

The **Music Box**

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

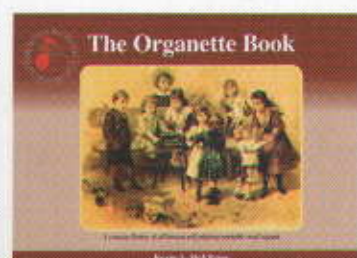
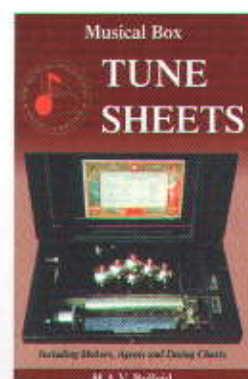
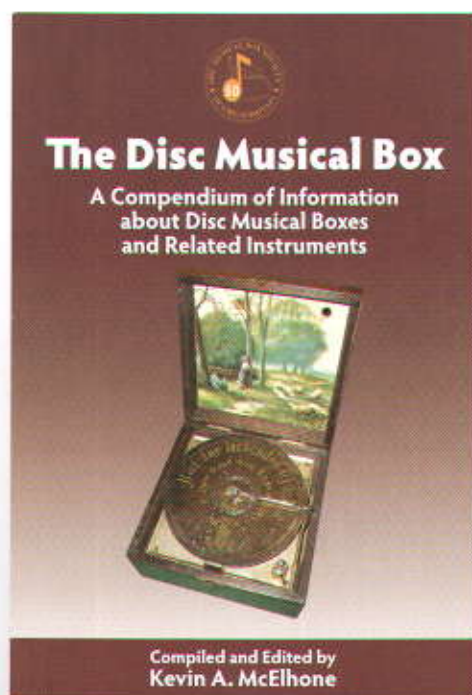
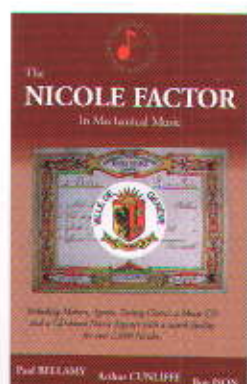


In this issue:

- Learning from Interpretations
- Health Merry-go-Round
- Making a Musical Box
- Restoration Matters!

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain

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From the Editors' Desk

There would seem to be three main objectives for the printed Journal from our Editors' Desk perspective:

1. it covers the membership activities
2. it records for posterity innovative work such as Don Busby's articles, and
3. it disseminates and records research and important observations by pundits who can 'connect the dots' for us.

This issue covers all these areas. We are delighted to bring you a transcript of Arthur Ord-Hume's keynote speech to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's conference on the subject of mechanical music as a resource for research into early performance practice (for a review see *The Music Box*, Winter 2013 issue). It is a challenging and thought-provoking address and takes an aspect of our hobby to a new and knowledgeable audience.

Luuk Goldhoorn continues to connect dots for us with *Stray Notes*, in which he records visually one of the last of the *sur plateau* movements and an early example of a cylinder movement, both contained in hallmarked silver snuff boxes dating from 1817, as well as the interesting images of Ste. Croix.

The Editors could not resist putting in a picture of the inventor of the glass harmonica playing his instrument – hopefully this will be the last reference to it!

The Safety Elf was sitting on the edge of her chair when reading *Restoration Matters*. Roy Evett and company have documented how they removed a broken Polyphon mainspring from its casing. Not

something to be attempted by the faint hearted in any circumstances. The Elf was very relieved that it was accomplished safely, but begs that you will heed the warnings contained within the article should you be tempted to emulate them.

By popular request we are pleased to bring you some more of the archives from the Old Bailey, Britain's earliest law court, where in the early nineteenth century a conviction for stealing a musical box could result in seven years' transportation to Australia or even death by hanging.

Our thanks go to Kevin McElhone for his contribution of some pages from a catalogue of the Health Merry-Go-Round Company. A new take on the treadmill or bicycle in the gym. When the advertising claims "there is nothing on the market that compares" we are sure they are right.

Our thanks go to all our contributors – without their articles we would have no Journal!

Front cover:

An early barrel piano, possibly by Clementi, circa 1825. It has seven barrels, five of which are spirally pinned, including *Malbrook*, supposedly sung to Marie Antoinette's children around 1781, now the tune for *He's A Jolly Good Fellow*, (Poor) Maryanne, composed by Haydn with words by Mrs Opie circa 1810, *Home, Sweet Home*, composed by Henry R Bishop, first performed in 1823 and an elaborate arrangement of *God Save the King* (King is deleted and Queen over-written). Editors' Collection. See the article on *Learning from Interpretations* on page 179.

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The Editors welcome articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal. The Editors expressly reserve the right to amend or refuse any of the foregoing.

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President's Message No. 3

I write this in the middle of what has so far been an extremely dreary British Winter. Natural disasters are normally the domain of farther-flung lands, not here, literally, lapping at our doorstep. My condolences to anyone who has suffered from the exceptional floods.

Looking forward to the time when you will actually read this, Spring should shortly be due, whether or not it really materialises in March! This is a time when we focus on regeneration and anticipate new growth. At the start of a new year, this could be as true for the MBSGB as it is for Mother Nature.

One issue which has been preoccupying the Committee is a review of the Constitution. Many people have said that the existing Constitution has adequately served the Society for over fifty years – but fifty years ago there was no internet with its negative as well as positive benefits, and nowadays we see also a trend towards a more litigious society in general. Nor did anyone envisage some of the ambiguous interpretations we have seen in the last year or so. The challenge lies in finding the right balance between effecting necessary changes, which will improve the running of the Society, whilst avoiding bringing in changes for change's sake. The Committee's work in this area is on-going.

At the 2013 AGM a member asked what the new EC was proposing to do about attracting more, younger members. This is a perennial question taxing most Societies – not just those for mechanical music enthusiasts. There is no one measure which will bring in a huge influx of new members; however, younger members, once they have joined,

are more likely to renew if they can both experience the benefits of membership, and see that there is a 'progressive' attitude towards running the Society. Again, a balance needs to be found between bringing in new ideas and maintaining continuity.

A couple of years ago I produced for the Executive Committee a document on the subject of 'Membership', although it also encompassed promoting both the Society and mechanical music itself. Some of the recommendations were minor, such as encouraging members with mobile telephones to pique people's interest by installing a ring tone consisting of a mechanical instrument. Others were to encourage people to take mechanical music out to the wider world through public events. I am delighted, therefore, to announce that member Jonny Ling has been invited to demonstrate some of his organs at a public event on London's South Bank in March. Although this was nothing to do with his being a member of MBSGB, he hopes to promote this and the other Societies in which he has an interest, and I wish him every success.

Many members demonstrate their instruments in public on an individual basis, but some of us feel that perhaps more could be done by the Society itself. A number of opportunities are being explored, and it is hoped that in due course you will be reading of more events, some of them 'joint ventures' with other organisations. None of this can come about without a lot of preparation, hard work and enthusiasm; if you think you could help in any way, or have further ideas for promoting the Society, please get in touch.

There is also the fostering of additional local groups to consider, and I hope that by the end of 2014 there will be one or two more in places not yet within a catchment area of an existing group. I am acutely aware that many members feel only a tenuous link with the Society, and more needs to be done to make them feel both more involved, and to increase opportunities for them to enjoy their interest. Exchanging ideas and views at a local level helps develop the debate on many issues, and is probably even more appropriate now, with the high costs of travel and an aging membership, than it was fifty years ago.

Little can be achieved without a lot of work, and if the Society is to prosper, it needs more people volunteering to share the load. With yet other ideas to be explored on the theme of 'regeneration' in the form of revisiting the 'restoration' project, all together this is potentially an exciting time for the Society. I hope many will feel energised not just to participate but to help, whether on the side-lines, or by tackling one of the 'officially recognised' Committee positions. You will be helping to preserve mechanical music and the appreciation of it for a future generation, as well as enhancing the current generation's enjoyment of it. Once again, there is a balance to be struck between the old and the new, fresh approaches, and tradition and continuity.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank those several people who sent me such warm messages over the festive season, and to say how much the Committee and I look forward to welcoming friends old and new at the Devon meeting?

Register News No: 81

One of the most pleasing aspects of undertaking register work is when it is possible to help another member find a programme for a box that had lost its tune card long ago. In early 1969, L'Epee box serial number 44542 that had been in the same family since the early 1900's came on the market. Like so many boxes, the tune card was missing and only the pinhole arrangement showed that it had once had a long thin type of card as illustrated in the Tune Sheet Book No: 55. The remains of a green card were under the pin heads.

On one occasion a recording of the box was played during one of the Chanctonbury Meetings and tunes 2, 4 and 6 were identified but since then no further progress has been made. Eventually the time came for the box to be restored and a gamme number of 3728 was found. A search in the Register was made, and lo and behold, quite unexpectedly, three other L'Epee boxes were found with the same gamme number. Tunes 2, 4 and 6 were exactly as reported and in the same order on the tune cards of each of these boxes, but more importantly, the missing tunes were there. A wait of 43 years had finally come to a conclusion and another box could be returned to a complete state once again.

What has been very unusual is that one of the three boxes (Serial No. 40804) has had the tune card illustrated in the Tune Sheet Book on page 33 so an appropriate example of the style of writing is to hand. Indeed a bonus!

I think that many serious collectors have at least one example of a manivelle in their collection and most of these I believe were likely to have been made by L'Epee. The circular case stamped with a lyre trade mark is often seen. Other



Illustration by kind permission of Messrs 1818 Auction Rooms

makers did make these types of novelty items and an example made by Ullmann turned up in an 1818 Auctioneers auction a short time ago.

It is interesting in that it has a serial number of 5013 and had its original cardboard box. The case is deeper than usual as it had a larger 3 air movement contained within. The 3 airs were listed on an Ullmann label and were:-

1. The future Mrs 'Awkins.
2. Linger Longer Loo.
3. Sailing merrily along.

The picture provided by kind permission of 1818 Auction Rooms Kendal, shows also the original cylindrical box which has the name "Reggie 1892" scribed inside the lid. One presumes that this was the name of the child who received the manivelle as a birthday or Christmas present in that year. The dates for the tunes fit in well as tune 1 was composed in 1890 and tune 2 in 1892. The third I cannot trace, but it shows that Ullmann were up to date with their marketing. For those who

are interested, the box sold at this auction for about £130 including fees and tax.

The Register numbers have reached 9,872 which mean there are just 128 new boxes to register before I achieve my aim of registering 10,000 individual items. I hope that I will achieve this number during the early part of 2014 and look forward to taking the project even further at a slower pace but refining and upgrading the existing entries.

Much more information has been processed over the past few years and where once the Register existed as a paper only item, now it has been computerised with the prospect of being held in two separate computer systems. One of these will be basic and relatively simple to use whilst the other will be much more powerful but of necessity more complex and difficult to use. I realise that many people may not have the Microsoft programme Access as it is not bundled in their Office suite. I also understand it is not easy to learn and is designed for the really serious database user.

To give a taste of the extent of information already stored it is now possible to check on the number of individual makers and often produce a JPEG picture of many of the boxes that are held on file. At least 1800 pictures are held on file with hundreds of existing prints being kept in the record boxes. A record of the gamme number of many boxes is held and as mentioned earlier this can be used for tune identification.

It is possible to find out which boxes were pinned to play certain tunes along with the arrangements that were used. If we take Auld Lang Syne as an example, then the Register has 335 boxes with the

correct spelling of this tune and there are other boxes with other spelling variants of the name. 32 known makers pinned this tune on their products of which 18 were forte-piano, 12 Mandolin or Mandoline Expressive, 68 were 2 per turn and 97 of them 12 air boxes. This sort of information gives a sample of the extent of the analytical power within the Register programme especially when it is used to sample the 3,266 Nicole records on file. It becomes increasingly evident how

Nicole organised their business and planned their production.

Sometimes the Register can find tunes that are never heard today. I would think that the music no longer exists in any libraries. Such an example is the 1890's tune "When the leaves begin to turn". It is to be found on 4 boxes but I think I would be safe in assuming no one today would be able to whistle the melody! Other unusual tunes are:-

Staring me in the face.
The Empty Chair.
Lovely Hours.
War song of the Men of Glamorgan.

I will try to answer any query you may have as and when I can, but please remember to help with postal costs.

Best wishes for the New Year to you all.

Arthur Cunliffe

AGM and Elections for Committee

Although you have only just received this issue of the journal, this is to remind all members that the next issue will carry the notification of the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Saturday, 7th June 2014, including nominations for the Committee.

The AGM is the opportunity for members to decide by whom and how their Society will be run. The Constitution, Article 4.4, allows for ordinary members to be nominated for a Committee position by any two other members of the Society. You may submit a nomination in writing so long as it states who is the candidate, what position s/he is standing for, the name of the proposer and seconder, and the Candidate signs to say they agree to stand/take up the position if elected. Alternatively you may wish to download a form from the Society's website.

Nominees are advised to

submit their nomination in good time and to ask for an acknowledgement that it has been received. Nominations need to be received by the Correspondence Secretary (John Ward) no later than six weeks before the AGM, i.e. by Saturday, 26th April, 2014, in order that they can be circulated no less than four weeks before the AGM.

Please note that to avoid any confusion or doubt as to how the 2014 elections will be conducted, only those members present and voting at the AGM will be able to cast a vote. This is in accordance with 'custom and practice.' Proposals to allow 'voting in absentia' in future are under consideration and may be put to the 2014 AGM.

