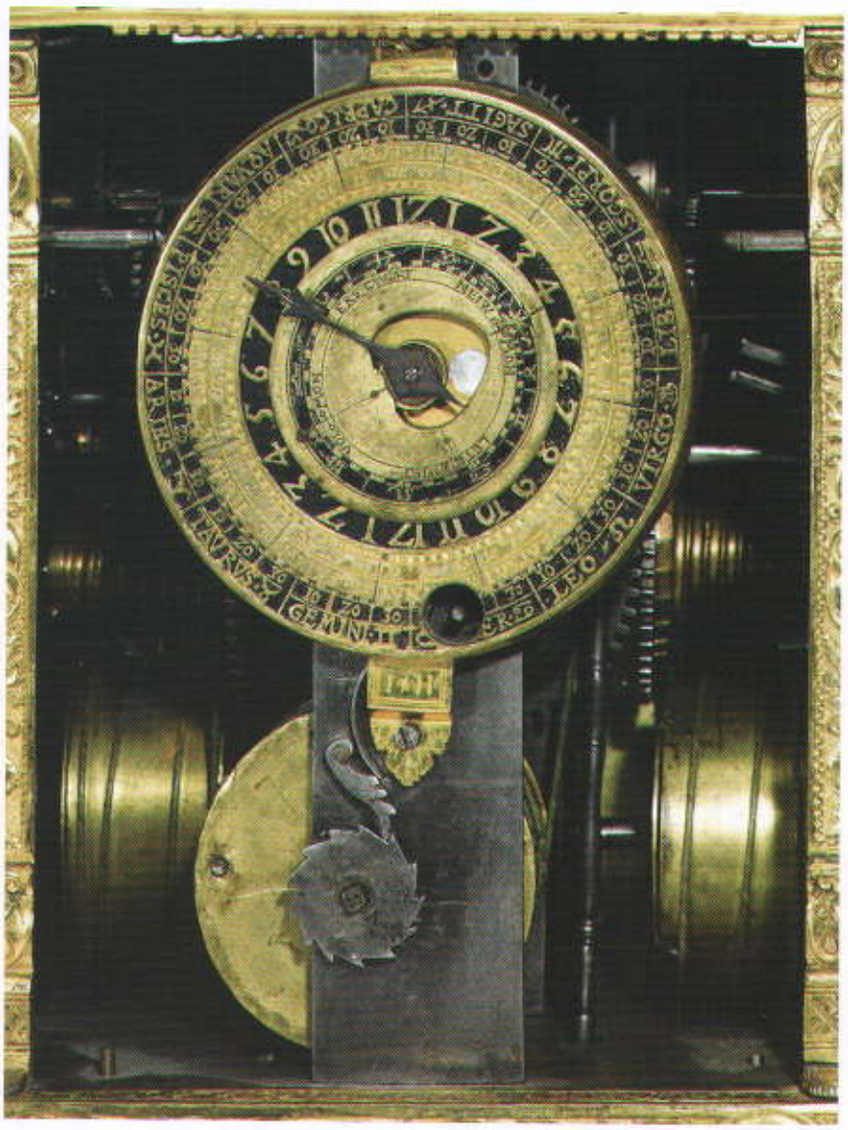
This view shows precisely how the musicwork operates. Each roller carries a long, slender curved lifting piece of flat cross-section. As the disc revolves, this allows the pin for a musical note to engage with the lifting piece and gradually lift it against the resistance of the 'U' shaped strip-iron springs. As the pin slips off the end of the lifting piece, the force of the spring allows the hammer to fly forward and strike the bell. When perfectly adjusted, the heavy hammer head supported on its soft iron wire link would travel forward to strike the bell and then bounce back, coming to rest a fraction clear of the bell so as not to block it.

The concept of the repinnable disc seems not to have occurred again until as recently as 1910 when the then Director of Telegraphs in Bielefeld in Westphalia, one Heinrich Graf, was granted his German Patent for a disc-playing musical box that looked rather like a table Polyphon or Symphonion which played a thick steel disc. Unlike those earlier two and their related cousins, Graf's disc was intrinsically projectionless being pierced with large numbers of radial holes into which owners could place pegs. To assist in making music, sheets were printed indicating various tunes and showing where to position the pins.

Called Graf's Musik-Baukasten and manufactured in Berlin by Liebermann, it was protected by a British Patent exactly one year after the granting of protection in Germany. This was 11,617 of May 13th, 1911. The 'tune-disc' was 29.5 cm in diameter with 99 radial divisions to accept pinning for the 20-note compass. A full description of this novel box is to be found in The Music Box, Vol.8, No.4, Christmas 1977, pp.146-150.

A future owner of this unique musical clock will, it is hoped, have both the interest and the resources to carry out the necessary further research into its history.

In preparing this paper I am indebted to Jonathan Hills, director of Sotheby's Clocks and Barometers department in New Bond Street, London, for his help and hospitality as well as permitting me to take the accompanying photographs.



Removing the engraved front door panel to the main dial reveals a small brass detail at the bottom of the dial and which is not normally visible. Into this is displayed in relief the initials 'I' and 'H'. This mark leads the author to the conclusion that the maker was none other than one of the most respected makers of musical clocks of his era – Isaak Habrecht of Shaffhausen.

FURTHER READING:

Britten, Frederick James: *Old Clocks and Watches & Their Makers*. 6th ed. Spon, London, 1932

Maurice, Klaus: *Die deutsche Räderuhr*. Beck, München, 1976. *(See* Band I, pp.137 *et seq.)*

Ord-Hume, Arthur W. J. G: *The Musical Clock*. Mayfield, Derbyshire, 1995

Ungerer, Théodore: *Les Habrecht, une dynastie d'horologers Strasbourgeois au XIVc et at XVIIc Siècle*. Strasburg, 1925

Wahl, Hermann (ed): *Die Uhr*. Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, 1967

FOOTNOTE: *The author is a Founder Member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, founder and first editor of The Music Box journal, and twice Past President.*

NOTE: For a general view of the musical mechanism showing detail of the steel bridges either side of the disc which support the eight parallel rollers, see the front cover illustration. Note how the brass pins in the music disc are all bent into a crook shape. While this might have originated as an original feature in order to minimise the friction load on the roller-mounted lifting pieces, it is more likely that this is the result of protracted usage.

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.

3157 John Roberts, Lancashire
3158 Trygve Sandberg, Norway
3159 Angela Matthews, Scotland
3160 Derek Streets, Yorkshire
3161 Stephen Wright, Surrey
12317 Keith Hilson, Berks [joint]

Now that there are 5 Local Area groups I hope that even more members will come along and join in. Most are informal meetings and give a good chance to ask questions and have a look at instruments.

The Author pictured at Sotheby's in London where he was permitted to examine this rare piece prior to its sale.

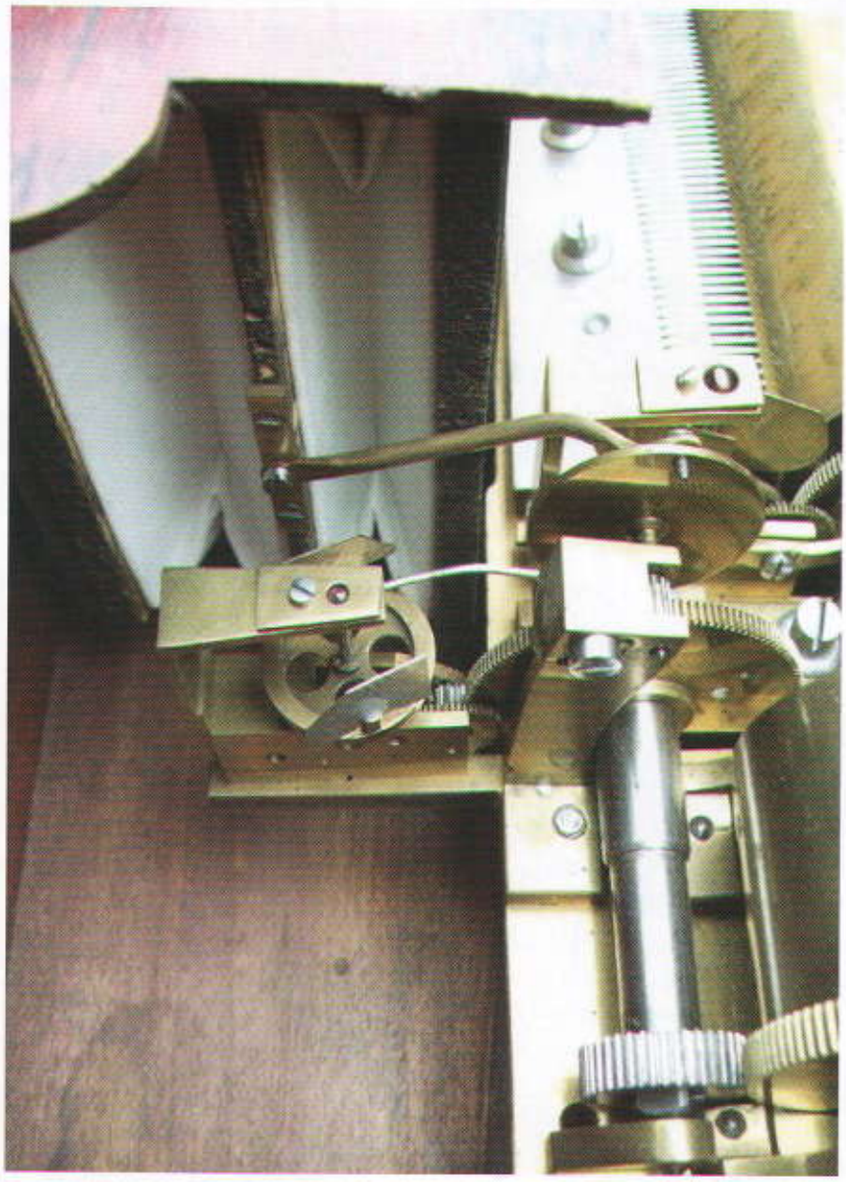
Two Motors for the Price of One.

by Kevin McElhone

I don't sell many cylinder musical boxes each year but about 18 months ago I took into stock three cylinder musical boxes which had reed organs in them, one of which was rather unusual. My very first job when I went self-employed in the mechanical music field in 1998 was to value a collection in Northampton for Mrs Gunn the widow of a contact of mine, Spencer Gunn. He had run a privately owned D.I.Y. store in the town near to where I worked for ten years so we had met several times as he had supplied me with timber for shelving and other projects.

He had collected for a long time and the collection of over 100 instruments was scattered all over the house in various rooms, the Grannie Annex, the loft, the garage etc. It was a large property employing a gardener, even after part of the land was sold off to build four houses on it. It took me over a week to sort out all of the discs, rolls, instruments etc. and to photograph and catalogue them and then give a value.