Whilst most of the current Committee are prepared to serve for another year, we would like to see more people standing for election, and more

choice. No special qualifications are needed, just **enthusiasm, commitment, and a desire to 'serve the Society.'** If you have enjoyed being a member, perhaps you would like to 'put something back in.' As a Committee member, you would normally be expected to attend Committee meetings, which are held prior to each weekend general meeting (usually twice a year), and at other times as deemed appropriate (possibly an additional once or twice a year.)

Although the retiring Committee can make nominations itself, as is its right under Article 6.5 of the Constitution, it would like to see more ordinary members actively engage in the selection of people to serve the Society. Therefore, you are urged to consider either standing and/or nominating someone. You may still nominate or second someone, even if you cannot attend on the day to vote for them.

Essex Group Meeting - 26th October 2013

from Don Busby

Eighteen members and friends of the Society assembled in St. Mary's Church Hall for this fifteenth meeting of the group. We were pleased to welcome Tony and Ann King, new to our group, and Stephen Wright who has recently joined the Society.

The 'congregation' was entertained by demonstrations and discussions of the workings of musical automata. Well over forty items were displayed by their owners, most having brought along two or three of their favourite pieces, whilst two members showed a wide range of 'toys'.



A fine turn-out at the Essex Group meeting

One of these larger displays was by John Odgers who, during his commercial ventures, has retained one of each of the various automata that have passed through his hands. His show included the following: autogyro; uni-cyclist on a tight rope; clown balancing a disc on a string; propeller-driven cyclist floating under a balloon; violin-playing doll; Ferris wheel; two hand-wound, card-playing organettes (one styled as a wardrobe, the other as an organ); boogieing, fluffy hep-cat and; a tall, slim figure who raises his hat to passers-by. This last is operated by an infra-red sensor: it was often placed outside shops and restaurants to greet customers. John pointed out that many of these items were by Sankyo of Japan: they were expensive and, being delicate and finely balanced, broke easily, especially as children liked to play with them. None remained marketable for very long.

Clive Houghton brought along a selection of Daphne Ladell's automata and a number of mechanised witches to mark the approach of Halloween. Notable amongst these many interesting

items were: drunk wearing a fez, sitting in a barrel; 'Aladdin' who blows smoke, this was not demonstrated as we were in the nave of a church (we could have used incense!); 'Alice', writing and falling asleep as her desk light goes out; a girl with a framed picture of a man whose facial expression changes; a 4 feet tall witch who lifts her head from her shoulders and; a couple of shrieking witches, one tapping her feet loudly on the ground.

Robert Ducat-Brown had opened the day's proceedings, showing us two birds in a cage. He explained that their whistling is produced in a similar way to the operation of a trombone: in the automaton the frequency of note of air blowing through a tube is varied by a cam-driven plunger changing the length of the tube. His second item was a small box made of melted horn, with a small compartment for billets-doux: an oscillating, whistling bird pops back into its box after trilling its tune. Later in the day, John Natrass produced

two similar caged, whistling birds. These items are still being produced in Lichtenstein: it is difficult to assess their age as they are often artificially stressed to appear old. John also played a couple of very old cylinder movements which still sounded nice despite having lain neglected in his 'shed'!

Kevin McElhone displayed a 6" Polyphon standard disc player with four bells, operated by four tooth tracks: unusually, the bed plate stretched across the carcass space. His second Polyphon, in a cheap pine box, veneered to simulate solid mahogany, had four bells with dedicated tracks: its discs have Mark 9 scoop projections. Both boxes are obviously smaller than a 9" box claimed elsewhere to be the smallest such machine.

Cylinder boxes were played variously by Kevin, Tony King and John Odgers. Tony's had been bought at auction and has six tracks producing a semi-mandolin effect.

Sharon Pointeer explained that

Wessex Meeting, Sunday 24th November, 2013

her teddy bear with pink dress was a sentimental replacement for one which she had overwound as a child, later lost in a fire. Her grandmother had dressed this second in a blue trouser suit which Sharon subsequently replaced by its current pink attire. Her blue-dressed doll, with powder puff and hand mirror, had been bought as a kit some twenty years ago. Attending the last group meeting prompted Sharon to complete assembly of the kit ready for today. These kits are no longer available.

Steve Wedge played his musical box with its comb, drum and bells: it was his first ever purchase of a musical movement. One of its airs is "Oh where, oh where has my little dog gone". Next came two seated girls, playing drum and banjo: in the past it was probably covered by a glass dome, now absent. Finally, Steve played a small cylindrical manivelle toy with changing pictorial scenes.

The day ended with Robert demonstrating three musical boxes with bells, two of which had drums: he explained that early boxes had their bells and drums hidden, whilst later ones had them on view. The first was a PVF with hidden bells: its origin was questioned by one member who has a similar box by another maker. Then followed a B H Abrahams three bell box and an impressive buffet musical box by Mojon Manger, with six tuned bells and drum. This last dated from the 1890's and has a selection of tunes from that period.

The full and interesting programme which Robert had organised finished slightly earlier than planned, allowing for a cup of tea and face to face discussions before guests departed. This new venue was deemed suitable in all respects and will be used for the next meeting on Saturday 31st May 2014.

Twenty two members and guests gathered in the vineyard 'tasting room' of the Down House, Itchen Abbas on Sunday 24th November, 2013 for the third Wessex group meeting.

The meeting proper opened with Kevin McElhone demonstrating a small six air cylinder box, which although it had Ducommun Girod stamped into the winding lever, was thought possibly to be the work of L'Epée or another maker.

Peter Trodd then showed us more of his astonishingly talented carving and woodwork, consisting of a barrel with the figure of Gambrinus, the King of Beer, perched on top. Peter had made a reduced-size version of that commonly used to house Symphonion disc musical movements in order to accommodate an orphaned 8" Symphonion movement that he had. The other example of his craftsmanship was an automaton replica of a 'Savoyard' organ grinder, which had presented a challenge during its construction. The bulk of the morning was then taken up with an exploration of the works of the Italian, Donizetti. As we learnt, he was a prolific composer of (sometimes bizarrely named) operas and operettas in the 'bel canto' style. His music is widely featured on cylinder musical boxes, many examples of which we listened to on a variety of movements: a late Nicole Mandoline, a Cuendet Sublime Harmonie Piccolo, a L'Epée, a key wind Ducommun Girod, a Lecoultré Granger *single comb* piano forte, and another Nicole Frères. Audience attention was exhausted before the selection available, and it was concluded that one can listen to

only so many versions of *The Daughter of the Regiment*. It was regrettable that we did not get to hear *Emilia di Liverpool*, although Linda di Chamounix did offer the opportunity to talk about the definition of a 'hurdy gurdy', as Pierotto, one of the characters in this opera, makes his first appearance playing such instrument.

After lunch we listened to a small Symphonion, before being played a cylinder box with an incomplete first tune! The highlight of the afternoon was the opportunity to hear a Lecoultré piano forte box with a single, chevron-style comb, and a 225 tooth cylinder box, thought to be by Langdorff, which was a two-comb piano forte box with mandolin pinning. This afforded the opportunity to reprise more Donizetti music. Both these exceptional boxes were bought along by a very long-standing member of MBSGB making his first ever visit to any meeting.

Two members then compared and contrasted two snuff boxes, very similar in appearance, the one by Martinet et Benoit, and the other by that well-known maker, 'Anon' – though it was argued that it too was a Martinet and Benoit. In 2011 Luuk Goldhoorn wrote that only twelve such boxes had been found to date, so now perhaps there is a thirteenth to add to the list. The entertainment concluded with a demonstration of seasonal items: a Christmas tree stand made by Eckhart of Stuttgart, with a Polyphon movement, and some modern musical matchboxes! Finally, we were treated to Offenbach's *Can Can*, rarely found on a cylinder box but played here on the Cuendet.

Teme Valley Winders

Christmas Meeting – 7th December 2013

Starting with tea and coffee, some 28 Winders assembled at 11:00 a.m. to begin the 8th Christmas meeting of the Winders. After a welcome and introductions from John Phillips, the Terrible Trio (or the Three Fix-it-'ere's) took the stage to explain and demonstrate their latest exercise in derring-do. Roy and Dennis Evett, and Eric Hartley took us through the process they used to remove a broken 15 ½" Polyphon spring from its cage in relative safety, and without damaging the cage. The original problem was raised at the previous Winders meeting by John Farmer, and the Trio decided they would rise to the occasion. This is a potentially very dangerous task since the spring was broken in several places so could not be "wound" in the ordinary way. However, between them, they came up with a method of using G-clamps and large jubilee clips to safely hold the coils of the spring to enable its removal. The demonstration was aided by camera projection to screen, with suitably placed "men-at-work" signs to satisfy the Safety Elf. Hopefully they will write up their method in a future article for posterity.

After all that excitement, we welcomed the relative calm of Nicholas Simons playing two piano rolls – Pastimes Nos. 1 and 3 by Artie Mathews, followed by Keith Reedman playing Black and White Rag, a re-cut from the Australian True Tone Rolls. This was reckoned to be as played by Winifred Atwell and Keith confirmed that it matches his oft-played 1950's 45rpm record of the same. John Farmer then took to the stage to show two recently restored items, the first being a Speaking Picture Book. The back



Teme Valley Winders Concertina Ensemble

of the book, which holds the mechanism, was still accessible so, with the aid of the cameras and screen, the audience were able to see the workings of the mechanisms which produce the 9 sounds ranging from a Lamb to a Cuckoo, and even "Mama and Papa" (with a little imagination). The second item was an unusual Amorette organette mechanism with a design quite different to most Amorettes, being much more compact, using small metal pallets and leaf springs. It was revealed as being from an Amorette Wheelbarrow, which plays the standard metal discs when pushed along. A couple of discs were played to demonstrate it.

Bernard Weekes then gave a nice tribute to Ken Stroud and explained that items from his collection, which had been donated to MBSGB and were planned to be on display, were still in the possession of Paul Bellamy and Ted Brown. It is still hoped that the items will be auctioned at the 2014 AGM. Hilda Phillips then treated us to "The 12 days of Christmas Turkey", a very funny tail about how long the Christmas Turkey can last – if you're not careful! We then delved into our lunch boxes, helped by Hilda's

drinks and cakes.

The first few afternoon speakers focussed on Automata, starting with David Henthorn who demonstrated an unusual birthday present he had received. It is an antique automata, being the amusing Cat in a Milk Churn by Roulet and Decamps company of Paris, probably made in the early 20th century. As the musical mechanism plays, the cat rises out of the churn, licking his lips, then pops back down. Nicholas Simons then demonstrated two singing bird mechanisms, the first being a modern battery operated, noise activated, twin singing birds sitting on a branch, and the second a tinplate clockwork singing bird with moving beak and flapping wings. John Moorhouse then gave us an update on his singing bird egg, with photos and short videos. John has now completed the bellows assembly, including a couple of modifications to improve its output of wind, although it is still very similar to the traditional designs. Thus the two birds now sing but John, being the perfectionist he is, is not yet satisfied with the result, which is perhaps a little frantic, so he hopes to improve the song, and may even try to represent an actual tune.

As time moved on, John Harrold took to the stage and, aided by photos on the big screen, took us through the many problems he had discovered in an early musical clock currently in his workshop. The clock, a 6 bell repeater, dates from around 1770, and was made by Richard Roughsedge of Twickenham. It had been subjected to quite astonishingly bad workmanship in the past, with some bearings being simply battered to make them tighter, parts being incorrectly repaired and others being wrongly re-shaped. Despite all these problems, the bells were actually in tune. John was gradually working through these problems to get the clock and bell mechanism back to proper working order. Next up was Alan Pratt who gave us an illustrated talk on the Hurdy Gurdy. Being

frustrated by the number of people who refer to street organs as Hurdy Gurdys, he felt it was time to educate us all. He explained the history and construction of the H-G, which is, of course, a violin-like instrument, played by a friction wheel and a number of finger buttons. Alan also played some recordings of Hurdys.

With the talks being essentially over, it was time for more refreshments, ably provided by Hilda and helpers. It was at this point that Theuringer Konzertinas started to appear and serenade us. First one or two, then a few more, plus John Harrold with his 40 note accordion, until finally we had 9 instruments, all playing together. Someone said "Is this a world record?" Who knows, but it was fun. Joining in the fun, and being

given a chance to play a Konzertina, were guests Andrew and Stephanie from Nicholson's organ builders of Malvern, recently visited by the Winders. Andrew was able to give John Phillips some advice on possible improvements to his "Pièce a Oiseau" cylinder box.

The next Winders meeting will be on Saturday 21st June 2014. The meeting will start at 11:00 a.m. and finish around 4:00 p.m. Members should bring packed lunches to consume during the lunch break. John and Hilda will provide tea and coffee during the day. Those wishing to attend should contact John Phillips on 01584 781118 to confirm. Bring along anything to wind, or just come along and talk to us

John Farmer

Précis Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 6th January 2014

Present:

Alison Biden (*Chair*)

John Phillips (*Vice-president*),

John Farmer (*Acting Treasurer*)

Kevin McElhone

(*Membership Secretary*)

Bernard Weekes

(*Acting Meetings Secretary*)

David Worrall

(*Recording Secretary*).

Apologies: received from John Ward, Arthur Cunliffe and David & Lesley Evans.

Business discussed - as set out hereunder.

Finance. The revised Outturn of "The Disc Musical Box" Project reported as a small loss of £156.71 at the time remaining stock was made over to the author; the 2013 Interim Accounts to end may 2013 had been Independently Examined by Richard Kerridge and were to his satisfaction; Electronic Copies

of "*The Music Box*" to free recipients were being considered as a cost saving measure.

Voting in Absentia. The Committee re-affirmed its intent to seek the views of all members before proposing any necessary changes to the Constitution.

Correspondence. Items from Paul Bellamy, including one suggesting a meeting to predetermine the future make-up of the EC, were considered.

The Stroud Bequest. Intention to auction items at the 2014 AGM re-affirmed; permission to access the items stored by Paul Bellamy and Ted Brown still being sought; further requests to be made; if unresolved by June to be referred to the 2014 AGM.

Review of Society Constitution. A Set of Limited Changes to the existing Constitution considered;

to be published in the Summer Edition of "*The Music Box*" for consideration by the 2014 AGM; the idea of changing the status of the Society to "Incorporated" was raised; this would need to be referred to an AGM for Approval in Principle in order to take such a fundamental matter further.

Spring Meeting Newton Abbot. Program Arrangements now in place; 39 members had booked to-date; others known to be interested and further bookings expected.

Election of Officers 2014. Article in the Spring Edition of "*The Music Box*" encouraging Members to Nominate and Second Officers for ALL Appointments as permitted under Article 4.4 of the Constitution.

Next Meeting. Friday 11th April 2014 at The Passage House Hotel, Newton Abbot, Devon. Time to be advised.

On Sunday, July 7th, 2013, the first-ever Conference on Mechanical Music was staged in the City of London by the National Early Music Association (NEMA) in conjunction with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. The event was attended by a distinguished list of delegates from the world of music and museums around Europe. The keynote speaker was Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume who presented an enlightening overview of mechanical music and its instruments and spoke of what may be learned from a study of early mechanical music. Here is an edited view of his presentation.

Learning from Interpretations by Mechanical Instruments

Confronted by the words 'Ornamentation in Mechanical Music' one's first reaction is 'Why not?' for there is indeed nothing special in title or concept. We should neither wonder at its realisation nor at its complexity. To do otherwise is akin to musical instrument racism.

But we do need to define what it is we mean by *ornamentation* – even *mechanical music* – and to do that, we have to go back to basics and face up to a few awkward home truths.

Music is an aspect of life many see as an arcane topic worthy of definition as an art-form. It is not a science, although mathematics has successfully been applied to proving the niceties of pitch and temperament.

In this regard, music was happy to exist for however long it may have

been until such time as somebody chose to want to write it down. Putting sound into script was as tedious as recording the scent of a rose in wrought ironwork; but after several notable false starts, a suitable technique was devised more by judgement than skill. The result was that teaching music was to become more intent on interpretation than on making performing sense out of the written-down notation. Most of us already understand that notation is but a guide and not a blueprint for performing style.

Nevertheless, this solution did work, and work quite well. Without it we would not have the preserved genius of Tallis or Blow, Bull or Bach, Buxtehude or Purcell.

Written-down music, then, was fine until some maverick mechanic came along and reckoned he could mechanise music so as to allow those who had no musical skills to enjoy melodious sounds without demur. The world of mechanical music had arrived and would blossom to bring the first-ever recorded musical performances into our lives.

This, then, was only the beginning, for mechanically-produced music became something of a cuckoo, if not in the nest, then certainly in the clef.

Until comparatively recent times, the devout musicologists of the World have consistently paid scant attention to mechanical

interpretation, generally giving not so much as a thought that anything useful might be learned from mechanical musical instruments and their automatic interpretations.

This inability to accept that anything at all worth knowing may be deduced from listening to a piece of music played exactly as it was expected to be heard, in many instances, at the time of its composition, has been nothing short of calamitous. Apart from isolated studies across the years beginning with Protz in Germany in 1938, this rich source of practical demonstration of performance style has been overlooked.

Before we can assess the value of these instruments and evaluate any significant information they might offer, we ought to consider what mechanical musical instruments are and, more to the point, what they were created for.

Music in past ages was a rare entertainment totally reliant on the physical presence and participation of human performers on real instruments. This depended on the transit of music as a commodity, hence the necessity of the creation of a musical notation.

I have already hinted at the inadequacy of this musical notation. Printed or written music involves an unlikely combination of the senses. Even as refined and as used today, written-down music is an improbable medium:



The author, MBSGB founder member and past President Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume

it is fundamentally an illogical situation since music cannot be looked at in the same way that smell cannot be heard. Thanks to the oscilloscope, however, sounds may be seen yet what we see by such wizardry may not be enjoyed by any of the regal senses.

This seemingly simple fact is one that many people have the greatest difficulty in accepting, partly because like most of us they have grown up with written notation and have not been exposed to the interpretational by-ways afforded to some of us by mechanical musical instruments. Generations of young piano students lived to rue the success of Clementi in publishing teaching guides and practice pieces.

That this inadequacy of written-down notation is true is proven by the number of different ways in which a musical score can be interpreted. If the score were to be an accurate depiction of sound as envisaged by the composer at the time of creation, then why do we have different performers, even different conductors, all rendering music in a different manner? And why would the record companies waste time and effort issuing yet another recording of a symphony or a piano-concerto just because it is given by a different artist or conductor?

Clearly, in the world of real music played by real people on real instruments, there is no 'perfect' rendition of those black dots on the printed telephone wires of music.

Which nicely introduces the fundamental problem with the musical score: How can a pianist or a violinist read expression from his printed sheet?

There lies the skill of the interpreter who has but a framework upon which to overlay his or her artistry.

From this we can confirm the unsavoury conclusion that written-down music is truly nothing more than a guide: it is certainly not any more than that; nor has it ever been. Certainly, there's an embedded code of signs, symbols and occasional curious text abbreviations but even they are reliant on a scale of effects that exists in a different way in individual heads.

And before the era of Mozart through to Beethoven, we have written-down indications where the performer should *ad lib*: indeed, he was expected to do so. Cadenzas were encouraged to reflect the thoughts and talents of the performer. In the time of Lully and Rameau, though, performers were entreated to produce only the music as written, yet Handel, Bach, Clementi and others welcomed the freedom of interpretation that saw grace-notes and trills sprinkled, sometimes like confetti, across their works. Music, some 19th century critic once wrote, acquired the twiddle bits and there was no better person to provide them than

the musical *prima donna* and that didn't necessarily refer merely to large ladies who sang *can bello*. The operatic insertion aria was a product of this harmonic largesse.

Occasionally today operatic singers try the decorative approach with their rendition of arias that are not best suited to such treatment. Usually the listener responds by recoiling, hearing the adulteration of a well-loved piece of music with richly-sprinkled but unwanted notes as little short of an abomination. Indeed, the general view is woe-betide any performer that adds so much as a demi-semiquaver that was not penned by the original composer. Back in the days of the music-hall, such vocal embellishments were greeted with approbation: thank goodness we have proceeded from that era.

Thus we discover that this so-called science of music offers that curious mix: a corset-like tightness which yet tolerates – indeed encourages – an occasional interpretational freedom that would be disallowed in just about every other aspect of skill.



The magnificent exterior of an Overture box by FC Lecoultré. The tune sheet in the lid lists Trio d'Elisabetha (Rossini), overture to La Cenerentola (-do-), Air No.3 in Il Pirata (Bellini), and Waltz in La Gazza Ladra (Rossini). The last opera was premiered in 1817. Elisabetha predated this by two years but Il Pirata was not performed until 1827 which dates this box to no earlier than 1827 and puts it in the era of the interpretationally important musical box.



Interior of the F C Lecoultrre Overture Box revealing the large-diameter cylinder and the fine comb

We have, however, seen at the top of this paper that music is more of an art and, like that of the painter, offers different windows of expression and portrayal.

All this would be fine were it not for one unfortunate fly in this ointment of interpretational discretionary uncertainty – those mechanical musical instruments. There is a widening understanding that they have the ability to teach us something about styles of performance that has long-since faded not just from memory but from the style portfolios of our most eminent tutors.

While this is now understood to be true and we ignore these priceless musical documents at our peril, we must ever be aware that like most good things in life, there is risk. We face the unpalatable reality that all that we see and hear may not be what we think we see and hear.

To explain, we need to keep our wits about us as we evaluate

both the real mechanical musical performers and the artificial or false ones.

To the majority, sadly, it is the latter class which is too-widely known and most readily comes to the mind of the critics of mechanical instruments.

It is all connected with the reasons why mechanical instruments were devised. It is here that we have a clear indication of the typical-response curve – a sine-wave of merit if you will. Initially, mechanical music was a novelty: a curious addition to a table-top decorative centre-piece, a letter-writers' seal, a pocket-watch or a snuff-box. This we will call Phase One. The music was not terribly good and neither was it actually very important for it to be accurate other than to sound vaguely familiar.

Phase Two was where novelty had transcended mere curiosity and, at the behest of the rich and the aristocracy or any others

who might be able to afford such extravagance, music was produced for its exquisite ability to satisfy the soul and to entertain at a high level. This saw the creation of superlative instruments that gave faultless performances to a high standard of excellence.

So capable were these instruments that composers were encouraged to write music expressly for them and this rich period in Mechanical Music is adorned with compositions by, among the many, Cherubini, Haydn, C P E Bach, W A Mozart, and L van Beethoven.

Phase Two was replaced by the birth of consumerism and the Industrial Revolution which saw everybody wanting automatic music in their homes. Cheap cylinder and disc-playing musical boxes were the novelty musical items in the late nineteenth century. Phase Three had begun and would extend into the era of the simple pneumatic player-piano or Pianola.

Mechanical musical instruments are thus stylistically categorised as falling into one of these periods as Phase One, Phase Two or Phase Three. But across all three phases we have to be careful that we do not confuse the real mechanical musical instrument with the false example.

The first of many exceptions to this time-frame compartmentalisation is the carillon, probably the oldest form of mechanised music. Much fine music exists for this instrument, the greater majority dating from the 17th century by Low Countries composers for it was there that the instrument was born and flourished.

In the main (and again there are exceptions), the fully-automatic instruments of mechanical music represent a purer and richer source of interpretational information and education than those that are semi-mechanical where the

performer retains even a limited ability to affect the performance. The hand-operated street piano or the busker's barrel-organ are mechanical instruments, often with richly-endowed and thoughtfully-arranged musical programmes, but they remain capable of being influenced to a certain degree by the manner in which they are operated whether it be (in the case of an organ) the selection and changing of registration, or merely the speed of turning the handle.

But even the fully-automatic instruments of mechanical music are viewed with a caveat. Those that are operated by clockwork of one kind or another invariably have a governor or air-brake that is adjustable. This adjustability creates the ready risk of the instrument not playing at the speed which its maker originally intended. This problem exists in musical clocks, early orchestral orchestrion organs and other free-standing instruments.

In general, the speed of these instruments is dependent on many variables starting with wear and tear over what may be two or more centuries plus human interference, well-intentioned or otherwise, over a similar length of time.

Significantly, for many years during which these instruments were neither appreciated for what they were nor treated as other than ancient novelties, their mechanisms have been exposed to brutal treatment ranging from adding extra driving weight 'to overcome age-related friction' (when what was needed was urgent treatment to combat motor-pivot wear), to lubricating every moving part (including, in some cases, wooden parts and leather) with copious quantities of oil in a fervent attempt to free up sluggish operation.

This accepted, it is these fully-automatic instruments of

mechanical music from which we can learn a great deal. To appreciate just how valuable these interpretations are and how important are the musical decorations employed, we need to know something about how instruments of mechanical music, both semi-automatic and full-automatic, have been viewed by their programmers over the years. Forgive the use of the word 'programmer' which unfortunately has a modern connotation that is little connected with music.

The programmers of which we speak here are those artistic craftsmen who could take a musical score with all its wide-open interpretational imperfections and from it create a genuinely brilliant performance via the process of translating the music into the pins and staples of the barrel or cylinder that formed the musical play-list for these instruments.

It was their skill that had, perforce, to equal that of the finest manual instrument performer and it is to him that the maker of the instrument entrusted the greatest part of his work – its transformation from a mute instrument that could go through the motions of playing into one which could produce a perfectly acceptable performance of a piece of music. The point is that because every performance of a mechanical musical instrument is both an original performance and an identical rendition, it had to be considered perfect from its very inception.

So here we return to that graph of disposition – the sine-wave – for that is precisely what we have when we assess the merits of mechanical musical instruments and their ability to teach us or influence us today. We find in general that the early Phase One instruments were little more than noise-making novelties while the Phase Three were intended for mass market entertainment.

It is, therefore, the Phase Two instruments that together form the Golden Age of mechanical music and from which we should sit in awe at what we hear.

With every pronouncement put forward as a rule, there are the inevitable exceptions and here we need to be aware that some popular forms of mechanical musical instrument have attained special dispensation so that, although categorised as being in Phase Three, they are in some instances, important enough to rank alongside those of Phase Two.

Even today, many tend to look down on street music as being the urchin in the alleyways of decent music. But at one time street music was the only way that the greater majority of the ordinary public could hear music. The Italian invention of the hand-turned street barrel piano brought together some unique skills, not the least of which was the skilful application of the well-checked tongue. Mid- to late 19th century hand-turned pianos were often excellent style interpreters.

The invention of the pneumatic player action, a Phase Three development that provided us with the basic player-piano, encouraged a small number of composers to create music expressly for it. Curiously, although the potential was impressive, very few took advantage of these instruments with their ability to sound far more notes than the human performer with ten fingers and thumbs.