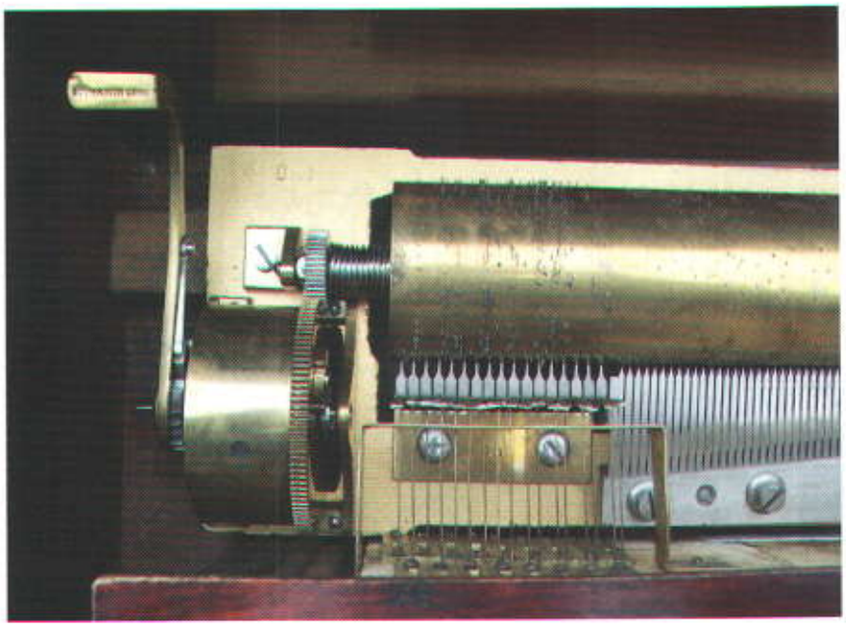
My valuation was £92,000 and I was rather pleased that this nearly matched Christie's Auction house valuation of £94,000. I wanted to buy one of the instruments, a chamber barrel organ made c.1780 with 8 stops and several barrels but the solicitor would not let me buy anything, or indeed would not let me sell the collection for a 10% commission - the reason given was 'in case I sold it cheaply to my friends' - although I would not have sold anything below any estimate given without permission of course.



The organ drive end of Ducommon-Girod No. 481

The collection was taken away to London to Christies Auction house and indeed on the day of removals Christopher Proudfoot came to the house and was not that surprised to see that I was the other valuer involved. The auction took place in late July 1999 but at that date I was working at Dunrobin Castle in Scotland which is 50 miles north of Inverness and was not able to be at the auction in person. The instrument I wanted was valued at under £2,000 and in those days telephone bids were only accepted for items expected to fetch much higher prices than that so I could not bid.

On my return from Scotland Mrs. Gunn told me that the collection had fetched £54,000 and after deductions of £3,000 for the removals and photographs, plus the Auction House commission charges she got £39,000 for the collection and so was rather disappointed. So was I, as I had hoped to make my name selling the collection, so to speak.



The conventional drive for the comb part, also showing the unusual organ key arrangement

She had, however kept her two favourite pieces back from the auction as she decided to keep them. I thought little more of them for about 14 years until I discovered by accident that an organ box was to be sold at an auction at Towcester, near Northampton. I recognised one of the pieces and guessed what had happened. Mrs. Gunn, aged around 90 years old, had died and the house contents were being sold. Her son bought a 19 5/8 inch Polyphon at the auction and I bought the cylinder box with reed organ.

The cylinder movement had been restored by Jim Colley in 1985 but the organ bellows had never been restored. It was rather short of wind so after showing it in an un-restored state at the M.B.S.G.B. meeting in Milton Keynes I sent it away to have the organ bellows completely replaced. The cylinder mechanism was still in excellent condition with no problems at all.

The unusual feature of this box is that the cylinder movement, when viewed from the front, is placed behind the organ mechanism which is in full view rather than the organ being hidden under the cylinder movement. The organ is also played at one end of the cylinder so there is one long steel comb rather than two shorter ones as is often the case. The keys for the organ are bent at 90 degrees and the pallets are clearly visible when playing.

The most unusual feature is the fact that there are TWO winding handles, both stamped Ducommun-Girod, one at each end of the case. There are two governors, a normal one for the cylinder movement and the typical larger organ type for

The organ reeds and pallet wires

Complete Music Notation Workshop Gallery Display, c. 1910
Entire outfit for production of piano rolls.
– Extremely rare! –
(Estimate: US$ 13,000 – 25,000 / Euro 10.000 – 20.000)

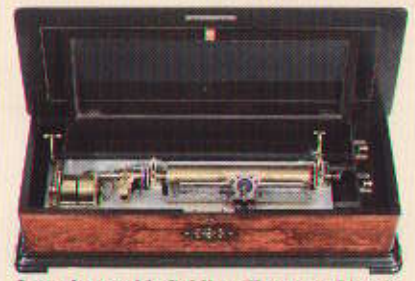
Organ Musical Box by Bremond, c. 1870
Perfect playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 4,000 – 6,500 / Euro 3.000 – 5.000)

»Decap« Dance Organ, c. 1950
Spectacular Belgian instrument with cardboard books. –
(Estimate: US$ 25,000 – 45,000 / Euro 20.000 – 35.000)

Nickelodeon Pianola »Coinola Cupid«, c. 1920
With complete 'Tavern' setting. –
(Estimate: US$ 4,000 – 7,000 / Euro 3.000 – 5.000)

»EMG Mark X« Gramophone, c. 1930
With giant (28") papier-mâché horn. –
(Estimate: US$ 3,000 – 5,000 / Euro 2.500 – 4.000)

Lambert »Guitarist« Automaton, c. 1900
Elegant classic Lambert musical automaton in unusual Arabian costume. –
(Estimate: US$ 5,000 – 8,000 / Euro 4.000 – 6.000)



Interchangeable Sublime Harmony Piccolo Musical Box with 6 Six-air Cylinders, c. 1880
(Estimate: US$ 5,000 – 8,000 / Euro 4.000 – 6.000)

»Banjo Player« Musical Automaton by Gustave Vichy, c. 1890
(Estimate: € 5.000 – 8.000 / US$ 6,500 – 10,000)

Decamps »Bébé Frileux« Automaton, c. 1920
Romantic-themed musical automaton, from Decamps family collection. –
(Estimate: US$ 5,000 – 8,000 / Euro 4.000 – 6.000)

Hupfeld Patent »Player Piano«, c. 1898
Excellent playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 6,500 – 9,000 / Euro 5.000 – 7.000)

»Bébé Eventail« Automaton by Lambert, c. 1890
– (Estimate: US$ 5,000 – 7,000 / Euro 4.000 – 5.000)

»Death of Cleopatra«, c. 1890
Rare life-size automaton with 'breathing' effect. –
(Estimate: US$ 13,000 – 19,000 / Euro 10.000 – 15.000)

Musical Picture Clock Automaton by Xavier Tharin, c. 1870
With cylinder movement by Nicole Frères. –
(Estimate: US$ 10,00 – 15,000 / Euro 8.000 – 12.000)

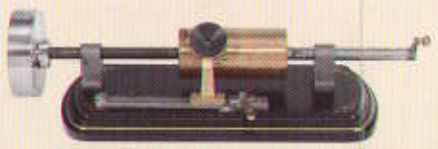
Decamps Coin-Operated Automaton »Clown with Ladder«, c. 1925
Attractive circus-themed automaton in original costume, from Decamps family collection. –
(Estimate: US$ 4,000 – 6,500 / Euro 3.000 – 5.000)

Regina »Mandoline Orchestra Style 304«, c. 1900
Very good playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 5,000 – 8,000 / Euro 4.000 – 6.000)

Decamps »Dancing Dog«, c. 1910
Rare prototype model of a mechanical toy, from Decamps family archive. –
(Estimate: US$ 2,000 – 3,000 / Euro 1.500 – 2.000)

Roullet et Decamps »Monkey Chef« Automaton, c. 1885
Rare monkey pastry chef automaton with kitten pie, from Decamps family collection. – (Estimate: US$ 10,000 – 15,000 / Euro 8.000 – 12.000)

Rare French Musical Automaton, c. 1860
for the Chinese market. –
(Estimate: US$ 7,500 – 10,000 / Euro 6.000 – 8.000)



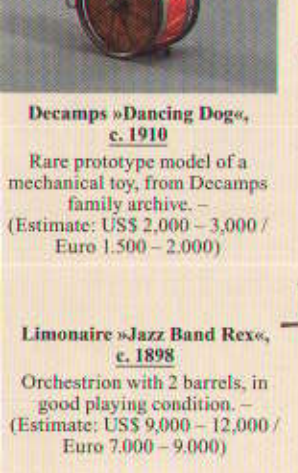
Edison 'Brady'-Type Tinfoil Phonograph
Absolutely the finest hand-made replica by William C. Ptacek (1958 – 2004) from Oakes, N. Dakota, USA. – Marked: »WCP 14« – one of only 14 ever made. – 78 cm/28 in. wide.
(Estimate: € 5.000 – 7.500 / US$ 6,000 – 9,000)

»Fratinola Model 8b« Pneumatic Orchestrion, c. 1910
Excellent playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 15,000 – 20,000 / Euro 12.000 – 15.000)

»Aeolian Player Reed Organ«, c. 1895
(Estimate: US$ 9,000 – 11,000 / Euro 7.000 – 9.000)

Hupfeld »Clavitist Atlantic« Orchestrion, c. 1925
Excellent playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 11,000 – 15,000 / Euro 9.000 – 12.000)

»Polyphon No. 104 P« Disc Musical Box with Prize Award, c. 1895
With 34 discs (19 2/3 in.).
– Perfect playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 6,500 – 10,000 / Euro 5.000 – 8.000)



Limonaire »Jazz Band Rex«, c. 1898
Orchestrion with 2 barrels, in good playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 9,000 – 12,000 / Euro 7.000 – 9.000)

Barrel Orchestrion by »Mazoletti, Bruxelles«, c. 1900
10 melodies, piano with 63 notes. –
(Estimate: US$ 6,000 – 8,000 / Euro 4.500 – 6.000)

Hupfeld »Animatic S« Orchestrion with Percussion Cabinet, c. 1925
Superb playing condition. –
(Estimate: US$ 12,000 – 20,000 / Euro 9.000 – 15.000)

127th Specialty Auction

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– The Specialists in »Technical Antiques« –

For more information & highlights please see back cover!

The front

the organ bellows. There is one on-off lever and if this is pushed only half-way for a couple of seconds the organ bellows will start pumping so they have built up maximum pressure by the time the lever is pushed fully on to start the cylinder rotating. This is a good feature which means you are not fighting to re-gain pressure all the time the box is being played.

There is the normal change or repeat lever for the six tunes on the cylinder but there is no evidence of tune sheet ever having been in the lid of the instrument.

The serial number 481 is stamped on the main bedplate with a continental 75 scratched just below this. The numbers 9 and then 2637 are stamped on the normal cylinder drive motor. A 'best guess' at a date would be 1865 but when checking the register there are no other boxes of this or any other make found to be constructed like this. The Organ tends to take the lead. When it was suggested that during a session to 'name that tune' at one of Ted Brown's meetings the box was played without winding up the organ, so that members could concentrate on the cylinder, this did not help much as there were times when the cylinder fell silent as the organ was playing the melody [silently of course] on its own. We only managed to identify one of the tunes which is better than we sometimes manage to achieve.

There is a lengthy article about this box in Music and Automata Volume 2 No.6 for October 1985. Although this is a rare publication, not easy to find, there is a set in the Archives. This set of magazines would be worth digitising: I wonder if Arthur Ord-Hume would care to comment on that suggestion?

Does anyone else know of another cylinder box with more than one governor and a system such as this?

Inlaid lid of Ducommun-Girod 481

A meeting of the Wessex Group is planned for the Autumn, with a provisional date of Sunday 27th October.

Please phone or email Alison Biden (see Officers' panel for details) **for further information, and/or to express your interest.**

STOP PRESS!

The rare German musical clock described on page 94 fetched

£92,500

including buyer's premium at Sotheby's on July 3rd.

We understand it was purchased be a British collector:

(s)he is to be congratulated on the purchase!

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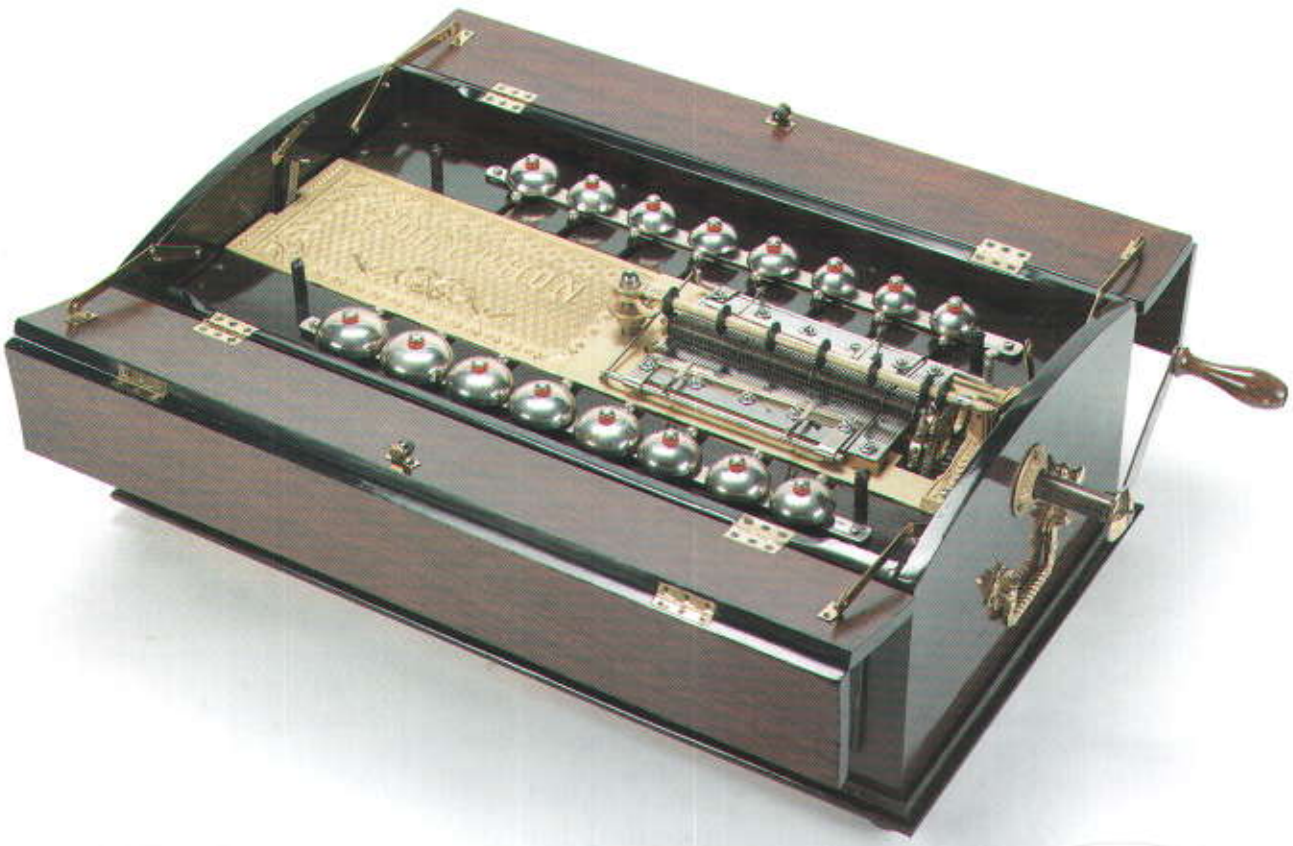

Emery Prior's lifetime collection of over 120 unique Musical Boxes
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Making a Musical Box

by Don Busby

Power Gear Train

The power gear train is designed to take power from the mainspring to both ends of the cylinder. Gear ratios have been chosen to ensure that bass and treble arbor plates, which carry the cylinder, rotate in synchronisation during playing of music and remain so whilst cylinders are being changed. Provision is made for drive take-off to governor and run-arrest units which were described in an earlier article.

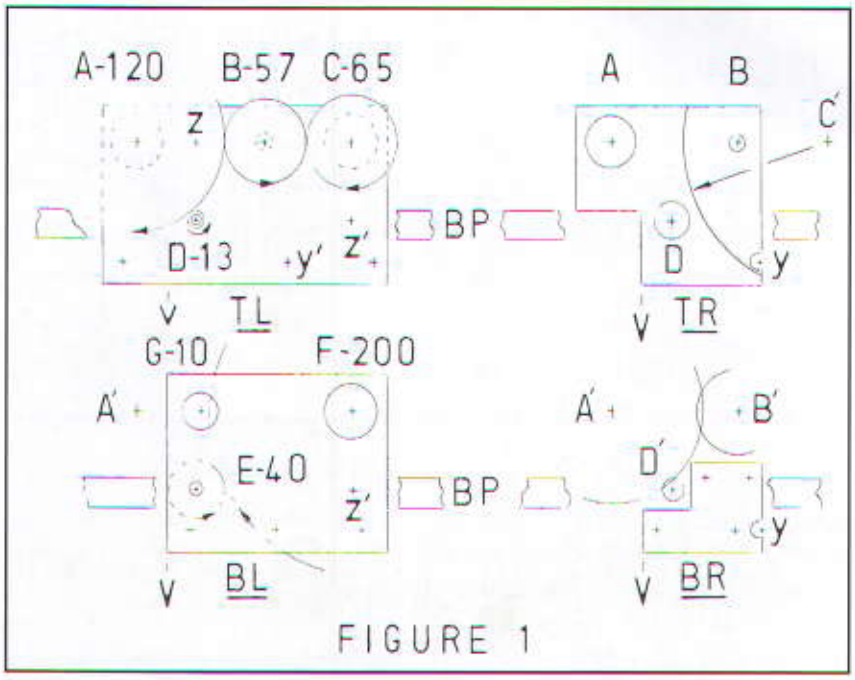


Fig 1. Gear train brackets and gears in elevation

At the outset of his musical box development, the author's intention was to cut his own brass gears. However, some time into the work he decided to buy in the necessary gear wheels from the source given at reference 1. This decision was taken for two reasons: firstly, the design, testing and fabrication programme was proving to be more time-consuming than anticipated; secondly, why not take advantage of a good source of gears at competitive prices in these modern days? The standard was set as 0.5 MOD, steel spur gears, with or without boss as appropriate. Informed readers will know that the pitch of Module gears is based on the value of π so, for example, a 200 tooth 0.5 MOD gear has a Pitch Circle Diameter (PCD) of 100 millimetres.

After much head scratching, a gear train comprising gear wheels, axles and brackets was devised as depicted in fig 1. This figure of elevations, together with its key, defines the sizes of brackets to be cut, axle holes to be drilled and positions of various sizes of gear wheels which make up the gear train. The relative position of the bed plate (BP) is shown, as is the edge of the cylinder void (V) nearest to the comb. Other centres are marked to show fixing holes for fastening of brackets to the bed plate: since these positions are not essential for an understanding of the gear train, exact locations are not defined. In order to help the readers identify positioning of brackets and gears on the bed plate, fig 2 repeats a plan of the bed plate from an earlier article, to define where brackets fit into its voids.

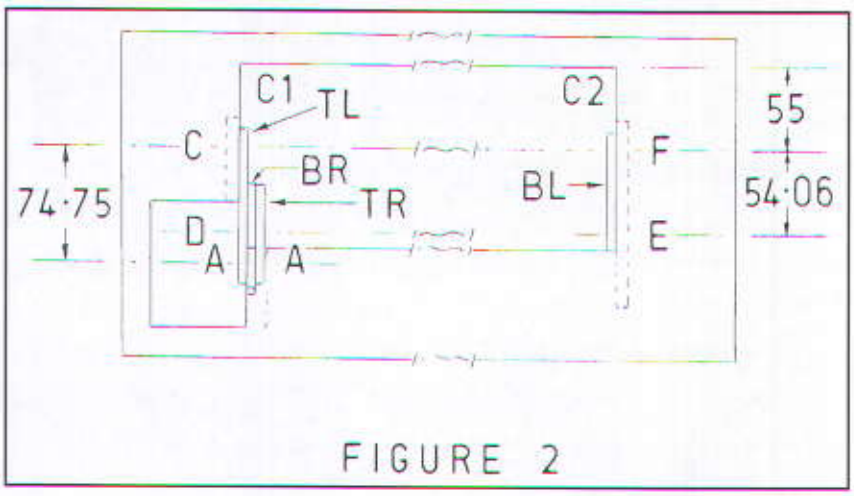


Fig 2. Bracket locations on the bed plate

We return now to fig 1 and use TL (i.e. Top Left), TR, BL and BR to define which quarter of the drawing is being referenced: all elevations are as viewed from treble towards bass. TL shows Pitch Circles for gears A and B which transmit power from the spring unit (behind A) to C which is bolted to the bass end arbor plate which carries cylinders as described in the article, "Fitting Cylinder to Bed Plate". The hyphenated number gives the number of teeth for a

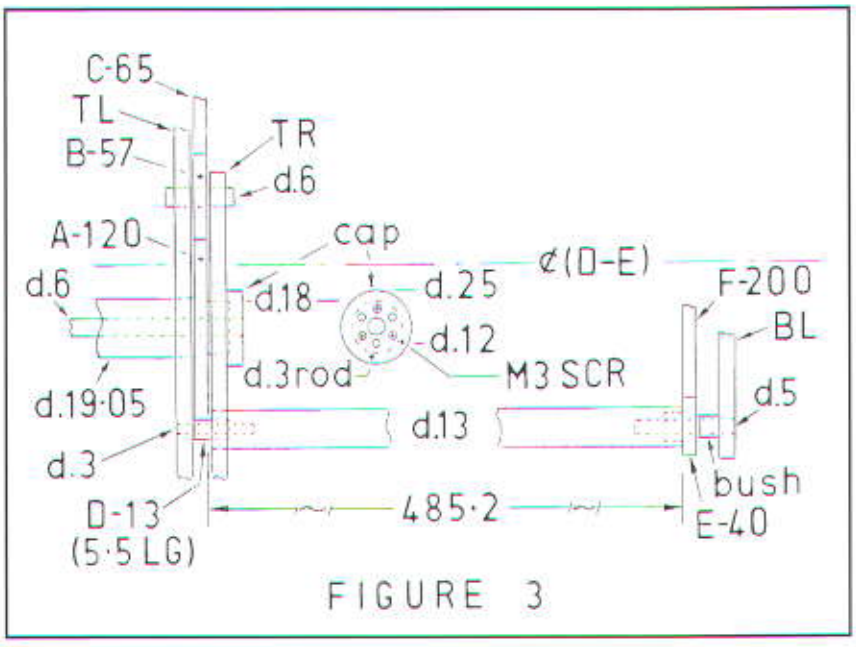


Fig 3. Transfer shaft and gears in plan

gear, e.g. A has 120 teeth. The hole centred at each gear location takes account of the bore of the gear as supplied and of the design of axle for carrying that gear. Gear D takes off drive to a 13 dia. transfer shaft through to gear E of BL: its function will be explained shortly.

TR is the partner bracket to TL to support the axles of gears A and B: C is supported by the cylinder arbor plate brackets as described in the earlier article. All brackets are 6 thick, as is spacer BR which sits between TL and TR to allow for gears (5 thick) and a 0.5 thick shim washer each side of a gear. Three arcs in BR show outer circumferences of gears A, B and D to ensure teeth clearance from this spacer. The 4 centres marked on BR are for 4 dia. holes to be drilled through BR and TR for screws to enter coincident M4 tapped holes in TL.