A derivative of the player piano which was also driven by a perforated paper roll was the player organ available in both pipe and reed form. The common theme was that both were keyboard instruments that could be operated by a pneumatic player action powered by air. One well-known Victorian composer was

hired by a major manufacturer to compose music expressly for these instruments. It is disappointing to find that the fellow in question produced perfectly mundane music of the kind any second-year organist could play in his sleep.

By contrast are the very recent compositions for player piano by composers including György Ligeti and Conlan Nancarrow which have taken the precision of mechanics and mathematics

to produce amazing piano works that, in general, are way beyond the means of even two human performers to play.

Somewhere between these two noted exceptions lies the age of the reproducing piano, famously the Triphonola, Welte-Mignon, Duo-Art, and the Ampico, although there were at least half a dozen other systems. These produced a recording of a performers' actual interpretation by a variety of

subtle means, not excluding post-performance treatment of master rolls, but nevertheless with the ability to encapsulate within a perforated paper roll a performance that accurately reproduced the performer's interpretation and expressional thoughts.

While there are great things to be learned from the presentation of music on the cylinders of mechanical instruments, this information comes with another risk and that risk is the problem of human intervention over the years. Earlier, mention was made of the problems of misguided attention using added weights to 'cure' friction or oil to overcome wear and tear.

But as outlined just now, the other problem with mechanical instruments has to be the regulation of speed. Clockwork instruments, in particular those operated by the application of potential energy stored and released in descending weights, invariably have an adjustable air-brake in the form of two wings or vanes which can be adjusted to receive varying degrees of opposition to the air as they rotate. The greater the opposition, the slower the mechanism will run while the lesser the opposition the faster it will go.

This causes problems when selecting the speed at which music should play and even though in general the tempi defined at stages between *adagio* and *presto* is today defined reasonably accurately by Maelzel's metronome, the reliance on accuracy at the time of composition was more *tempo comodo a semplice*.

The matter of speed of performance becomes slightly clouded when it is discovered that all of the better-made or top-quality mechanical organs and dulcimers were provided with means by which the tempo could be adjusted by the owner.



Street organs provided ready availability of music to the masses and the importance of this medium cannot be over-estimated. Controversial in the extreme, the medium was both loved and hated and was generally associated, incorrectly, with the lower echelons of musical life. But the early street instruments brought opera and the classic as well as popular music to everybody.

Orchestrion organs and other early mechanical organs provided with helically-pinned barrels could play pieces of music up to twelve or more minutes in length and the smallest adjustment of the airbrake wings which regulated the speed of the clockwork could thus have a significant impact on performance duration and, consequently, tempi.

Some makers actually made use of this variability to allow the instrument owner to adjust playing speed. On some high-quality instruments, the correct or expected tempo is actually recorded either on the musical cylinder itself or on the programme sheet. This is shown as a number that corresponds to a setting on the adjustable air-brake. Mechanical organs exist having a number of pinned barrels, each devoted to one piece of music and each intended to be played at a different speed.

Assuming that the condition of the clockwork mechanism is perfect having been restored to as near original condition as possible, these tempi can be assessed as pleasingly correct and ideal.

Whereas other instruments which have tempo-adjustment achievable by this same method but do not have specified markings, the clock-makers' mid-position setting of the adjustable wings is usually a reliable indication of the intended tempo.

But now we find one of those occasions when for guidance we must look outside mechanical music to the historic records of taste and fashion. During much of the Phase Two era, speed of performance was equated with virtuosity and, in an age before the fast tramcar could frighten ordinary people, audiences would go wild at rapid renditions and precision in musical performance. This one dubious characteristic

ought not to be overlooked when listening, for example, to one of the 'Haydn 32' played at, what to us, is breakneck speed.

And here we find the old chestnut which, in music, is the equivalent of the chicken and egg situation – what is the speed of the minuet. Nobody seems to know for sure. Ask five musicians and you will receive five answers, all different. A mechanical instrument from the time of Mozart, correctly adjusted and in sound working condition, tells us unequivocally, having hidden the answer upon its barrel since the time when a dancing-master said to his barrel-pinner 'Pin me this music as a minuet'.

For us today, though, we have one fool-proof way of finding out the right speed and it comes not from the music nor from the conductor

or even the musicologist but from the experienced dancer. Since the minuet is a dance that is conducted at a comfortable speed for its choreography – that *tempo comodo* – have a dancer perform to the music and then measure the result – ergo: the right speed!

Earlier the Golden Age of Mechanical Music was mentioned. This was little more than a century in length and comfortably embraced the lives of Franz Joseph Haydn, Muzio Clementi, Ignaz Pleyel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven but just missing out on Alessandro Scarlatti and, sadly, Domenico. Expressed in terms of convenience, then, we can consider this Golden Age to have begun around 1720 and to have extended to around 1820. It was within this era that the greater majority of the finest



A quality organ mechanism by Alexandre Francois Debain of Paris. The large diameter wooden barrel shows that it plays fairly long melodies.

mechanical musical instruments were produced. They embraced the top-quality manufacturers of musical clocks containing pipe organs and dulcimers and included virtually all the best makers in Germany, France, and Sweden. This was our Phase Two.

Significantly, it also included the birth of the comb-playing cylinder musical box and it is thus with this category of mechanical instrument that we find that the early perfection of the mechanisms allowed the inclusion in the instrument's repertoire of some valuable and since-lost musical masterpieces.

This period left us the finest examples of mechanical music and, thankfully, preserved for us today some music that has not survived in any other form.

Having defined the form, the style and the period of the mechanical instrument of music that are of concern to us in our study, we can now look at the prime topic of this paper – ornamentation and interpretation.

Experience tells us that there are certain types and forms of music that are best treated without any form of ornamentation. Unlike the metronomic performances of artists such as the late Glenn Gould, Bach allowed for interpretational variety, even in those works suspiciously considered free from opportunity such as the 'Forty-Eight'. Other forms of music, though, demanded the strict tempi associated with cultural variation and here in particular one can suggest that Turkish music as found on musical clocks from the time of James Cox, Charles Clay and forward, was invariably metronomic to suit a well-researched market in both Oriental style and presentation.

Here I would like to go back to my original point, namely the inaccuracies of written-

down musical notation and our interpretation of it. Before the arrival of mechanical music, it was easy to understand this notation. All that, however, was to change once it came to translating this into what, in today's parlance, we can call software.

An example is the semibreve or whole note. If divided into two it becomes the minim: four becomes the crochet. These and all other notes and their fractions possess one unfortunate mathematical characteristic – two of the short ones makes one longer one, two longer ones make an even longer one and so on. A bit basic but in terms of musical engineering an annoying revelation. While it never caused any problem to the human performer who could happily produce two short notes in the space of one longer one, it wouldn't work for the programmer of the mechanical organ.

It would take the thoughtful skills of an 18th century priest to elucidate this fundamental problem for the benefit of the musical clock-makers. He said that part of every note was silence and that the silent part was as equal in importance as the part that was heard. In other words, you could make two shorter sounds that equalled one longer sound by allowing for that crucial separating silence.

While the term 'ornamentation' can cover a vast variety of interpretational additions that range from the idiosyncratic through to the exquisitely satisfying, this embellishment of music has to be seen as nothing new and the first true study of its use was the work of Joseph Engramelle who published his treatise on ornamentation in 1775 having studied contemporary mechanical musical instruments.

It was Engramelle who first pointed out the mechanical inconsistencies in music, namely and in short that

it was impossible to sub-divide the semibreve into a pair of minims, four crochets or eight quavers and that in attempting to do so the result would be the unaltered duration of the semibreve. In other words, Engramelle drew attention to the basic fact which we all take for granted but had not hitherto been expressed, namely that it was *silence* that defined the duration of a note if it was to be audible as a separate division and definable as an expression.

A few short years later, his work was expanded upon by Bedos, another man of the cloth, this time a Benedictine monk, who, being what today we would call a mechanical musicologist, re-drew all of Engramelle's musical ornaments and translated them into barrel-pinning patterns having himself experimented to see what was the best length of silence that had to be subtracted from each and every note's duration in order to enable it to be heard and defined.

Bedos demonstrated the mordent, trills, suspensions and every other form in terms of how much linear distance the expression should be allowed upon the surface of the barrel at a specific metronome mark and, more important still, how much silence must separate each note.

Dom Bedos extended his work not merely to ornamentation but to showing us how to apply it to music. He set out extended plans of cylinder pinning to reveal how both divisions of silence and ornamentation of notes should best be applied. Most important was the basic truth that Engramelle and Dom Bedos described styles of interpretation that were not just in use at their times but were in keeping with the expectations of both composers and their audience.

Whatever form of ornamentation or expression it was possible for

the human performer to adopt, this could be replicated by the intelligent and sympathetic barrel pinner who would instinctively know when to short-change his dividing wheel, or over-turn it to create the expression that he sought to achieve.

Of course this was a skill that did not come easily to the barrel pinners unless they themselves were skilled musicians. Fortunately we can ascertain that a good number of these craftsmen were indeed capable performers themselves and we have examples of stylish execution extending from *rallentando* (also possibly attained by necessity because the barrel divisions had been wrongly counted or marked) to the various types of trill.

The renowned Dutch musicologist and keyboard performer Ton Koopman, speaking at Utrecht in 2009, observed that many mechanical interpretations sounded too fast. While I agree this is sometimes the case, as mentioned earlier, this deficiency in Koopman's eye was at one time the expected style and can be used to accentuate the subtlety and precision of the ornamentation.

It would be incorrect to suggest that all mechanical musical instruments can teach us the correct and proper use and application of musical ornamentation in the same way as it would equally be suspect to acclaim every instrumental soloist or conductor as the embodiment of musical interpretation.

No, one must be both susceptible to, and critical of those pieces to which we listen. At all times one has to remember that the written-down music in the form of the score is neither the definitive indication nor the interpretational paradigm but a map of the music – a guide within which the player and the conductor have a certain

freedom to roam.

The mechanical musical instrument, however, has already enjoyed that freedom to roam and has encapsulated the result like a fly preserved in amber. There for us we can hear the sound of a past age. No gramophone recording ever gave us such a distant record of a long-past performance. And, as we said at the outset, because each playing is a replay of that original, we know just what was expected of the music by the audience of the time.

It is largely due to this anomalous situation that we find human attempts at performance of mechanical music styles not merely unsatisfactory but unnecessary. The Mozart clockwork organ pieces are a case in point where organists try to play them with thick and unsuitable registration at the speed of a dirge

A few years back and in an attempt to re-learn the skills of the masters of old, two projects were undertaken. The first, carried out with the co-operation of the last-remaining Swiss cylinder musical-movement maker, involved the pricking of a small trinket-type musical-box cylinder to demonstrate expression.

The second was the building, fifteen or so years ago, of a clockwork spinet of the style of Bidermann in Augsburg in the early sixteenth century and this was to achieve a 'hand-played' performance of early English music by Dowland, Blow, Bull and Purcell.

In both instances it was established that once the principle of cylinder marking had been mastered, the incorporation of decoration and manual style was, if not exactly easy, then perfectly achievable by a skilled musician with practice.

Since it is shown as a fundamental

aspect of the arrangement of music for mechanical interpretation, the notion of ornamentation in mechanical performances is, as a concept, redundant. A greater concern is the synthesis of the human performer and his performance style.

Here the worst examples of this synthesis are commonly found with the player-piano or Pianola and its metrically-cut rolls. More often than not, the cheaper music rolls were never so much as near a human performer but were marked out and punched direct from the score by machine operators. This means that every note falls precisely in its right place and, in demonstrating the very limitations of the written score that we referred to earlier, it shows the risk we have of mechanical music revealing its own weaknesses. The majority of the popular catalogue of ordinary piano rolls serves little but to hammer home the nails in the coffin of that common belief which proclaims mechanical interpretation as being pretty awful.

Indeed, Aeolian's player pipe and reed organs (which were extremely expensive high-quality instruments when new) had that opportunity to journey far from the metrical interpretation, yet an analysis of the vast majority of music rolls issued for these instruments shows that they, too, were metrically-cut and every note in every chord starts and stops at the same moment in time. The full capabilities of these truly wonderful instruments were seldom probed which is why thoughtful owners actively engaged in laboriously hand-making their own music rolls.

We should always be careful in assessing mechanical musical instruments and make sure that what we hear is what we are listening to and not hearing that which we would like to hear. A case in point concerns a university project of some



Clocks that play on bells are rarely of interest to the musicologist. This one, however, proves the exception to the rule. Made by Joseph Finney of Liverpool in about 1770, the right-angle movement performs seven melodies on 12 bells with 24 hammers. The tunes are Psalm 104, Lovely Peggy, Love and Youth, Nut Brown Maid, A March, Miller of Mansfield, Merry Tones H-. The music plays every three hours, the tunes being changed automatically every 24 hours or manually as required. The preserved performances of at least three of these tunes have been noted as of considerable interest.

years ago where a degree student presented a 'watertight case' for having detected *notes inégales* in the pinning of music found on a British-made barrel organ in a private collection.

Certainly the eager young gentleman had found some unequal notes but after the barrel-organ had undergone necessary restoration, they vanished, for what had been heard and eagerly interpreted as such was, in fact, wear and tear in the organ mechanism.

To explain this vanishing trick we need to understand the dynamics of the keyframe of the mechanical instrument. If we take four identical pins in the surface of the barrel, each of the same thickness of wire, each protruding the same amount above the barrel surface and each identical one to the other, then the clear indication is that they represent four identical notes – da, da, da, da. This will be the same whether they are adjacent notes performing a scale or notes intended to be sounded together as in a chord. It also means that if it is one note repeated four times, then each appearance of that note is identical.

While this may be the barrel-pinner's fervent intention, the mechanics of the organ might interpret his intentions in another way. Assuming that the organ is otherwise adjusted properly, the sounding of these four notes depends on the horizontal alignment of the keyframe meaning the height of each key tip above the surface of the barrel. If the distance from each tip to the barrel surface is constant, then the four notes will sound identical. If the distance to the keyframe is below optimum, then the notes will appear to increase in length – da, da, da, da becomes daa, daa, daa. If the distance is too much, then each pin can only raise the key tip for a very short time producing d-, d-, d-, d-.

The important thing to note is that when we talk about this horizontal alignment, whether it is too much or too little, the four notes will sound of equal duration whether that be individually too long or individually too short.

Now envisage an instrument where that essential horizontal alignment is less than perfect and, as an example, we have the first key too close to the barrel surface, the second correct, the third too great and the fourth correct. Those four identical notes now sound daa, da, d-, da! What was once a repetition now assumes a rhythm! However, since it was not the musical arranger's intention, it becomes a false rhythm!

Now put yourself in the position of a youthful music student who may have more than a fistful of musical theory but not much knowledge of mechanics. He reads his score and finds four identical-length notes – da, da, da, da. But when he listens to the organ he hears daa, da, d-, da! How can this be? What is more peculiar is that the next time the same notes are sounded in the duration of the music, the self-same rhythm is clearly heard.

'Ah!' asserts the young student with alacrity and the wisdom brought about by having read Ebenezer Prout's primer on harmony and an Internet essay on the use of *notes inégales* in French music. 'Eureka!' he cries with the resolution that comes from seeing things entirely in black and white. 'I have found proof of the existence of *notes inégales*!'

If the irregularities in the mechanical action are removed, as would be a natural and inevitable consequence of a proper, adequate servicing, the rhythmic irregularities, attractive though they might have appeared, now disappear and the quest for that musical Yeti – the inequality of otherwise equal notes – vanishes

back into the mountains from whence it apparently came.

Of the many composers whose music was arranged for mechanical organ the two most prolific were Handel and Haydn. Significantly at the conference on Josef Haydn's music held in Utrecht in 2009, the Dutch musicologist Ton Koopman, observed, perhaps controversially, that he did not believe that the French love of *notes inégales* influenced non-native composers.

Much of this presentation has been devoted to issuing words of warning about what to expect from mechanical musical instruments and what not to. I believe the last-mentioned story justifies this possible over-concentration on the negative aspects.

Nevertheless, when all the hype and the misunderstandings are swept away, that which is left is a small yet vital segment in the interpretational history of music. We have the opportunity of hearing music in exactly the way it was intended to be heard at the time the instrument was constructed. This takes us, in many instances, to the performance style that the original composer would have heard, indeed would have expected and consequently would have concurred with.

On that solid and rich ground, I commend to you the value of the instruments of mechanical music and their priceless interpretations, ornaments and all, as documents of unsurpassable merit.

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The Library of Mechanical Music & Horology

This edited copy prepared for THE MUSIC BOX Tuesday, 29 October 2013 by the author

All photos were supplied by the author.

The Ken Stroud Collection

As mentioned in the Winter edition of *The Music Box*, it became known in January 2013 that the late Mr Kenneth Stroud had left his collection of mechanical musical instruments to the Society.

An unassuming man, Ken Stroud was a member of the MBSGB from 1999 until his death in November 2012. A keen engineer, he started work in the RAF as a flight maintenance engineer for the Spitfires. His interest in things mechanical continued throughout his life, initially with vintage motorcycles and then push bikes, and the lamps and badges used on the machines. He was a Guide for the National Trust at Chartwell, the home of Winston Churchill, but, as mobility became an issue in later years, he started collecting mechanical music and was a regular attendee at the Chanctonbury Ring.

Hearing about him from those who knew him, one gets the impression of a thoroughly good man who would go out of his way to help others, as well as being someone with a sense of curiosity that all good engineers have. Ken's kindness and generosity was demonstrated in his bequest to the MBSGB of his mechanical music items, valued for probate at £5,600. The items were collected from Ken's house in January 2013, by Paul Bellamy and Ted Brown, who took them into store on their premises pending a decision on the ultimate disposal of the bequest.

Under the terms of the will, this was left to the Society for its benefit, and as such, is the property of all the members collectively. No prescribed purpose or means of disposal were specified in the will. After lengthy consideration by the current Committee as to how to maximise the benefit for the Society, it was decided to sell the collection at the next Society Auction (June this year.) As you will have read last time, it was the intention to ensure maximum publicity prior to the auction by featuring the collection in this and the next journal.

However, despite several requests, the Committee has not yet been allowed access to the collection to undertake the preparations for the items to be auctioned; not having had such access, it is not possible to feature them in this edition of *The Music Box* as fully as had been envisaged, other than to list them as set out below. It is hoped that the delay will not adversely affect the success of the collection's ultimate disposal. Meanwhile, until the situation is resolved, the Society cannot realise any of the benefit intended by Ken Stroud.

The collection consists of several organettes, including a Chautauqua, a Draper's 14 note organette, and another 14 note American OrguINETTE. There is also a Cabinetto 25 note organette and a 16 note Amorette. Modern items include a home-made John Smith 20 note busker organ along with eight music rolls, and a 2006 copy of a 10 note, barrel operated Serinette. Amongst the cylinder musical boxes is one by L'Épée, number 1216, with bells, and a small box with 3 inch cylinder, playing two tunes. Disc musical boxes include a 7 inch Monopol, an 8 inch Polyphon in a Serpentine case, an 8 inch Edelweiss and another Polyphon, this time an 11 inch one. Finally, there is a modern copy of an upright Symphonion musical box, two photograph albums, and a number of musical novelties.

Dates for your Diary 2014

compiled by Bernard Weekes

11th - 13th April 2014

MBSGB Spring Meeting

Passage House Hotel, Kingsteinton,

Newton Abbott Devon

Contact Bernard Weekes 01242 254025

for more information

26th April 2014

British Horological Institute Automata Forum

BHI Upton Hall, Upton, Newark,

Nottinghamshire NG23 5TE

11th May 2014

National Vintage Communication Fair

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre,

The Fosse, Fosse Way, Leamington Spa,

Warwickshire, CV31 1XN

17th May 2014

Midlands Group meeting

Lincoln

Contact Roy Ison 01522 540406

for more information

31st May 2014

Essex Group Meeting

Contact Robert Ducat-Brown 01438 712585

for more information

7th June 2014

MBSGB Annual General meeting

Road Village Hall Road, Northamptonshire

21st June 2014

Teme Valley Winders

Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire

Contact John Phillips 01584 781118

for more information

28th - 31st August 2014

Great Dorset Steam Fair

Tarrant Hinton, Near Blandford Forum,

Dorset DT11 8HX

5th October 2014

Cotton Museum Organ enthusiasts day

Cotton Mechanical Music Museum,

Blacksmiths Road, Cotton, Stowmarket,

Suffolk. IP14 4QN

7th - 12th October 2014

Musical Box Society International Meeting

Weston, near Fort Lauderdale Florida USA

11th - 12th October 2014

Milton Keynes Organ Festival

Milton Keynes Museum, McConnell Drive,

Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5EL

18th October 2014

Midlands Group meeting Derby

Contact Nicholas Simons 01332 760576

for more information

6th December 2014

Teme Valley Winders

Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire

Contact John Phillips 01584 781118

for more information.



The British Horological Institute's

Automata Forum

Saturday 26 April 2014

at Upton Hall, Upton, Notts, NG23 5TE

10.45am–4.30pm

Speakers

Phil Gale *'A Bird in the Hand'* – singing bird box restoration

Michal Start *'It's Alive'* – how the master automata makers represented life with mechanism

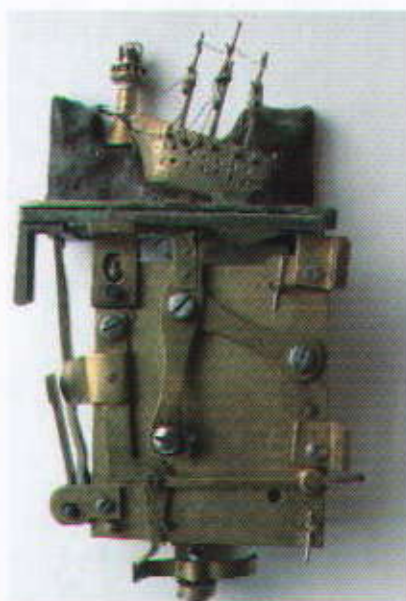
Matthew Read *'Bowes Museum Swan'* – a major restoration

John Moorhouse *'A Singing Bird in an Egg'* – design and manufacture of a new automaton using traditional methods

Special Guest **Alan Pratt** from the Musical Box Society, with his *'Clown Automata'*.

Price: BHI members £45, non members £60

(Lunch Provided)



Bookings:

Zanna Perry

01636 817603,

zanna@bhi.co.uk



WEB SITE NEWS

We now have a Members Only section of our web site; this is to convey important and urgent information to you. It also contains information, which may be of interest to members about the society. We hope that it will soon contain a message board on which all members can contribute with information, or maybe offer an item for sale, or one that is wanted.

Please check this page regularly for notices, particularly close to a meeting or the Annual General Meeting.

Click the third button down on the home page, the user name is **musicalbox** and the password is **bremond** all in lower case letters.

This may change from time to time and will be notified regularly in the journal.

To make this part of our web site a success, it requires input from our members, please contact any committee member if you have anything to report or have an idea.

The Disc Musical Box by Kevin McElhone

price **REDUCED** by £5
from £65 to £60 + postage

Obtainable from
Kevin McElhone
- see Officers' Page.

Ask about bulk purchases.

NVCF

Date of next event
Sunday 11th May 2014

Venue
Warwickshire Exhibition Centre

The Fosse, Fosse Way,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire,
CV31 1XN

Visitor admission fees

Normal Entry -
10.30am to 4pm -
£8 (under-14s FREE)

Early Entry - from
approx. 9.00am - £25

No advance ticketing,
all tickets on the door.

FREE CAR PARKING

<http://www.nvcf.org.uk/>

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 who 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.

3167 Mr.D.Iakobachvili, Monaco
3168 Naoto Orvi, Japan
3169 Mark Windisch, London
3170 Isabelle Harman, Australia
3171 Graham Pont, London
3172 Mr.P.Turner, Norfolk
3173 Swetsinfo, Oxford
3174 John Humphrey, Somerset

Now that there are 4 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.

Subscriptions FINAL REMINDER

If you had not paid your subscription by early February, you will see a FINAL REMINDER version of the renewal form in this issue of The Music Box. (If you paid recently, please ignore the reminder). If your subscription remains unpaid, this will be the last issue of The Music Box you will receive. Please **PAY NOW** to make sure you continue to receive your journal. If you have any queries, contact the Subscriptions Secretary (see Officer page).

ALSO, don't forget to complete the Data Protection section if you are happy for us to contact you by e-mail, or to pass your e-mail/phone details to other members. You can also send answers to these questions to musicalboxsociety@hotmail.co.uk if you are paying by PayPal, Standing Order, or bank transfer.

Making a Musical Box

by Don Busby

Looking Back

Criteria for fitting combs to bed This review of development of a bespoke cylinder musical box, identifies better ways for some aspects of design and build operations, after six years hands-on experience in the field of mechanical music by this novice machinist. It is intended to help other beginners who might choose to make similar mechanical music devices by suggesting some refinements and simplification.

Foreword

The series of articles records development of a bespoke musical box by a novice machinist and newcomer to the world of mechanical music. It describes the author's attempts to build a cylinder musical movement with a fully chromatic toothed comb and interchangeable cylinders so that a wide range of airs might be pinned. Work spread over six years, from Spring 2006 to Winter 2011 during which, as a member of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, he has benefited from advice freely given by experienced Society members, always gratefully received and applied. However, only as each phase of work was approached did questions and a need for answers arise: he could not constantly have an expert at his side, so made his own decisions, some good some not so good! The main objective of this review is to highlight pitfalls and better avenues of approach that a similar novice might find useful on such a project.

Articles appear from Spring 2009 to Spring 2014 in the Society's Journal, "The Music Box", a quarterly publication, reference ISSN 0027 4275. An index to the series is appended to this article: in it and throughout this review, articles are referenced by Roman numerals with relevant Journal identified by season

and year (abbreviated in brackets).

I Comb design (Sp09)

The cylinder of this movement is fixed, giving a single track of pinned music. Tips of teeth could have been left plain, precluding a need to prepare and apply a fly-cutter. Further, since the cylinder will not be traversing several music tracks, teeth could be narrower and at centres much less than 2.9mm.

During initial tuning (VII) the comb (125 teeth) was found to have a natural frequency range of somewhat under two octaves (4D? to 6C) resulting from a root slot angle of 2° 57': an increased starting range should result from a larger angle.

II Milling teeth-tip and damper anvil slots (Su09)

III Milling teeth-root slot (Au09)

IV Slitting teeth (Wi09)

V Drilling damper wire holes (Sp10)

No comment on the above four articles

VI Hardening and tempering teeth (Wi10)

As described in the article, hardening and tempering of the first five segments of comb were carried out on an open-hearth fire, fuelled by smokeless coal and charcoal. The process was messy and it was difficult to achieve the requisite hardening temperature of 800°C. A sixth segment and some replacement teeth for an 18th Century musical box were hardened in a home-made muffle oven. Tempering was carried out in a bath of molten lead on an electrical hot plate.