* * *

(Key to Figure 1)

TL

MS bracket 99.75 x 60 x 6 (W x H x T)

AB=44.25 BC=30.50
AD= 33.25 CD=60

Lathe indexing to D:

AZ=20.69 CZ=54.06 ZD=26.03

Axle hole dias. A=19 B=6 C=19
D=3 A is 12.5 from edges

No. of gear teeth are shown hyphenated

TR

MS bracket 65 x 60 x 6 (W x H x T)

Corner cut-out 22.25 x 25 (W x H)

y10 dia. cut-out for access to bracket fixing hole at y'on TL

Axle hole dias.
A=18 to take boss of gear A
B=6

D=13 to take transfer shaft between gears D and E

'Segment' centred on C' recessed 1mm to give clearance for cylinder

BR

MS spacer 42.75 x 30 x 6 (W x H x T)

Corner cut-out 17 x 15 (W x H)

y as for TR

Hole centres for 4 dia. fixing screws through TR to M4 tapped holes in TL, centred or 5 from edges

BL

MS bracket 77.5 x 60 x 6 (W x H x T)

FE=60 FA'=74.75 (AB+BC of TL)

*FG=52.75 Note: G-10 is a 'corrected' gear with PCD of 5.5

Lathe indexing to E:
Fz'=26.03 (Cz' of TL)
z'E=54.06 (z'D of TL)

Axle hole dias. E=5 F=19
(F is 12.5 in from edges)
*G=13

** This take-off drives the governor and run-arrest unit, both to be the subject of a later article.*

* * *

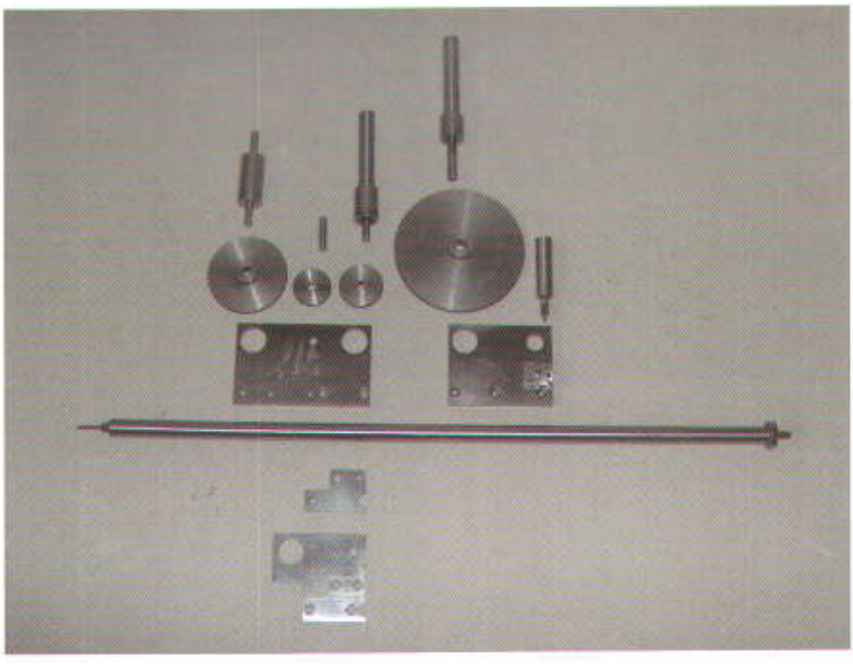


Fig 4. Component parts of gear train

Fig 5. Great wheel from treble end

After assembly (without gear C) the 'gear box', comprising TL, TR and BR, resides at C1 of fig 2: it can only be placed into position at the same time as BL, together with the transfer shaft between gears D and E. BL is located at C2 of fig 2, carrying gears E and F. Gear F, our great wheel, is bolted to the treble end cylinder arbor plate.

Brackets TL and BL are screwed to mild steel brackets which are themselves screwed under the bed plate as shown by dotted outlines at fig 2. This figure shows the centre line between gears C and F which is also the line of the cylinder arbor. The centre line of the transfer shaft from gear D to E is also defined. Finally on fig 2, A---A indicates the centre line of gear A and the mainspring arbor.

The interconnection between bass and treble ends of the gear train through the transfer shaft is shown in plan at fig 3. Components are drawn to scale but the figure is schematic in that, for simplicity, gear train C-B-A-D is presented in a straight line, whereas the true position of the transfer shaft is as shown by C/L(D-E), so bringing the centres of C-65 and F-200 into alignment. Further, BR which sits between TL and TR is omitted for clarity.

The design calls for shim washers between gears and supporting brackets to be 0.5 thick In practice, because of manufacturing tolerances, these were adjusted to give smooth running and to achieve the required separation of 485.2 between the inner faces of gears C and F which are integral parts of cylinder supporting arbors. The 'cap' to the 19.05 dia. arbor of gear A-120 is attached to it by three 25 long, countersunk M3 screws which pass through the boss of the gear. Three 25 long 3 dia. rods pass through the gear boss to transfer drive from the mainspring arbor: they extend into the 'cap'. Gear B-57 rotates on its axle which is sweated into TL and supported by a matching hole in TR. Gears D-13 and E-40 and integral 3 and 5 dia. axles are sweated into the 13 dia. transfer shaft. Elements of the development and assembly of the gear train are shown by figs 4, 5 and 6, currently with temporary arbors for gear wheels and, with brackets TR and BR excluded for illustrative purposes.

It is timely now to explain the roles and reasons for choice of gears for the transfer shaft between gears D and E as shown by fig 1. The function of this shaft is to take drive from gear A to gear F in order to keep F rotating in synchronisation with gear C at the other end of the cylinder. C is integral with the cylinder drive arbor plate, whilst F, the great wheel, is integral with the treble end cylinder arbor plate. In many a musical box the great wheel, being attached to its cylinder, would

Fig 6. Bass end gears and transfer shaft take-off

be turned by drive gear C, via the cylinder and its arbor and not have a transfer shaft such as ours. However, when our cylinder is changed it is preferable that the cylinder arbor plates remain lined up. Does our design achieve synchronisation? Returning to fig 1, consider a single rotation of C, then 65 teeth will pass its point of contact with B, therefore 65 teeth of B will pass this point. Similarly, 65 teeth of A will pass its point of contact with B and 65 teeth of D will pass the point of contact with A. Since D has 13 teeth it completes 5 (65/13) revolutions. We know that D and E are both secured to the transfer shaft, therefore E will complete 5 turns. Five turns of E will cause 200 (5x40) teeth to pass its point of contact with F, which will therefore complete 1 revolution in synchronisation with C, as required.

Do we need gear B? Well, without it C and F would rotate in opposite directions and, with a cylinder in place, our drive unit would remain motionless! The number of teeth of gear B is of no import, being determined only by gear train geometry.

Other things to be considered in relation to this gear train include what happens if a 'run' occurs. This could be caused by failure at one or more of its various components or stages of operation, e.g. cylinder in place or not. This subject was dealt with in a previous article (The Music Box Vol. 24 No. 6, Summer 2010) where the governor and a run-arrest mechanism are described. In the meantime, readers might like to mull over what other mishaps could arise.

REFERENCES

HPC Gears Ltd
Unit 14 Foxwood Industrial Park
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S41 9RN
Tel: 01246 268 080
www.hpcgears.com

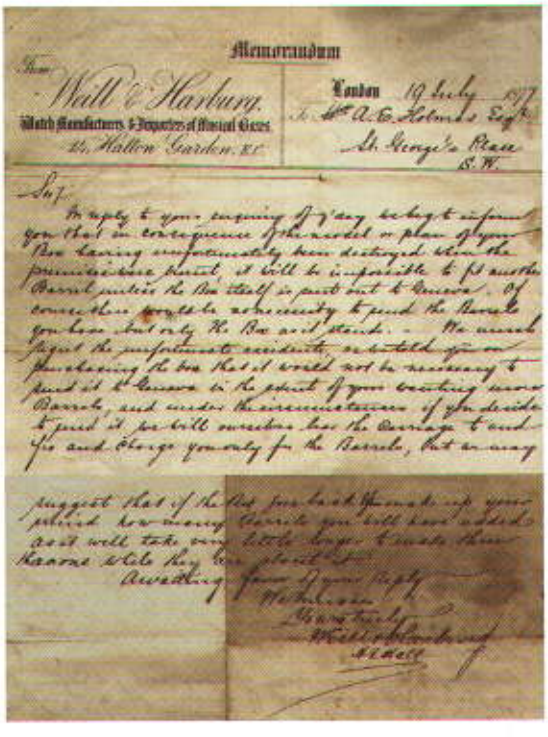
Weill & Harburg (Grosclaude)

By Luuk Goldhoorn

It is not that often that a box comes in with more written information than just the tune sheet, but this one, made by Grosclaude, has a small archive. It was bought by A.E. Holmes Esq, St George's Place, London, S.W., from their representatives Weill & Harburg in London somewhere around 1876. The Harpe Harmonique Zither type box, no. 2041, has four 33cm cylinders with 6-airs each, plays 2 combs with a total of 134 teeth. (Fig 1, picture of the box).

Fig 1. The Grosclaude box

The tunes named on the tune sheet, which is folded like a booklet, are all operatic, and very pleasing to listen to. Mr. Holmes must have planned to buy more cylinders for the box on a later date, since it came with two handwritten lists of tunes not mentioned on the tune sheet. Sadly he had bad luck as we can read in the memorandum that Mr. H.L Hall from Weill &Harburg sent him (fig 2A & B) a memo, seen in text form in fig 3. They had a fire and all information regarding the box



Memorandum

From Weill & Harburg, Watch Manufacturers & Importers of Musical Boxes, 42, Hatton Garden, E.C.

London 19 July 1877

To Mr. A.E. Holmes Esq., St. George's Place, S.W.

Sir,

In reply to your enquiry I beg to inform you that in consequence of the model or plan of your Box having unfortunately been destroyed when the premises were burnt, it will be impossible to fit another Barrel unless the Box itself is sent out to Geneva. Of course there would be no difficulty to send the Barrels you have but only the Box and stand. - We would regret the unfortunate accident as stated by us in purchasing the Box that it would not be necessary to send it to Geneva is the object of your wanting more Barrels, and under the circumstances if you decide to send it for this purpose we will remember that the Carriage to and fro and charge you only for the Barrels, but we may suggest that if the Box you have purchased is one of those which have many Barrels you will have added cost will take very little longer to make them because while they have stood for

Awaiting your favour of reply

We remain

Yours truly

Weill & Harburg

Fig 2. The Memorandum

Memorandum

Weill and Harburg
Watch Manufacturers & Importers of Musical Boxes
14 Hatton Garden E.C. London 19 July 1877
A.E. Holmes Esq.
St George's Place S.W.

Sir

In reply to your enquiring of y'day we beg to inform you that in consequence of the model or plan of your Box having unfortunately been destroyed when the premises were burnt, it will be impossible to fit another Barrel unless the box itself is sent out to Geneva. Of course there would be no necessity to send the Barrels you have but only the Box as its stands. -We much regret the unfortunate accident as we told you on purchasing the box that it would not be necessary to send it to Geneva in the event of your wanting more Barrels, and under the circumstances if you decide to send it we will ourselves bear the carriage to and fro and charge you only for the Barrels, but we may suggest that if the Box goes backYou make up your mind how many Barrels you will have added as it will take very little longer to make three than one while they are about it.

Awaiting favour of your reply
We remain,Yours truly
Weill & Harburg, H.L. Hall

The text of the Memorandum

was lost, so to order extra cylinders the whole box would have to be sent back to Geneva. Perhaps Mr. Holmes did not want to miss his box since the number of cylinders stayed at the original four the box was bought with. Also with the box is a four page handwritten instruction for the "celebrant" on how to operate it, there is no date on it but the very old envelope it is in with the heading "Musical box, List of Airs, Instructions", suggests an early date. A second list of instructions, in a different hand, is written on a piece of thin cardboard.

Apart from what can be found in the reference books the following information about Weill & Harburg can be added. Louis Weill commenced his business in c. 1863 until c.1876. In 1876 he entered into business with Henry Harburg. In 1879 Weill & Harburg had as partners L. Weill, H.Harburg and Charles Feis as wholesale and export watch manufacturers in London (Holborn Circus) and La Chaux de Fonds, rue Léopold Robert, Switzerland. Chronology of the firm: Weill & Harburg (c.1876-1890), Louis Weill (& Co) (1890-1896), Weill & Co (1896-1919), Arthur Mayer & L. Weill (c. 1919-1928), Arthur Mayer (1928).