A gas camping stove was to hand in case of a power cut during tempering. A six minute video on YouTube, "A Mini Muffle Oven", shows these processes. The video can be accessed

via a link with the Society's website (www.mbsgb.org.uk) or by calling up the author's YouTube account, "MrDoneBy".

The series article proposed an improved clamping jig: this was effective in these later operations.

VII Adding leads and initial tuning (Sp11)

The author's decision to make his comb tuning fully chromatic over five octaves, coupled with larger than necessary tooth centres (I), results in a sparsely pinned cylinder, especially towards its ends. This is akin to a piano key board where maximum activity is at its centre. The author does not regret his earlier decision as he will be able to pin most tunes on further cylinders. However, it might have been better to decide what tunes were intended for all cylinders to be built and to tune teeth accordingly. Thus, groups of several teeth, say up to eight, could be matched to allow for better mandolin and Sublime Harmonie effects.

VIII Adding dampers and fine tuning (Su11)

Earlier in the series it was proposed that Sublime Harmonie would be achieved by playing pairs of a given note with a 2 ½% or 5% frequency difference: in the event the author revised tuning to have tooth frequency of -20%, +10% or in tune, to produce larger beat frequencies. The resulting music was definitely improved by the change.

IX Forming a cylinder (Au11)

Investigating, developing and making cylinders from brass sheet was an interesting exercise and involved building a slip roll machine from steel

off-cuts. 'Soldering' seams set the cat amongst the pigeons: a novice is reminded to silver solder his seams! Time and grief can be saved by choosing cylinder size which can be met by brass tubing ex stock. Having committed himself to rolling from sheet, the author will look into adding a narrow, thin, brass backing strip inside his cylinder seams.

X Cylinder end caps, dividers and arbor (Wi11)

A change recommended here is to leave cylinder arbor overlong by 20mm at each end, only adjusting to leave 4mm beyond outer face of end caps after completion of grinding. The reason for this is explained in XII.

XI Simple division (Au12)

Building this device was interesting and informative, but a time-consuming exercise. Cylinder time base division can be effected using proprietary dividing heads or by a hand-turned, graduated disc at cylinder end. The author intends to use his lathe dividing head on further cylinders.

XII Dividing a cylinder for music (Wi12)

Cylinder changing is enabled by arbor and drive pins protruding from each end cap. These enter slots in arbor plates of the actual movement and the pinning machine (PM). As described in the article, a slight error whilst milling one arbor plate slot was corrected. Later, whilst fitting comb to bed plate (XX), a small degree of eccentricity of pin ends relative to cylinder arbor was detected. At one part of an air, music volume decreased slightly compared with that diametrically opposite. This was thought to be a residual error from the earlier correction. This first cylinder had been mounted in arbor plates of the PM for cementing and grinding of pins. The following modifications were carried out on PM arbor plates to achieve concentricity of pin end envelope and cylinder arbor.

The centre of the arbor plate in which the slot had been adjusted was milled out and a blank disc sweated-in. A hole was drilled and reamed through the blank and into the shaft of the arbor assembly, to accommodate the over-long cylinder arbor (X) on the lathe for cementing and grinding pins, after which it is cut back to finished length. A consequence of the above is that the cylinder needs to be fitted with a temporary arbor of correct length for drilling pin holes on the PM which has fixed arbor bearing brackets. It was only necessary to drill and ream the other arbor assembly of the PM to accept the temporary, over-long cylinder arbor.

If variation of volume persists after the above modifications, it will be necessary to check and, if necessary, correct arbor plate slots of the movement proper.

XIII Drilling and pinning a cylinder (Sp13)

A dividing head more robust than described in XI is needed for very short intervals between notes: small plastic gear wheels proved to be too elastic for accurately turning this heavy cylinder by small amounts.

XIV Cementing a pinned cylinder (Sp12)

A high power heat gun is essential for large cylinders.

Additional points for the footnote to the article, discussing the possibility of a spinning mass of cement being "...likely to burst the cylinder..." are as follows:-

1. The inherent shape of a cylinder is just that, cylindrical: it will oppose force tending to open it, just as the flat brass sheet resisted force applied whilst rolling the item.
2. Pins attach cylinder wall, both to end caps and inner dividers, thus supporting its cylindrical form.

XV Grinding a pinned cylinder (Su12)

No comment

XVI Fitting cylinder to bed plate (Su13)

A bed plate ex-10mm thick mild steel plate has resulted in a very heavy musical box. A thinner plate, perhaps down to 6mm, should be considered.

XVII Power gear train (Au13)

The chosen method of changing cylinders calls for arbor plates to rotate in synchronisation. Manual alignment for this operation would preclude the need for a transfer shaft and much of the gear train. Additionally, if a spring drive is discounted in favour of hand-winding (XXII), gearing could be further simplified, perhaps dispensing with a great wheel. However, some form of gear reduction would be necessary for acceptable hand-winding speed.

XVIII Governor, run-arrest and hand-wind units (Su10)

Elimination of a spring drive (XXII) means that governor and run-arrest units would not be needed.

XIX Power and control (Au10)

Manual power would allow simple control of cylinder rotation speed and start/stop functions. Design of control mechanisms for this movement has still to be completed if a spring drive is to be designed and fitted.

XX Fitting comb to bed plate and into the box (Wi13)

It was found that adjusting comb to cylinder and playing this first cylinder brought out deficiencies in fitting of leads and damper wires. Until optimal positioning was found, a few leads and a larger number of dampers needed repair. The author expects to encounter similar problems as extra teeth are brought into play by new cylinders and tunes. Thinner wood for box sides and lid would lessen overall weight.

XXI Looking back (Sp14)

You are reading this article of the series.

XXII Mainspring unit-on hold pending development

A novice should consider dispensing with this unit in favour of a hand-driven musical movement.

It will be some time before the author tackles this phase of his development: springs and brass tubing have been purchased. Now, in 2012, attention has turned to making new cylinders, improving interpretation and quality of music and, repairing a rusty 18th Century, 8-air movement.

Acknowledgements

Having reported this development in the third person as an observer, I now write in the first person to thank the many members of the Society who have guided and advised me since I became a member in 2006. Had I not written-in asking where one might buy combs for a musical box, I might never have bought a lathe, joined the Society or undertaken such a build. My thanks are due also to our Editors who have patiently transposed my offerings into print in the Journal over the last five years. I am writing this in December 2012.

Thank you all.

Don Busby.

Appendix - index to Articles

I Comb Design (Sp09)

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VIII Adding Dampers and Fine Tuning (Su11)

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X Cylinder End Caps, Dividers and Arbor (Wi11)

XI Simple Divisio (Au12)

XII Dividing a Cylinder for Music (Wi12)

XIII Drilling and Pinning a Cylinder (Sp13)

XIV Cementing a Pinned Cylinder (Sp12)

XV Grinding a Pinned Cylinder (Su12)

XVI Fitting Cylinder to Bed Plate (Su13)

XVII Power Gear Train (Au13)

XVIII Governor, Run-arrest and Hand-wind Units (Su10)

XIX Power and Control(Au10)

XX Fitting Comb to Bed Plate and into the Box (Wi13)

XXI Looking Back(Sp14)

XXII Mainspring Unit-on hold pending development



Michael MacDonald demonstrates how to turn a barrel organ. Kindly submitted by Kevin McElhone - thank you Michael and Kevin!

From the Archives of the Old Bailey

When the penalty for stealing a musical box could be death by hanging

Editorial Note – in those days the monetary units were:

l. – Pound

s. – Shilling (20 to the Pound)

d. – Penny (12 to the Shilling)

540. Theft from a Specified Place
– 17th April 1822.

JOHN FOSTER was indicted for stealing, on the 1st of April, one set of cruets and stands, value 10 s.; one musical box, value 5 l.; four spoons, value 10 s., and one pair of sugar-tongs, value 10 s., the goods of George Mott, in his dwelling-house.

JOHN ELTHAM. I am servant to Mr. George Mott of Essex-street, Strand. On Monday, the 1st of April, about ten minutes past nine o'clock, I went out of the house, leaving the door ajar; I was returning in five minutes, and saw the prisoner come from the door - he went down to the bottom of the street. I followed him; he had something wrapped up in a handkerchief; he ran up Milford-lane; I overtook him at the top of the lane, and saw the shape of a cruet under his handkerchief; I said,

"You have got my master's property."

He said, "I have nothing of yours," and then threw it at me, handkerchief and all - I collared him, but he got away. I picked up the things, and then followed him, crying Stop thief! he was taken in about two minutes by Ross's. The glass of the cruet was broken - I produce it, I do not know the value of it. They are my master's.

Cross-examined by MR. LAW. Q. Did you lose sight of him - A. In turning the corner. I am certain of him.

JOHN ROSS. I heard the cry of Stop thief! and took the prisoner, who was running along Little Essex-street; the last witness came up in about a minute, with the stand in his hand.

GUILTY. Aged 48.

Of stealing to the value of 39 s. only.

Confined Six Months.

First Middlesex Jury, before Mr. Justice Burrough.

1171. Theft from a Specified Place
11th September 1822

EDMUND MUSTOE was indicted for stealing, on the 22d of June, at St. Marylebone, one brooch, value 3 l.; one musical box, value 10 l.; one watch, value 20 l.; one watch chain, value 2 l.; one key, value 7 s., and three seals, value 3 l., the goods of Frederick Boyce, in his dwelling-house.

MESSRS. PLATT and LAW conducted the prosecution.

LIEUTENANT FREDERICK BOYCE. I have a house in Hay's-place; there is a stable to it, which is in the parish of St. Marylebone. I have a room over the stable, which has occasionally been occupied by myself and my servant. I keep my horse in the stable. I had let part of the house; but kept the stable in my own possession, and the room over it, and had a bed there, and slept there at times. I left town some time in June, intending to return, and use the room as usual. I returned the latter end of June or July - I had left Powell, my house-keeper, in care of the room, to sleep there or in the house, which she liked. I had a bureau in the room, in which

I left my gold watch and chain, and another gold chain separated from the watch, a gold and pearl brooch, a musical snuff-box, a silver snuff-box, a silver tea-pot, and considerable other property. When I came to town, I missed the articles stated in the indictment - I had seen them safe five or six days before I left town. I was absent a fortnight. The bureau was locked. In consequence of information, I apprehended the prisoner in Broad-street, on the 7th or 8th of July. I saw him searched. The constable shewed me two duplicates, which I returned him.

Cross-examined by MR. BRODRICK. Q. Are the stables immediately behind the house? - A. Yes, and connected with it, and in the same parish. The gold watch cost twenty-eight guineas.

ANNE POWELL. I was housekeeper to Mr. Boyce in June and July. He left town in June, and returned in July. The prisoner is a nephew of mine. While my master was absent, he came to the place, and slept in the room where the bureau was for above a week at different times. I do not recollect the last time he was there.

GEORGE GILLESPIE. I am a watchman. The prosecutor brought the prisoner to me in Broad-street, Golden-square, about a quarter past eleven o'clock, on the 7th of July. As we went to the watch-house, he said,

"My G - d, Sir, don't send me to the watch-house - I shall return you all your property to-morrow."

Mr. Boyce said, "Say nothing to convict yourself; I don't want to convict you."

ROBERT CHARLES CHAPMAN. I am constable of the night. I

searched the prisoner, and found three duplicates on him, and a key. In the course of the night, he said, he had stolen the watch, and pledged it, and sold the duplicate to a Mr. Turner. I found Turner in the morning by the prisoner's description, and I saw him deliver a gold watch, seal, and key to Suttie.

CHARLES VAUGHAN. I am servant to Mr. Dry, a pawnbroker, in St. Martin's-lane. On the 21st of June, the prisoner pawned a musical snuff-box, for 1 l. - I am certain of him. Next day he pawned a gold watch, with chain, seal, and key, for 14 l.; he said he brought them from Captain Boyce, 12, Edgware-road. Turner came to redeem the gold watch about a week after. On the 3d of July, a brooch was pawned for 12 s., by a young man, who said he came from Turner. (A duplicate found on the prisoner for a brooch, was here produced). This was what I gave the person - it is in my hand writing.

GEORGE TURNER. I gave Suttie a watch, chain, and seals. I had the duplicate from the prisoner at the Horse and Groom, public-house, Castle-street. He had asked me to lend him 3 l. on a duplicate of a watch, and I said I had no objection, and that I should redeem the watch, as the interest would be considerable, and hoped he would take it from me as soon as possible. I redeemed it at Dry's.

THOMAS SUTTIE. I produce the watch I received from Turner. I am assistant to Chapman.

GEORGE TURNER. This is the watch.

CHARLES VAUGHAN. They are the watch and seals which were pawned with me.

EDWARD CORBAN. I pawned this broach at Dry's. The prisoner sent me with it. I gave him the duplicate.

MR. BOYCE. The property is all

mine. The watch cost twenty-eight guineas, and is worth forty guineas with appendages.

Cross-examined. Q. Where did you leave the key of the bureau? - A. In a little box in the bureau drawer, which was locked, but it could be opened by taking off the bureau. The stable is connected with the premises by walls.

Three witnesses gave the prisoner an excellent character.

GUILTY - DEATH. Aged 20.

Strongly Recommended to Mercy, by the Prosecutor and Jury.