A search on the internet revealed the following information:

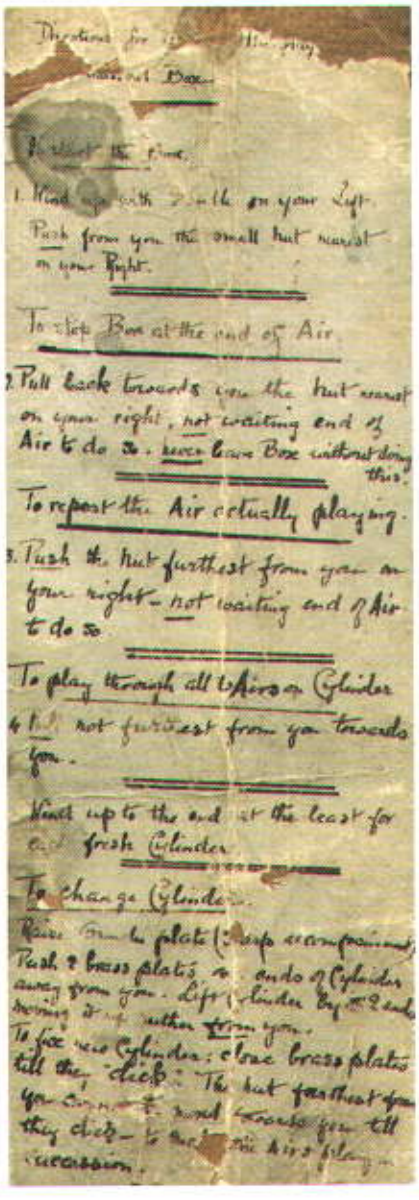
THE LONDON GAZETTE, MAY 11, 1875.
Louis Weill and Henry Harburg, both of Hatton Garden, in the county of Middlesex, Manufacturers and Importers, have given the like notice in respect of the invention of "improvements in musical boxes and other similar instruments."—A communication to them from abroad by Louis Auguste Grosclaude, of Geneva, in Switzerland, as set forth in his petition, recorded in the said office on the 12th day of February, 1875.

THE LONDON GAZETTE. MAY 23, 1884.
NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofor subsisting between the undersigned, Louis Weill, Henry Harburg, and Charles Feis, at 3, Holborn Circus, in the city of London, and Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland, Wholesale and Export Watch Manufacturers, trading as Weill and Harburg, has been, as from the 31st day of December last, dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due to and owing from the said firm will be received and paid by the said Louis Weill and Henry Harburg, who will continue the said business under the same style as heretofore.—Dated this 19th day of May, 1884.
Louis Weill.
Henry Harburg.
Charles Feis.

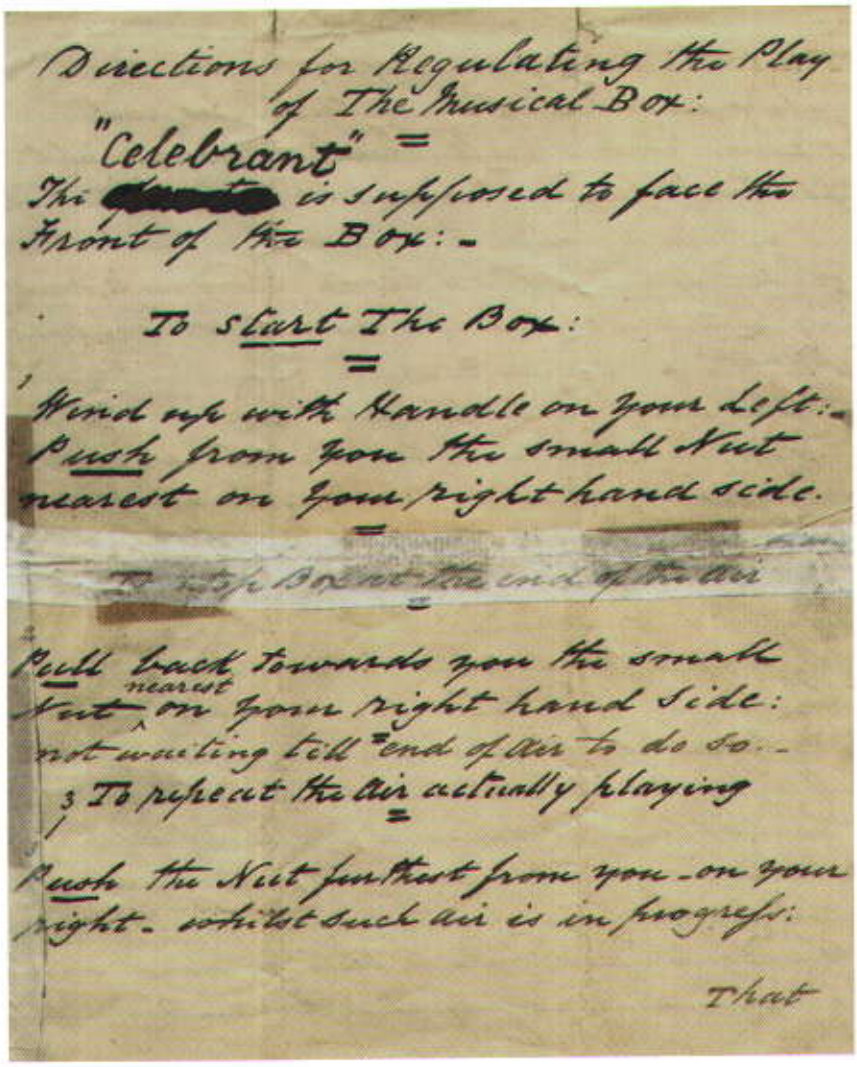
THE LONDON GAZETTE, APRIL 15, 1890.

Notice is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofor subsisting between the undersigned, Louis Weill and Henry Harburg, under the style of the firm of Weill and Harburg, at 3, Holborn-circus, in the city of London, in the trade or business of Wholesale and Export Watch Manufacturers, was this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due to and owing from the late firm will be received and paid by the said Louis Weill. Dated this 12th day of April, 1890.

Louis Weill.
Henry Harburg.



Above: *The complete tune list.*
Below: *Instructions A page 1.*
Left: *Instructions B.*


Directions for Regulating the Play of The Musical Box:

"Celebrant" =

The [redacted] is supposed to face the Front of the Box: -

To start The Box:

=

1 Wind up with Handle on your Left: - Push from you the small Nut nearest on your right hand side.

=

To stop Box at the end of the Air

=

2 Pull back towards you the small Nut nearest on your right hand side: not waiting till end of Air to do so. -

3 To repeat the Air actually playing

=

Push the Nut furthest from you - on your right - whilst such Air is in progress:

That

Directions for Regulating the Play of the Musical Box

The "Celebrant" (originally Operator) is supposed to face the Front of the Box.

To start The Box

1. Wind up with Handle on your Left.
   Push from you the small Nut nearest on your right hand side.

To stop Box at the end of Air

2. **Pull** back towards you the small Nut nearest on your right hand side: not waiting till end of air to do so.
3. To repeat the air actually playing.
   Push the Nut furthest from you - on your right - whilst such air is in progress.
4. That the 6 airs on any Cylinder shall play in order of succession - as per Programme -
   Pull nut on your right furthest from you towards you.

There are four Cylinders, but as the Drawer has space for but three, one is always in "Position" in the movement. The Cylinders are numbered at longer end: 1 : 2 : 3 . 4:-

Before attempting to remove a Cylinder see that the ormolu plate in centre of Box -and which regulates Harp accompaniment - of which hereafter - is raised, then Push the 2 Brass Plates over the end of the Cylinder - from you. Then lift the Cylinder by its two ends from its place moving it up rather from you. A Cylinder can be withdrawn and replaced only when you effect the operation at the end of an Air (see No. 2) Before putting in new Cylinder raise the Harp Plate.

To secure the fresh Cylinder in its place pull the two aforesaid Plates towards you till they "click".

To produce Harp Tone depress the Ormolu Plate in Centre towards the Cylinder - and Vice versa, raise it: This admits of graduation of pressure & of consistent Harp tone Effect.

Wind up to end, at least for each fresh Cylinder.

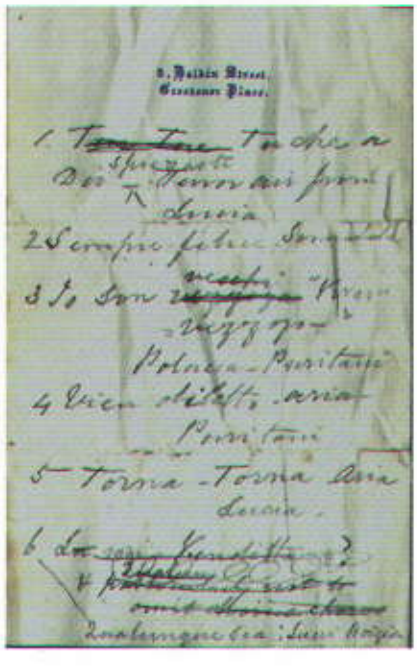
In replacing Cylinders in Drawer let the longer End be on your left hand- as it will be when placed in the Movement for duty.

When proposing to use more than one Cylinder - take the Drawer itself out bodily & place it handy.

I **think** the "Harp" should not be "laid on" in the middle of any air.
Wait till its over & then put the plate ???? from ??? (illegible).

This page has an address which has no known relation to Weill & Harburg (3 Balkin Street, Grosvenor Place). (probably an address for Mr Holmes – as this list of tunes bears no resemblance to the tune sheet, might this be his proposed 'wants list'? – Ed)

1 Donizetti	Lucia de Lammermoor	Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali
2 Bellini	Sonambula	Sempre felici
3 Bellini	I Puritani	Io son vergin vezzosa
4 Bellini	I Puriatni	Vien, diletto e in ciel la luna
5 Donizetti	Lucia de Lammermoor	Torna Torna
6 Donizetti	Lucretia Borgia	Qualunqua sia l'evento



Right: *Tune List 2.*
Above: *The text of it.*

OH FAVENTIA!

by Gordon Bartlet

I had never taken these small Faventia Spanish barrel pianos seriously; in fact I was certainly not looking for one. Like a number of things in my collection, this item found me rather than the other way round. It turned out to be the standard 6-tune manual version manufactured, probably, in the 1950s. On first encounter it made a cheerful, if tuneless, jangle.

The piano on its snazzy little cart. Unfortunately no donkey.

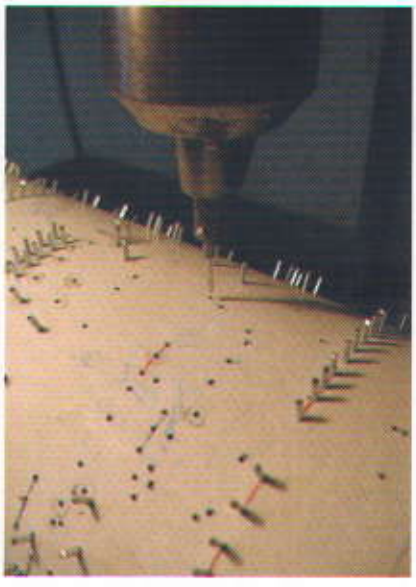
Firstly, then, some attention to the tuning. Out of respect for old strings and an old frame, this was set a couple of semi-tones below the designed pitch. The result was a more tuneful jangle. The tunes themselves were mainly of Spanish origin (no surprise there) but not my own preference. The general sound, however, was evocative of a street scene in a Victorian TV drama, so what would it sound like with a barrel pinned with late Victorian or Edwardian Music Hall tunes?

This is where the book by Colin Williams came in useful (see Colin's letter in The Music Box volume 25, page 304). This gave much helpful information on arranging and pinning a barrel, which was augmented by advice from those at Chanctonbury Ring meetings. This all goes to show how useful it is to make contacts throughout the Musical Box world.

Cylinder with carbon paper and "clock face" attached, ready to be marked out. A bank of temporary coil springs hold the hammers away from the strings.

The new worm wheel was formed from multiple sheets of plywood. The six barrel staves were from a West African hardwood. This was selected as having a straight fine grain with no knots, but turned out to be too hard for pinning without drilling pilot holes. The barrel was turned on a friend's lathe, being too large for my Myford ML7. The six tunes selected were Don't Dilly Dally; Oh Mr Porter; The Old Bull & Bush; After the Ball; I'm Hen-er-y the 8th; and Daisy Bell. Due to the size of the barrel each tune is limited to around 20 seconds so that only the choruses can be played. As the worm wheel has 32 teeth, marking out a 32 bar chorus using the "clock face" method becomes very simple.

With the key frame realigned so that each hammer can be pushed with its tail just touching the barrel (but without the hammer touching the string) the barrel was marked out, note by note. A sheet



Top Left: *Barrel marked out and ready for drilling and pinning.*
Top Right: *Pin about to be inserted in predrilled hole. The magnets are in the larger section of the insertion tool, within the chuck.*
Left: *All holes drilled and about half the pins inserted. Lengths of presnipped wire waiting below.*
Below: *Pinning complete and ready to play.*

of carbon paper fixed around the barrel ensured a clear sharp mark (thanks, Ted, for this tip). The barrel on its cradle was then transferred to the milling machine and drilled (0.8mm dia.) followed by inserting the pins. These were formed from 1.12mm dia. galvanized wire, pre-snipped to form a chisel end. Each pin was temporarily held in the insertion tool by a bank of tiny magnets within the tool's hollow stem. The normal pin projection was 4.5mm. This was reduced to 3.5mm where quick repetition of notes can cause fouling between a hammer tail and the following pin. The milling machine was used as a convenient alternative to the traditional pinning frame. The barrel could be rotated in its cradle, and the milling machine table indexed along to get precise positions for drilling and pinning.

Now, if you want to see how marking out and pinning a barrel should be done, just look at the old Pathé newsreel clip showing Antonio Tomasso in action. He could achieve in five minutes what it would take me all day. You may, incidentally, have heard a younger member of the extended Tomasso family, the superb trumpet player Enrico Tomasso. He plays regularly in a variety of top bands and vintage jazz groups.

More details of how I produced a new barrel can be seen from the photos. I now have a lot more respect for these machines. With tunes that are easily recognisable my little barrel piano has a new lease of life.

Stray Notes

An occasional series originated by Luuk Goldhoorn.

38. Change mechanisms in 3-air musical snuff boxes

By Luuk Goldhoorn

Although the snail was known as a device to shift the cylinder in musical boxes, it took some time before it was used in three-air musical snuff boxes. We can only guess what the reason for this delay was.

Three air snuff boxes with a sectional comb I have never seen, but Lecoultre delivered as early as 1819 three air combs to the Nicoles, and so a device to place the cylinder at three different positions must have existed around 1820.

François Lecoultre developed two solutions before he accepted the snail and its lever screwed upon the barrel house.

The first one is shown in figure 1. The change lever has a pin and a spring with a notch that can hold the lever in three positions

Figure 2 is a later development of François Lecoultre and it is almost the well known solution used in later works. A snail with two times three points is operated by a lever which is screwed to the underside of the bedplate. It functions in the same way as the lever which in later works was screwed on the spring barrel.

Fig 1. Earlier Lecoultre arrangement

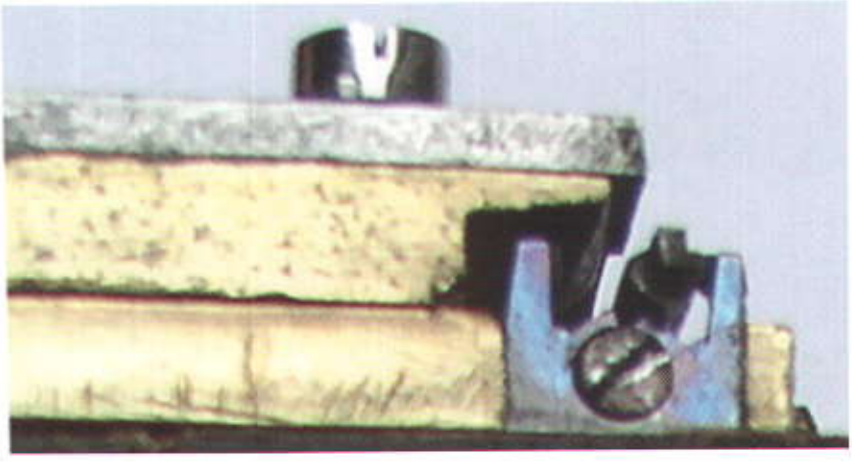


Fig 3. A simple method from an unknown maker

A disadvantage was that the plate on which the work was screwed must be deepened out to give space for the change device.

A third development was used by an unknown maker. In figure 3 it is shown.

A very simple solution with a small plate with three notches in any of which the change lever could rest to play the appropriate melody.

None of these methods had a long life. Soon the method as depicted in figure four became the standard.

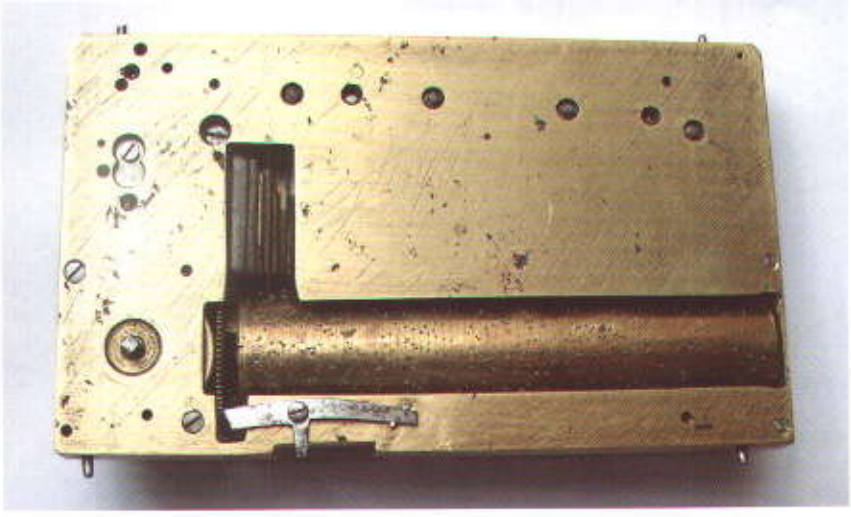


Fig 2. Alternative Lecoultre arrangement

Fig 4. The conventional method

39. Socrates

By Luuk Goldhoorn

The picture on the lid of a snuff box is of course never completely unique. A number of copies were made at the time. Nevertheless it is rare to find two of a kind.

Here is an example of two lids both with a picture of the murdering of Socrates. The strange thing is that they are not from the same period. One is on the lid of a sectional comb musical box, and can be dated before 1859, the other one has an integrated hinge, and is therefore made around 1870.

Top Left: *La Mort de Socrate, oil painting by French artist Jacques-Louis David, 1787, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*
Top Right: *As depicted on a sectional comb movement.*
Bottom: *An 1870 version.*

40. Smith and Litherland, Patentees of the Spring Tuning

by David Evans

Back in the mid-18th Century, pianos were rarely seen or heard, except possibly in Italy. They were gradually appearing in other parts of Europe in the third quarter of the century, due in part to Muzio Clementi, an Italian protégé who was protected by an English gentleman, and allowed to study music in Devon. Since 1773, Clementi[1] had been a keen exponent of the newly-introduced (in western Europe, at least) forte-piano[2], becoming one of the first concert pianists of International renown. By 1800, as Clementi was about to embark on a series of piano concerts all around Europe, and Zumpe's[3] small 'square' pianos started to appear in people's homes, Peter Litherland[4], a watchmaker of Liverpool, became involved. Peter was perhaps a musician, or at least was fascinated by the mechanism of musical instruments. Timber framed pianos are notoriously difficult to keep in tune[5], and piano tuners were in short supply in those days. Peter devised a system of springs or weights attached to the ends of the strings of the instrument to keep the tension constant. He patented his ideas in Patent No. 2430 of 1800: 'A Method of Keeping in Tune various Musical Instruments by Means of an Apparatus'. 'The utility of my invention is to keep perpetually the tension of the strings to all kinds of musical instruments strung with wire, gut, or any other materials so that the same tones will be produced at all times notwithstanding the expansion and contraction of the strings by heat and cold, or from atmospherical variations with respect to moisture and dryness, or any alteration that should take place in the figure of the instruments from those causes' states the specification. Basically the idea was to fit a strong helical spring at the end of each string between the end of the string and its securing device, or by hanging a lead weight on the end of each string. He mentions 24 lbs of lead for each string on a piano. His helical spring idea can be applied to the piano-forte, harpsichord, pedal harp, violoncello or violin and 'there are many other instruments with which the helical spring is applicable...'.

Various other implementations are included, such as using a lever at the end of each string, so that the weight hanging from it can be much smaller than 24 lbs, by the ratio of the parts of the lever. 'But as springs singly without these appendages are the most portable, cheap, simple and elegant, and answer with so great an exactness to all kinds of instruments that have wires or strings of any sort, I generally chuse (sic) to make use of them simply applied', he continues. The rest of the patent describes the sizes of springs to be used with a whole range of instruments, from pianos to mandolins and guitars. Peter was so confident that his new invention would be successful that he involved his friend Egerton Smith[6] (Jnr.) in the adventure, and they appear in the trade directories as 'Smith and Litherland, Patentees of the Spring Tuning' from 1802, their trading addresses being that of Litherland, Whiteside & Co. (Peter's watch company) and also Smith's navigation shop in Pool Lane. In 1801, Egerton Smith, together with organ builder Thomas Todd, also of Liverpool, was granted his own patent, No. 2512, which included copious drawings showing various levers with adjusting screws fitted to the ends for tuning. This patent concentrates on using weights in combination with pulleys to achieve the required tension. It mentions that pianos, with their tri-chord strings, can share a weight by attaching all three strings of the tri-chord, via levers, to a common bar, which in turn is attached to a weight, or combination pulley and weight.

What, you may ask, does all this have to do with mechanical music? The system obviously didn't catch on, or all pianos made after that time would have been fitted with it. Next time you are close to a Mills Violano Virtuoso, take a look at the way the violin strings are tuned. They are secured to levers, which have weights hanging therefrom. The weights are moved further out or closer in by means of nuts on threaded rods to achieve fine tuning. The system works very well, and the Mills violin seldom goes far off pitch. If Smith and Litherland had lived for another hundred years they could have been drawing Royalties from the Mills Novelty Company of Chicago!