Second Middlesex Jury, before Mr. Justice Richardson.

1514. Simple Larceny - 16th September 1830

JOHN MUNTON was indicted for stealing, on the 7th of August, 1 musical-box, value 30s., the goods of Thomas Harris.

SARAH BARNES. I am servant to Mrs. Jane Harris; she lives at Clark's-place, Islington. On the 7th of August the prisoner came to the house, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, and said he wanted a tooth extracted - I asked him into the parlour, and went into the kitchen to tell Mrs. Harris; there was a musical-box in a case in the parlour window - I heard the case door open, and went up; the prisoner was then going out - he said, "What would it be to have the tooth drawn?" - I said I did not know, but Mrs. Harris would be there in a minute; he said he would go and ask his aunt - I took hold of his arm, but he got out and went away; Mrs. Harris came up and missed the box, and I ran after the prisoner, who was taken.

Cross-examined by MR. PHILLIPS. Q. When had you seen it? A. About a quarter of an hour before - Mrs. Harris is married, I believe; her husband is at sea

- I have not seen him at all; the prisoner had no box when he was stopped - I saw him stopped, and was almost close to him; no other person had been to have a tooth drawn that afternoon; I think no one had been there at all that day.

JAMES FRESHWATER. I am a butcher. I heard Stop thief! called - I went out, and saw the prisoner running; he had walked past me, and I saw something in his hand very much like this snuff-box - there came two more young men with him; he offered it them, and they refused it - I then heard Stop thief! cried, and the witness said, "That young man has got a snuff-box;" I said, "Are you sure it is him?" - she said, Yes; I ran, and a young man had taken him.

JOHN SEYMOUR. I was nearly opposite the house - I saw a crowd, and went and picked up a box, which I delivered to Mrs. Harris.

SARAH BARNES. I never saw the prisoner before; I could not be mistaken - I let no one else in but him; I saw the other two boys when I went out - they were rather taller than him.

JANE HARRIS. I am the wife of William Henry Harris. This box belongs to my brother-in-law, Thomas Harris - I saw it safe on the 7th of August; Barnes told me a boy wanted a tooth extracted - I did not see the prisoner till he was brought back, except just going off the step of the door; the other two boys were taller than him.

Cross-examined. Q. Is your brother-in-law here? A. No; he is in the country - I am sure it is his box.

JOHN HOPTON. I am a Policeman. I took the prisoner - he told me he had broken the box, and he would make it good if I would let him go - he pulled 5 s. out of his pocket, and asked if that would pay for it.

GUILTY. Aged 14. - Transported for Seven Years.

Restoration Matters!

14 - Removing the Beast from the Cage.

By Roy Evett

This series is designed to cover the wide range of issues that we encounter in our hobby and these may vary in terms of difficulty and skill level required. Anyone taking advice from these articles must first determine whether they have the necessary skills, experience and workshop equipment in order to carry out the work safely. Please consider your abilities before carrying out the work described here and if in doubt, pass the job to an expert.

At a meeting of the Teme Valley Winders in June last year, John Farmer presented a spring assembly from an upright, coin operated Polyphon. The spring was broken in four places and the question was how should we go about the difficult and very dangerous job of removing it safely from its cage?

After several suggestions, I explained a method shown to me by the late Arno van der Heijden. As I did have some experience of doing the job several times myself, I volunteered to take the spring home and remove the spring.

Each week, brother Dennis, friend Eric Hartley and I meet for a Music Box 'workshop' and inevitably the spring job was discussed. It has to be said that the procedure I normally use does have its dangers, particularly where there are one or more short pieces of 12 inches or so long to remove.

Now as the spring in question was broken in four places making it more difficult and dangerous to operate on, it was decided that an easier and safer method should be developed.

Whilst the following method is very controllable and has removed most of the danger, eye, hand and face protection should still be used.

THINGS CAN GO WRONG!

The key to our solution was the realisation that simply clamping the coils of the spring together would prevent the spring from unwinding. Furthermore, a relatively small amount of pressure is required to achieve the result. Most of us will have experienced springs that are very reluctant to release their power just because they are gummed up with old grease.

This is how our solution works:

Somehow we must support the pillars of the cage otherwise the power of the spring, which is very considerable even when broken, will splay them outwards when the end plate is removed. They are likely to cause damage to the brass drive gear and there is a possibility of the spring flying out with disastrous consequences.

Fit a good quality 'jubilee' clip around the pillars and close to the end plate. Tighten the clip and remove as much slack as possible by tapping it into a hexagonal shape as you do so. Fig 1.



Fig 1

Undo the securing nuts and carefully prise off the end plate. There is likely to be a small amount of pressure still on the pillars causing the plate to drag a little on the threads. With care this should not cause any damage. Fig 2.

As a 'belt and braces' precaution we passed two 'G' clamps through the spokes of the drive gear and clamped the spring coils at that point. Subsequent



Fig 2

tests of the procedure have shown that those clamps serve no useful purpose. The clamps appear in the pictures because the photographs were taken 'live' during the first removal operation. They are un-necessary and will not be discussed further.

Next remove the spring arbor. Fig 3.



Fig 3

Now is a good time to bolt the assembly loosely to the bench via the arbor bearing. This not only makes the procedure even safer but is also most convenient when wishing to rotate the assembly whilst working.

Fit three 'G' clamps across the coils of the spring. If there is a break in the outer coil it is advisable to use an extra clamp and use one each side of the break. The size of clamps to be used depends on the space available between the inner coils of the spring. In the case of this Polyphon spring it was possible to use quite large clamps. Fit the clamps around the spring, equally if possible. Positioning of the clamps will depend on where the breaks are. Fig 4.



Fig 4

The jubilee clip must now be carefully slackened.

In the case of this particular spring, there were two breaks on top of one another. Because the outermost break was only about three inches from the loop it was decided to remove this short piece before going any further. It was quite easy to pull this out with the aid of 'mole grips', Fig 5.



Fig 5

A small clamp was used to pull the broken end into position ready for removal of the rest of the spring.

The spring can now be lifted out of the gear recess with a pair of screwdrivers, carefully so as not to damage the teeth. It will not be tight and will lift out of the cage without any force being necessary. Fig 6.



Fig 6

DO NOT succumb to the temptation to pull the spring out by the 'G' clamps. The faces of the clamps do not follow the contour of the spring and therefore have a three point contact only and although it is very unlikely they will move, it is better not to take any risks. Hold and lift the spring itself. Fig 7 and 8.



Fig 7



Fig 8

Put it somewhere safe where there is no strain on the clamps. Laid flat on the bench in the same plane as it was in the cage is probably best. If the end of the spring can be clamped back into position, a jubilee clip, or even two, can be tightened around the spring. This is absolutely the easiest and best way of making the spring safe. Do not use cheap clips. A good clip will only cost two or three pounds and will easily cope with the pressure.

It is then safe to remove the clamps. Alternatively, the coils of the spring may be bound with wire before removing the cramps.

The method we used was to arc weld the edges of spring coils together before removing the cramps. That worked very well but of course not all home workshops have that facility. If this method is chosen, make sure the heat

from the weld penetrates deep enough to soften the spring steel around otherwise it will remain brittle and break away from the joint.

Never remove the clamps until the spring pressure is fully restrained by some other method.

Whichever method you use, make sure it is safe before passing it on for recycling. No doubt the scrap man is rather attached to his fingers and eyes and wouldn't want any nasty surprises.

Calling all organette owners:

I am marrying up hymn tunes available on organettes with words available on Magic Lantern slides, with a view to developing, possibly, some sort of entertainment combining the two.

I have already been asked to take a Celestina with some rolls of hymn tunes along to an event scheduled for June at a local church.

If there are any organette owners out there who would be willing to let me have the titles of any hymn tunes they have, for information purposes and/or who might one day be willing to participate in such an event, and/or lend their instrument for one, I would like to hear from you.

Thank you,
Alison Biden

Stray Notes

An occasional series originated by Luuk Goldhoorn.

42. Birmingham 1817 from Luuk Goldhoorn

Of course there is not a specific date on which snuff boxes with *sur plateau* movements were superseded by *cylinder* works. Nevertheless it is nice to show you two snuff boxes both stamped with a silver mark from Birmingham 1817; Figure 1 and 2.

The *sur plateau* work is of normal be it late construction, as it already has a fan,

The *cylinder* work is of an early date as it has its start-stop lever at the back. Quite an ingenious and expensive construction which soon was succeeded by a lever screwed on the regulator. (Figure 3)

At first sight one could think that the maker of this regulator already knew of this new construction seeing the screw hole visible at the regulator. But that is not true. It is the hole through which (on the underside of the bedplate) the regulator was fastened with a screw.



Figure 1 a *sur plateau* work in a silver snuff box, marked Birmingham 1817 (ex Wyatt collection)



Figure 2 (above) a *cylinder* work in a silver snuff box, marked Birmingham 1817

Figure 3 (above right) a common start/stop lever

43. Ste Croix from Luuk Goldhoorn

Although Sainte Croix was around 1850 a small town with about 3000 inhabitants, quite a lot of pictures of this town are known. In the Piguet book you'll find a number of them.

Here are two other pictures which look identical but close inspection unveils that the horses in the foreground have changed into cows.

The one with the horses is the older one. It was sculpted by J. Ulmbach and edited by L. Rohbock in 1840 and measured 58 x 92 mm.

The other one is far bigger, 116 x 171 mm and appeared in "La Suisse, Collection de vues pittoresques par H Runge", edited by G. G. Lange in the years 1863-1866

One wonders if in the sixties horses were too expensive to do the land-work



News from Other Societies

Mechanical Music, Vol 59, No.6, November/December, 2013
(See also www.mbsi.org)

Amongst this issue's regular reports and messages is one from the in-coming President, Julian Grace, thanking everyone who had just retired for all their work. This includes long-time Editor of the magazine, Rosanna Harris.

Luuk Goldhoorn delivers a short article entitled 'Anomalies' about snuff box anomalies which make dating a box difficult.

The main article in this edition, by Christian Eric and entitled 'Anton Olbrich's unique Viennese Musical Clock', is beautifully illustrated with informative photos. It contains one of the earliest known examples of a musical movement from the east of Europe, and to Christian's knowledge, it is the only Austrian fusee-powered sectional comb musical movement to exist. As with all Austrian movements, the bass notes are on the right.

There are then two articles by Larry Karp about LeCoultré and Lawater: one of these articles first appeared in Autumn 1991. A second box with these two names, and only two digits different in the serial numbers, has come to light. Despite the additional data, the identity of Lawater remains a mystery.

Wayne Finger then writes about preparing a Violano for the next generation. To achieve this he had his Mills Violano rebuilt by an expert and fitted with a MIDI system, via wireless receiver. He thinks that before the rebuild, 20% of the notes did not play. It allows for putting a play list on an iPad.

The Minutes of Trustees Meeting is

followed by a report on the MBSI convention in Chicago and a report on the Annual business meeting (AGM).

Snowbelt, Japanese, North West International, and Southern California chapters contribute reports, and then, in the regular series 'The Hunt' Jim Quashnock writes about a 'beat up old carriage clock' found on a 'Mantiques' stall at a gun show in Dallas. He was surprised on dismantling it to find it had a small cylinder movement in the base.

Delmont John Louis and Paul Lysaght are the subject of the obituaries.

The AMICA Bulletin, Vol 50, Number 5, Sept – Oct 2013
(see also www.amica.org)

The focus of this issue is very much the annual AMICA convention held in July commemorating the 50th anniversary of AMICA, hosted by the Founding Chapter in San Francisco. A large section of the magazine is taken up with the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting, annual chapter reports and several photographs of the event itself. There is a detailed account of how the table favours, in the form of miniature Seeburg G orchestrions, were laboriously made. In addition Stephen Kent Goodman writes about the National 8 Roll Changer Coin Piano, and Matthew Jaro writes about his first nickelodeon, a Nelson-Wiggen, which has undergone a huge restoration. There are reports from the Lady Liberty, Midwest, and Pacific Can-Am Chapters. An event at Coney Island offered Lady Liberty members the opportunity to promote mechanical music by playing various portable organs to the public. The regular feature 'In the News', carries an article about the Stearns Mansion, a home built in 1908 in Wyoming, Ohio, around a grand pipe organ,

which sadly no longer plays and is awaiting its fate to be determined by the house's new owners. At time of the article's publication, July 2013, the house had a price tag of just under \$2 million. It was not the only item of interest up for sale then, as the Steinway piano maker was also on the market in August 2013, according to another item. This is followed by a report about the Orchestria Palm Court restaurant in San Jose, California, owned and run by two AMICAns, with many of their instruments housed on the premises and played for the entertainment of diners. Philippe Rouillé, Ray Siou and Bob Hunt are the subjects of the obituaries in this issue.

The AMICA Bulletin, Vol 50, Number 6, Nov – Dec 2013
(see also www.amica.org)

Busy people, these AMICAns. This is a 72-page issue of a magazine that comes out six times a year! Skipping the 'parish notices', there is a preview of the 2014 Annual Convention to be held in Fresno – with an interesting introduction by way of a potted history of the town's growth in the 20th century. In his regular column, Matthew Jaro writes about research resources, with an impressive list, running into pages, of resources available for the study of mechanical music topics, and a comprehensive review of each resource. A random article about items of interest on the internet features one about Scott Joplin endorsing Apollo Player Piano rolls, the point being that one can come across things unexpectedly, and hitherto unknown. This is followed by an extraordinary article, several pages long, by Giorgio Farabegoli on Angelo Barbieri organs. It is very detailed, scholarly, fascinating and beautifully illustrated... It contains a section about Barbieri organs in Great Britain, where Barbieri was

hoping for success in supplying cinema organs. However, only one is known about, which was located in the Regal, Leamington Spa (now Apollo) and whose final fate is unknown, other than it was probably broken up and the parts redistributed.