[1] *Groves' Dictionary of Music.*

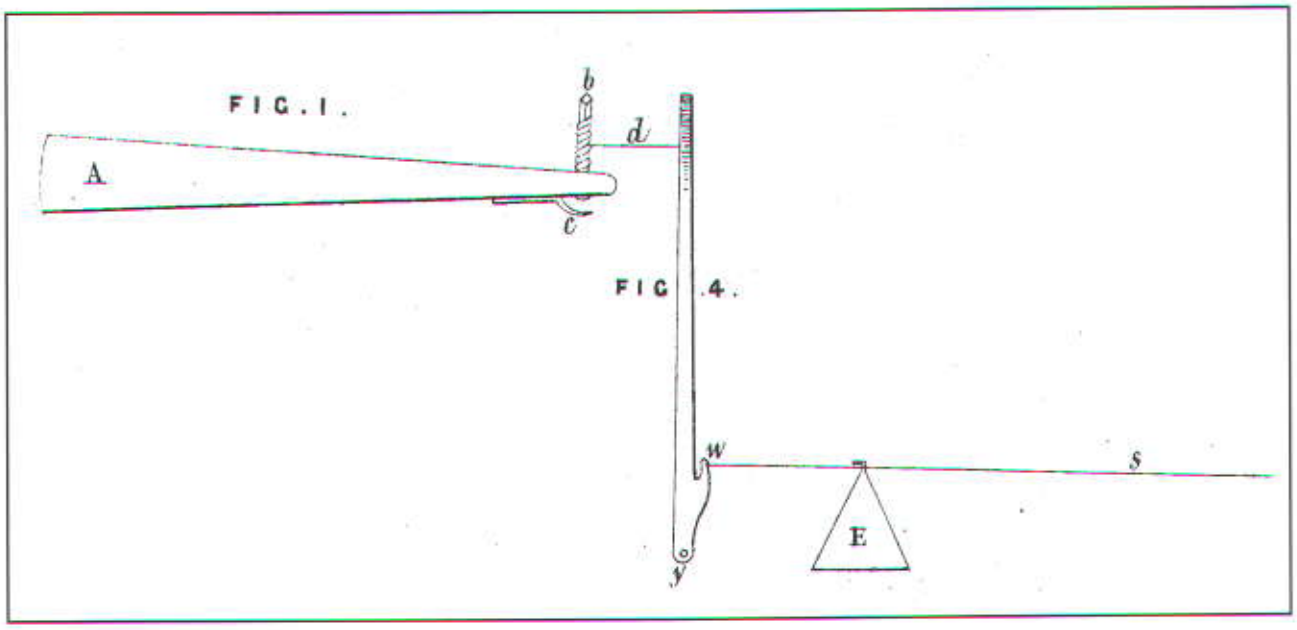
[2] *First attempts at the instrument occurred in Italy in 1598, but it did not become a practical instrument until Cristofori introduced the escapement (the device that enables the hammer to hit the string and then rebound) in 1709. It remained confined to Italy until a German harpsichord maker named Zumpe, living in England, designed a simple but effective action, and introduced the piano into England.*

[3] *See [2] above.*

[4] *Litherland revolutionised the Lancashire and English watch trade by inventing the rack lever escapement for watches.*

[5] *Only after the introduction of the iron frame did they become stable.*

[6] *Egerton Smith's father, also Egerton, was described as a mathematical instrument maker and lecturer on Philosophy. He worked at Newton's Head, 17 Pool Lane from 1774. The business grew into a Navigation Shop, selling ships' binnacles, compasses etc. Egerton Junior continued the business, also acting as agent for Edward Massey in the sales of his Patent Sea Log and Sounding Machine. He also published all kinds of almanacs, charts etc for navigation.*



Drawing from part of Smith & Todd's Specification, Patent No. 2512/1801.
A is a weighted lever with c as its fulcrum, b an adjusting screw attached by wire d to lever Fig 4, pivoted at y. The instrument string s is attached to w and passes over bridge E.

Dates for your Diary 2013

compiled by Daphne Ladell

SOCIETY MEETINGS

Autumn Meeting 2013

Friday 27th – Sunday 29th September

The Museum of Mechanical Music and Bygones – Cotton, Suffolk

Details and Booking Form enclosed

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Chanctonbury Ring

(Open Day and Organ Grind)

Saturday 27th July 2013

10.30 Coffee / Tea for an 11am start

Lunch provided

(if you are planning to bring an Organ could you please let Ted know)

Please contact Ted Brown on

01403823533

CANCELLED

Chanctonbury Ring

Sunday 13th October 2013

10.30 Coffee / Tea for an 11am start

Bring your own sandwiches, school puddings provided

Please contact Ted Brown on

01403823533

CANCELLED

Midlands Group meeting

Saturday 19th October 2013

Horncastle area of Lincolnshire

11.00 start

Bring and share for lunch

Please contact David O'Connor;

07860558141

or Nicholas Simons;

njas@btinternet.com

01332 760576

For those travelling long distance overnight accommodation can be arranged. Please contact David

Essex Group Meeting

Saturday 26th October

10.30 coffee / Tea for an 11am start

Our next meeting will be at a new venue:

St Mary's Church Hall

Doddinghurst Road, Doddinghurst

Essex CM15 OQJ

Main theme:

Musical boxes with bells and automata.

Please bring something along, not necessarily connected to the main theme.

Please bring your own lunch.

Further details and directions, 'Forthcoming Events' page of the web-site: **www.mbsgb.org.uk**

or telephone

Robert Ducat-Brown

01438712585

Chanctonbury Ring

(Christmas Meeting)

Saturday 30th November 2013

10.30 Coffee / Tea for an 11am start

Lunch provided

Please contact

Ted Brown on

01403823533

CANCELLED

Teme Valley Winders

(Christmas Meeting)

Saturday 7th December 2013

11.00 till 16.00

Please contact

John Phillips on

01584781118

News from Other Societies

Compiled by Alison Biden

Mechanical Music, Vol No 59, No.3, May/June 2013
(See also www.mbsi.org)

Ardis Prescott, the MBSI Membership Chairman gives over her 'space' to contributions from members about how they interest potential new members. Very briefly, it would appear to be: keep talking enthusiastically to anyone and everyone about mechanical music, and invite people to hear your collection. The first article in the magazine is Helmut Kowar's The Music of the Walbaum Cabinet. This amazing piece of furniture, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, dates back to about 1620-25, and houses a barrel organ, automaton of a lady dancing, and a clock. The article goes into a lot of descriptive and technical detail, both of the cabinet, the workings and the music itself. Luuk Goldhoorn then describes some unusual miniature musical boxes, neither cartel boxes nor tabatières, for which Etienne Blyelle had coined the name 'cartières'. A New York based organ company B.A.B. run by a trio of Italian immigrants, is the subject of the next article. Unsurprisingly it produced a lot of Italian music on rolls, barrels and punched card. The article also contains profiles of the three owners, Evaristo Bona, Andrew Antoniazzi and Dominick Brugnolotti. The last significant article consists of nine pages dedicated to describing the Music House Museum in Traverse City, Michigan and its contents. This impressive collection of a wide range of instruments in beautiful condition is a must-see for anyone visiting that area.

The AMICA Bulletin, Vol 50, no 2, March-April, 2013
(see also www.amica.org)

Vice President Alan Turner briefly mentions progress made with social network sites in his address, while Editor Terry Smythe refers to AMICA's on-line research library. Modern technology features in a letter on 3D printing, suggesting this could be invaluable in the restoration of mechanical musical instruments. A lengthy article on American organettes by Q David Bowers previews his forthcoming opus, expected 2014. In the regular Nickel Notes, Matthew Jaro writes about Don Teach, 'an influential figure in the nickelodeon world.' His love of mechanical music first started when his father brought home a player piano for the weekend (he used to sell them.) Don now owns almost thirty American-made nickelodeon pianos, including many different Seeburgs, and a Wurlitzer CX piano, and several other pianos of note. His website is: musicguy@nwla.com. John R Grant then continues his light-hearted history of AMICA's pumping contest, for which the award is known as the Footsie, with a list of the winners. The last recorded contest, in 2011, took place in the UK. Julian Dyer appears to be the champion, having won it three times.

The Key Frame (Issue KF 1 - 13)
(See also www.fops.org)

The magazine opens with a tribute to Norman Smith, who died in January of this year. Norman was well known amongst the rally-going fraternity, in particular for his association with the famous White Brothers' Mammoth Gavioli fair organ. A short article about Arthur Mills and the 89 key Gavioli he formerly owned explains how his association with this organ and the town of Rushden has been preserved for posterity in a tapestry, part of a series of ten depicting the twentieth century in Rushden as a millennium project. David Ward's round up of the 2012 Irish organ rally season gives an account of the rallies attended, and the organs taking part in each one, along with a comprehensive report on the Irish summer weather! In his article, Musical Roots, Andy Hinds writes about Felix Powell, who with his brother George, wrote the fabulously popular 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag.' Despite being the creator of this optimistic song in 1915, Felix Powell committed suicide in 1942 in his home town of Peacehaven, where he was serving in the Home Guard. Jonathan Holmes then writes at length about the Paul Corin Collection in Cornwall, on its closing in November 2012, along with a comprehensive description of the numerous instruments that have passed through it, including two now to be found with our Music Box Editors in Canada (!), an Aeolian pipe organ and a Philipps Pianella orchestrion *(four actually, we also have a Bohemian barrel piano orchestrion and a Philipps Duca reproducing piano from the Corin Collection – Ed)*. James Reid gives an encouraging account of how his business has developed since he set up cutting organ music and repairing and maintaining organs when he was made redundant three years ago. His activities have expanded to restoration, the hiring out of organs for events, and buying and selling them.

Organ Grinders News, No. 84, Spring 2013
(See also www.boga.co.uk)

There are two accounts of different Christmas events, penned by different authors: one at Audley End the other at Olney, Bucks. The rest of this slim newsletter is given up to a report on the Association's Committee meeting on 17th February, and obituaries.

Organ Grinders News, No 85, Summer 2013
(See also www.boga.co.uk)

Little Downham Organ and Bygones Festival, held on 23rd March was well –supported by BOGA members, despite some being indisposed due to ill-health and others having to brave snowy conditions. It raised £950 for the charity MAGPAS.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin No 204, Autumn/Winter 2012
(See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk)

Paul Morris writes briefly about Concertola 204, a device which allows for continuous piano playing for a long time as it can be loaded with several rolls at a time. It is thought to be the only one of its kind in England. Bill Mowbray then supplies a biography of his father, Frank Herbert Mowbray, who was Chief Engineer to The Universal Music Co. The family can trace its involvement in industry back several generations. Universal made rolls for the Orchestrelle and Aeolian companies; Frank was well suited for this, having worked beforehand for the Printing Arts Company which manufactured banknotes for foreign governments, thus giving him valuable knowledge of paper. Later he designed a piano which could punch holes in the stencil used to cut subsequent rolls, then invented a Metrostyling machine. Mike Boyd provides an extract from each of two books about Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole, featuring the expedition's pianola. Felix Klempa writes at length on Life in a Pianola Roll Factory, taken from his notes for a presentation to the 2010 AMICA convention in Buffalo, New York state. The factory in question is QRS, and his 'notes' cover many of the developments that were introduced during his time there.

Player Piano Group – Bulletin No 205, Spring/Summer, 2013
(See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk)

A number of social events are recorded, including Reg Richings' 90th birthday. Mike Boyd makes a contribution with an article on automatic tracking devices to the occasional series looking at some of the weird and wonderful ideas that player manufacturers tried. An item from the June 1936 'Popular Songs' about Duo Art artiste Pauline Alpert, is complemented with a list of her recordings. The final feature of this issue tells of five Steinway pianos fated to be lost with the Titanic. Four of the five were shipped from Hamburg to London in 'raw' state – i.e. they became art cases after arrival in London. The three destined for the first class areas of the ship were customised according to the ship's specifications. One of the pianos had a French finish which was applied after delivery to the ship to ensure that its wood stain matched the décor of the entrance hall.

Non-English journals

Het Pierement – April 2013
(See also www.draaiorgel.org)

(this review was written appropriately to the sound of Dordrecht's carillon!)

This issue opens with an article by Herman Meddeler about a Starkton organ, built by Wilhlem Bruder Söhne in Waldkirch, which he bought from its Swiss owners, the Weiss family, and took to the Netherlands. It is now on loan to the Haarlem Organ Museum – another personal tale of the challenges one overcomes when smitten by a 'must have' instrument! The next article by Tom Meijer features another mechanical music fanatic, Glenn Thomas of New Jersey and his collection of instruments, including many American orchestrions. But he always wanted an organ which sounded like a Dutch street organ, had the volume of a fair organ and looked like a Marenghi or Gavioli. European organs sound different from American built ones. Result: 'the Glacier' built by Johnny Verbeeck. With 112 keys, 17 registers and 557 pipes it is the biggest new organ to be built in years either in Europe or the USA. Next is a report that the renovation at the Speelklok Museum is now open, affording the visitors more interactive displays, and better facilities for hearing working instruments, while the discovery of an old postcard casts further light on the history of organ builders Bursens and deBacker.

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 2nd Quarter, 2013
(See also www.aaimm.org)

Once again I take my hat off to the French society for producing a magazine full of articles on original subjects. It is always a treat to read. President Jean-Pierre Arnault relates how AAIMM returned to the cradle of the musical box, Ste Croix in Switzerland, for its AGM. A demonstration of 'long marche' musical boxes had been proposed by Etienne Blyelle; although he passed away beforehand, poignantly it was decided to go ahead with it as a homage to him and other departed mechanical music enthusiasts. Jean-Pierre also relates how the museum at Mirecourt has undergone renovation, thanks to support from the Mirecourt municipality. Jean-Pierre is also the author of a review of a book on the history of the phonograph, by Francis Jeannin. Five pages are dedicated to an article entitled 'The restoration of mechanical music instruments: thoughts on an overlooked profession' by Antony Chaberot. In it M Chaberot considers the work of the professional restorer who has to make a living from what he does, observing how unusual it is as there is no recognised training for it. Instead he lists the qualities needed by a good restorer: meticulousness, critical sense, patience, mechanical aptitude, love of old instruments, respect for them, and knowledge of old music. He cites an Ariston as an example of the poor economics of restoring an instrument, calculating a job which might take 35 – 40 hours at 30 euros an hour, thus rendering the cost of the work more than the value of the instrument. However, to encourage young restorers he has this to say: the greatest satisfaction will remain, day after day, that of achieving the best work possible, even if it is not very lucrative, with respect to one's clients and the old instruments which have been entrusted to one. Emile Tadini, an (automatic) piano maker from Nice, is the subject of the next article. Then there's more on the table of medals awarded to the organ manufacturer Limonaire, featured in a previous issue, now in the museum at Les Gets. A fascinating article on talking dolls is penned by Jalal Aro and Jean-Pierre Arnault. Edison produced dolls with miniaturised phonographs inside. These were of limited success, as mishandling by their small owners would often render the dolls inaudible. Step in doll manufacturer Emile Jumeau who commissioned watchmaker par excellence Henri Lioret to devise a means of recording the human voice to be contained inside a doll. Next up: how about six pages about the 'jaquemarts' of France. If you've ever wondered what those mechanical characters found at the top of church towers which sound the hours by striking a bell with a hammer are called, now you know, though the etymology of the word is disputed. Another informative and highly original topic, it is a reprint of an article from a periodical dating back to about 1900.

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument (Gesellschaft fur Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente), April 2013
(See also www.musica-mechanica.de)

This edition runs to 82 pages, most of them packed with close text interspersed with photographs – mainly of people, rather than instruments! The first 'full length' feature is an article about Oscar Walcker's Organola, described as a 'semi-automatic' organ playing machine. This is complemented by 17 pages of roll details. Appropriately the next article is about the redevelopment of the Organola in Pfeddersheim. The Pfeddersheim organ dates back to 1770. Franz Xaver Schätzle is featured in the 7th part of the series on forgotten organ builders of Waldkirch, whilst Dr Wolfram Metzger, Eberhard Layher and Arno van der Heijden are the subjects of the obituaries. There is a very comprehensive report on the Symposium 'Recording the Soul of Music' held at the Museum fur Musikautomaten in Seewen, on 10th and 11th March of this year, during which twelve different presentations were made by a number of different international participants.

L'antico Organetto (Associazione Musica Meccanica Italiana), May 2013
(See also www.ammi-italia.com, or www.ammi-mm.it)

This issue heralds the arrival of the Musicalia Museum. Housed in seven rooms, it charts the history of the rise of mechanical music and then its decline, starting with a reconstruction of da Vinci's war drum. The next room is dedicated to home organs, followed by street organs. Other instruments that are featured are orchestrions and fair organs, and of course, the Racca Piano Melodico. Four pages are dedicated to showcasing some of the Museum's instruments. There follows a short article about coin-operated instruments which entertained in public places during the Belle Epoque. Another two articles about the Villa Silvia itself and several pages of advertisements complete the contents of this colourful, if slimline, magazine.

Schweizerisch Freunde Mechanischer Musik Journal, No 115 December, 2012
(See also www.sfmm.ch)

This magazine opens with an epic article about musical Christmas tree stands, by Raphael Lüthi, which occupies almost half the entire edition. This is followed by an account of the Swiss society's trip to Paris last September, which included a visit to the Musée des Arts Forains. The 2012 Organ Festival at Les Gets, France, is the subject of the next feature, followed by a page dedicated to the new 'Raffin Trio.' A taste of this unique event can be found on http://musicanicarts.free.fr. Meggenhorn was the venue for an organ grind in August 2012, reported by André Ginesta. Paul Fricker then writes about the Zelinsky Collection in San Francisco. Organ grinding is also the topic of the final feature of this issue.

Letters to the Editor

From John Harrold

Dear Editors,

Can I please correct the report on pages 9 and 10 of the Spring magazine (Vol 26 No. 1 – Ed). The temperament I quoted was "1/5 Comma Meantone Modified", a temperament in use in England about the same time the instrument was made. The Pitch should have been around A= 415 Hz, but this had been altered many years ago (probably in Victorian times) to A=440HZ on the two ranks of wooden pipes, the metals could not have been tuned as they were full of holes and splits. During subsequent "restoration" a few years ago the tuning was again altered even higher, this being recognizable by the age marks on the inside of the pipes where the stoppers had been. The metal pipes had been tuned to an even higher pitch and made no sense whatsoever. To bring them down to a pitch suitable to go with the wooden ones I added longer tuning slides.

All I can say to restorers is if the pipe work is old, please try and work out the original disposition. If you have problems there are enough tuners around today who understand old temperaments. To modernize it is an act of gross vandalism, and is to be deplored. Continental organ builders are in full swing putting back old organs to as near as possible to their earliest known disposition. We should be doing likewise, old music requires old tuning and temperament to reveal what the composer or arranger intended.

Thank you John – a most important point to make – Ed.

From Clive Houghton

Dear Editors,

An item in the summer edition of The Music Box states that for the first time we have an unusual situation regarding the election of Officers at the AGM and for this reason the Committee has decided to introduce postal voting. For reasons beyond my knowledge postal voting was unable to take place and voting for the various officers was undertaken only by members that were in attendance at the AGM.

The newly elected President is now in post having gained a total of only 25 votes (a total of 25 votes, not a majority of 25 votes). With a total membership in excess of 360 I fail to see how just 25 votes can reflect the wishes of our members.

We have a substantial number of members who live abroad and in addition we have members living in the UK that are unable to travel to an AGM; the only way these members can express their wish is by having a postal vote. All other organisations I am involved with have postal voting and I can see no reason why the MBSGB does not.

Having attended and enjoyed AGMs for many years, I was this year embarrassed and deeply saddened at the disgraceful behaviour of a number our members, particularly as this included people up for election.

Clive Houghton

From Arthur Cunliffe

Dear Members,

I would like to thank those members who have sent messages of thanks for my efforts as President/Chairman of the Society.

It is most gratifying to know that my work has been appreciated by so many people. I would particularly wish to thank the Committee members for their help and kindness over the past 7 years. I believe that had it not been for their dedication, the Society would not have been in the sound position it is today. In particular, I would like to place on record my appreciation for the work of Ted Brown and Paul Bellamy for always being on hand to offer advice and assistance.

Noreen and I valued the messages and flowers that came from the members attending the AGM. It was indeed most thoughtful of you. We were both very sorry that we were unable to attend the AGM and not be there to receive them in person.

No one knows what the future will be, but I hope that the European Project largely established for us by Paul and Ted will continue into the future so that many diverse societies can be brought closer together to become one happy family. I believe that the future for small groups like ours lies in close so-operation with similar minded people throughout the world.

Once again many thanks for your kindness so kindly expressed at the end of my term in office.

Kind regards, Arthur Cunliffe.

From Malcolm Bailey Ladell

Dear Sir,

AGM Travesty

I hope you are able to print this letter to give the Members the chance to think about what happened at the AGM and whether or not they are happy with the outcome as it stands or what they can do if they wish to change it.

Firstly, I must say that I was not at the AGM but I have been told by my wife, Daphne, who was present as the Meetings Secretary and a member of the Executive Committee, and by friends who were also present that the meeting was unpleasantly acrimonious with hostile personal attacks from some, but not all, members shouting from the floor and some new and old incumbents of the Executive Committee.

Is the 2013 Annual General Meeting a valid meeting?

Possibly not; although the AGM was properly convened as it was advertised in good time in The Music Box. However, the AGM was not properly chaired by the incumbent President/Chairman who was unable to do so due to ill health and the Vice-President who, in accordance with Article 6, Sec.3 of the Constitution automatically takes over as Acting President/ Chairman, was prevented from carrying out his duties as Chairman by a raucous small group of a few members shouting from the floor.

At this point the meeting should have not have proceeded but should have been adjourned for sufficient time for the Executive Committee to have met to appoint an Acting President/Chairman in accordance with Article 6, Sec.3 of the Constitution of the Society.

The appointment of an Acting President/Chairman by members was invalid as being outside the scope of the advertised Agenda of the AGM and not in accordance with the Constitution.

Accordingly, I believe the AGM and decisions taken at it are challengeable as being invalid.

Are the appointments of the contested positions on the Executive Committee valid?

Possibly not; none of the appointments will be valid if the AGM itself is deemed invalid.

In addition the appointment at the AGM of the incumbents of the contested positions on the Executive Committee will not be valid if, as I understand is the case, not all members had been circulated of the nominations at least four weeks prior to the AGM as required by Article 4, Sec.4 of the Constitution. Those members who were not circulated were not aware of the identity of the contestants and were thus denied the opportunity of deciding to attend the AGM to vote.

This unsatisfactory position arose because, as advertised in The Music Box on the same page as the Notice of the AGM, for the first time in recent years the positions of President, Vice-President and Correspondence Secretary were being contested by several members. The advertisement did not give the names of contestants but stated that a postal voting slip was enclosed but it was not, and even if it had been, a postal vote (albeit a good idea) would not have been valid unless approved by the members passing an appropriate Resolution at the AGM.

Article 4, Sec. 3 of the Constitution clearly states 'the election of Officers (i.e. the Executive Committee) shall take place at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting. This is archaic particularly as it requires only 25 members (about 6% of the current membership) to be present at either an AGM or EGM to pass resolutions appointing members to serve on the Executive Committee or make any changes to the Constitution and/or Bye-laws. Postal voting would overcome this and be more democratic.

Can this unsatisfactory position be rectified and, if so, how?

It could be left as it is until the next AGM in June 2014 but it should be rectified as soon as possible to avoid the possible loss of those members who are dissatisfied with the disgraceful conduct and outcome at the 2013 AGM and for various other reasons, including possible personal legal liability risks to members of the Executive Committee in the (albeit unlikely) event of claims against them and/or the MBSGB if their appointments and consequently actions are defective.

The Executive Committee can, and should, call an EGM to re-run the election process and allow the members the opportunity to amend the Constitution to facilitate postal voting.

If the Executive Committee fails to promptly rectify this unsatisfactory position then, in accordance with Bye-law Article 1, Sec.4, it requires only 8 members to propose and submit Resolutions to the Correspondence Secretary who is required to circulate these to all members with notice of the necessary EGM.

It seems a great pity that acrimony has crept into the MBSGB, a Society of likeminded people, whose object is to meet socially to promote interest in the preservation of Musical Boxes and all other forms of mechanical music.

Please don't leave the MBSGB if you are unhappy with what happened at the AGM. The MBSGB belongs to you, it's Members and it is up to you, the Members, to decide whether or not to leave things as they are or to rectify them.

Thank you for reading this and, hopefully, giving thought to the issues I have raised.

Yours sincerely,

(These letters are representative of communications we have received from more than a dozen members - Ed)

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1st October 2013

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Posting of magazine:
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