John R Grant reaches the final instalment in his series, *The Footsie Chronicles*, in which he writes about his personal mission to find a musical box with 'Old Piano Roll Blues' on it. When he failed, he resorted to making his own – in the form of a piano, and with a 30 note movement bought from a UK website (the only one he could find with a chromatic scale.)

Shirley Nix reports on the 6th Sutter Creek organ rally, and includes a history of how these rallies originally came about. There are six chapter reports, the regular features 'AMICAns in the news' and 'In the News', and two book reviews: *Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous*, by Rollin Smith (which includes some in the UK) and *Chopin's Prophet: Life of Pianist Vladimir de Pachmann*, by Edward Blickstein and Gregor Benko.

The Key Frame (Issue KF3-13) (See also www.fops.org)

Continuing on from the last issue is the completion of John Page's report on the restoration of Keith Emmett's Gavioli. This covers all of eight pages and includes detailed photos of the inner workings of the organ, including the pipes, glockenspiel, keyframe, drums and action.

Musical Roots this time covers the life of James Lord Pierpont. No, this isn't a member of the British Nobility but the son of a Unitarian pastor from Boston Mass'. James had a talent for writing music and contributed songs to the popular minstrel troupes of the 1850's. His big hit came in 1857 with the song 'One Horse Open Sleigh', which at first did not attract much interest. It was renamed 'Jingle Bells' and has remained popular to this day.

The Key Frame (Issue KF4-13) (See also www.fops.org)

Every year the FOPS organises its own rally at Widnes and this is reported in this issue. Over 60,000 people visited the rally over the two days. Another event worth visiting is Peter Craig's open day at Stevenage, where his organs and excellent garden can be viewed. This has become an annual event for both organ and garden lovers alike.

Paul Kirrage's Oktoberfest in Woking is reported. Here you will see the best of classic German organs including a visiting organ from the continent, this time the magnificent Model 38 Ruth of the Vader family from Holland.

Musical Roots this time covers the life of John Hughes, from South Wales. He is best known as the composer of the Welsh Hymn 'Cwm Rhondda'.

As reported elsewhere, Boz Oram recently died unexpectedly and his funeral is reported here. After the service in a packed church it was back to the pub for a recital on Boz's 'Shaharazad', playing some wonderful music arranged by Boz himself. A fitting tribute to Boz's life and skills.

Vox Humana – June, 2013 (See also www.moos.org.uk)

This issue is dominated by articles by (the now late) Boz Oram, who writes further on his experiences of being an organ owner and the effect playing the organs in public can have – both on him and the audiences. As much a collection of 'human interest' stories as musings on organs, many of the anecdotes are particularly poignant, my favourite being the one about the Belgian nurse who ventured out to inform Boz that a patient who had been in a coma for some time had finally showed signs of reaction on hearing a particular piece of music he was playing. Boz also continues his account of the 'Flying Circus'

2012 MOOS trip to Belgium and the Netherlands. He is also the author of a short article on steam Calliopes. Elsewhere there is an appreciation of the composer Eric Coates, famous for writing *The Dam Busters March* (to the extent his other works are sadly overlooked), and Daphne Holt writes about building an organ 'from almost nothing!' This includes toothbrushes, a coconut, broom handles and soup ladles! Finally, Peter Craig writes about travelling in Japan in 2006, on a trip called 'Steam and Cherry Blossom'. This afforded him the opportunity to visit the Hall of Halls, Rokko, where at the end of a guided tour he was able to show how an organ should be played manually. He writes extensively about some of the instruments in this collection. Peter was also able to visit another collection of mechanical music, in Hiroshima, and had two further encounters with mechanical music whilst travelling around Japan.

Vox Humana – November 2013 (see also www.moos.org.uk)

Somewhat bizarrely, this issue has the details of the MOOS AGM which had been held in April, 2013, to coincide with Founders Day at the Thursford Collection, despite an intervening edition of the magazine. Peter Craig commences what promises to be a regular feature, writing about instruments in his own collection, with an item about his 'Venus de Milo,' a Theo. Mortier 84 key organ from the Mortier 'Orchestrion' range. This would appear to have been a much travelled instrument before it came to its current home. There is then an article about the Italian Society's (AMMI) SISAR project. SISAR is the Italian acronym for the Scanning, Listening and Recording Integrated system, which won two awards at the Maker Faire Rome 2013. Digitally decoding and preserving mechanical music media allows both their physical appearance and musical content to be preserved. A tribute to the late Boz Oram by James Dundon is followed by

a posthumously published article by Boz, about acquiring and renovating a 'new' vehicle for transporting his Hooghuys organ. Geoff Powells then writes about the St Albans Dance Organ Day last 23rd November and Alan Smith about a charity fundraising event he took his De Vondeling organ to. Finally, David Dingwall delivers the first instalment of an account of the 2013 annual MOOS trip, this time 'The Peculiar Pilgrimage.'

Player Piano Group – Bulletin 206, Autumn 2013

(See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk)

Social visits are the mainstay of this society and three interesting and varied meetings are reported in this issue. MBSGB member Steve Greatrex, in far off Plymouth, had standing room only at one point whilst demonstrating his Steinway Model B Duo-Art Grand which has been fully restored and plays from rolls plus the addition of the MIDI Virtual Roll system. Meetings in Chelmsford and Kettering are also reported, giving the wide-spread membership the opportunity to enjoy each other's instruments and socialise. Rowland Lee, a professional musician, contributes a very interesting article about Copyright. This starts in the very early days of true 'mechanical' copying of music, in 1910, and describes how the law has kept pace (or not!) with technical development, right up to the present day with the advent of the internet and YouTube. Further thoughts are promised in part two.

Four notable personalities are mourned, including Marian McPartland, the British born American jazz pianist, who was one of the last jazz pianists to record rolls for QRS. Also remembered is Mike Meddings, who had the rare gift of being able to hand arrange music rolls and was well known for his masterful arrangements of Jelly Roll Morton. His website, www.doctorjazz.co.uk lives on to remind us of his legacy.

North West Player Piano Association Journal – Christmas 2013

(See also www.nwppa.freemove.co.uk)

We have another bumper issue of 64 pages for this twice yearly publication from this small group of enthusiasts. The Pianista is described in detail. This was developed by a Parisian named Thibouville Lamy and at 1872, pre-dates the Pianola by many years. It operated from folded card books, like a fairground organ, and most probably suffered from poor expression capabilities, like the other totally mechanical devices being invented at the time.

This issue's famous musician is Rudolf Ganz, who died at the age of 95 in 1972, well after the formation of various player piano societies. In a professional career lasting 83 years he recorded over 180 reproducing rolls covering all major manufacturers; Welte in Germany and USA, Duo-Art, Hupfeld Triphonola, Ampico, Artech, Artrio and Recordo.

An amusing article describes the 'musician' Florence Foster Jenkins. An American heiress who had little sense of pitch or rhythm, she was wealthy enough to realise her ambitions to perform in Carnegie Hall and have herself recorded for posterity. Her recordings are still available today on YouTube and CD, but as you can imagine, are an acquired taste!

Also included are reports of the many home visits, contemporary reprints, adverts, etc, plus an analysis of the relative costs of a reproducing piano and commonly bought items of the period. In 1925 you could have bought three Austin seven cars for the price of a Steinway Duo-Art upright.

Organ Grinders News, No. 86, Autumn 2013

(See also www.boga.co.uk)

The annual summer gathering is reported in detail with photos of most of the organ grinders present. This event was held at The National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port. Also included is a report of the 21st Banbury Street Organ Festival which is always run alongside the Town Crier's Competition. Elsewhere is included a photo of Bob and Sylvia Ducat-Brown shown playing their organ in Welwyn Garden City, collecting for the Parkinson's Disease Society.

Non-English journals

Het Pierement – October 2013

(See also www.draaiorgel.org)

An article entitled 'The White Ruth reborn' describes the restoration of this organ by Martin Conrads. The next item explains how a collection of slides was obtained by the KVD which offers images from the 1960's of some of the organs to be seen on the streets of Amsterdam fifty years ago. This is followed by an update of the alterations at the Speelklok Museum, where there is a new cafeteria, new shop and two new rooms of exhibits. Some exhibits are now interactive and hands on. The composer B A Verhallen is the subject of another feature, and Marten van der Vlugt delivers the second part of his article on Symphonia music rolls. There is a report about the major promotion of street organs in the newspapers last summer. 'De Vierkolommen' (Four Columns) a 67 note organ built by Carl Frei in the 1920's is the subject of the next item. Several pages are dedicated to a fascinating article about 'The Greek Water Organ.' Hendrik Strengers then reviews a CD of early music played by mechanical instruments produced by Dr Helmut Kowar in Austria. Once again Philippe Rouillé is the subject of the obituary, a testament to just how big a figure in the international field of mechanical music he was. Other features in this issue are the regular 'From the rediscovered archives' and 'Brief news.'

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes – 4th Quarter, 2013 Year

(See also www.aaimm.org)

This edition opens with two lengthy obituaries, one to Philippe Rouillé and the other to Michel Gollet, followed by an account of the Society's Spring visit to Strasbourg. Written by Jean-Marc Lebout, it opens with some fascinating data concerning the present-day organ industry in France, including information about a unique apprentice scheme. According to one master builder who has been involved in this work all his life, ten years work is required before one can call oneself an experienced builder. Jean-Marc describes the manufacture of organ pipes as demonstrated and explained by the group's host, Michael Walther. Strasbourg's Cathedral provided interest in the form of the organ, and the famous astronomical clock, whilst the following day saw the group visit Waldkirch in Germany's Black Forest, where they went to organ builders, Jäger & Brommer, and the Elztalmuseum. Gerard Decoret writes briefly about an electrically operated Piano Orchestron, made by Maison Veuve Amelotti in Nice. The German town of Rudesheim, and in particular Siegfried's Mechanisches Musikabinett, is the focus of the next article, followed by an account of the 2nd International Festival of Kataryniarz, in Plock, Poland. This is followed by a round-up of several festivals throughout France in 2013. A special event, the 4th Biennale des Musiques Mecaniques des Gets afforded the elaborate celebrations accompanying the opening of the extension to the Les Gets museum and new Limonaire square. The Museum enjoyed considerable support from a number of local, regional and national authorities, and even the European Union. Jean-Marc Lebout takes up his pen again for a lively account of the MBSI convention in Chicago in August 2013, and the wonders to be seen there. Seven pages are devoted to the Fairground Follies Museum in Sydney, Australia, and there is the regular feature about items of interest

on the Internet.

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument (Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente), No 117 August 2013

(See also www.musica-mechanica.de)

If ever there were needed an incentive to learn German, opening this magazine must be one: 59 pages of densely packed, lengthy and detailed text in which to immerse oneself, an Aladdin's cave of information on mechanical music. Unfortunately, this reviewer knows literally only the odd key word or two, and can but drool over the tantalising contents. These consist of: an article by Ralf Smolne about the restoration of an experimental piece thought to originate from the workshop of Ignaz Bruder Söhne in about 1860 and now in the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch; an article which first appeared in the Italian magazine about Angelo Barbieri, here reprinted with significant additional material; a piece by Luuk Goldhoorn about 'A mysterious suitcase' (it contains a cylinder musical movement); four pages about the organ industry of Waldkirch; an impressive full page, small type, list of museums and private collections in Germany, followed by a similar list for other European countries; a report of the German Society's trip to Fürth, hosted by Ernst and Inge Bundle; the 'Happy Jazz Band' in Seewen Museum which plays 'at the touch of a button; almost ten pages of reviews of other societies' magazines and nine of advertisements!

Newsletter from Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde, No 116 April 2013

(See also www.sfm.ch)

'Zauberklang der Musikdosen' is the title of an extensive description of an exhibition held at the Ortsmuseum Meilen early last year. The word 'Zauberklang' might sound a bit harsh to an Anglophone, but it translates as 'magic sound' and is most apt

in this context. With the detailed descriptions by Raphael Lüthi and Paul Fricker, and colour photographs supplied by Andre Ginesta, it is only the sound that the reader lacks in order to fully experience this exhibition. A seven page article tells how Vreni Hiltebrand built her own organ, first going on a course to learn how (and keeping down the costs by living in a camper van parked on the grounds where the course was held). Highly motivated, she resumed the construction even after undergoing surgery for a serious illness. There is a short report on the Dijon organ festival. A tribute to Etienne Blyelle is delivered by Philippe Rouillé – somewhat poignant now that Philippe is also deceased. In anticipation of the next Waldkirch organ festival, Raphael Lüthi writes about a past weekend event held in this German capital of organ building.

Newsletter from Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde, No 117 August 2013

(See also www.sfm.ch)

After an extended editorial column which appears to incorporate a report on an organ gathering, the first main article of this edition is a feature on British pianist, Rex Lawson. (The dramatic portrait photograph accompanying it is reminiscent of a Dutch 'Old Master'! He looks very venerable.) Edi Niederberger writes about a surprise he had when restoring a barrel organ. This is followed by an account of the opening ceremony of the Fuchs organ builder workshop. Andre Ginesta then describes how he found the 'Taj Mahal' in Craig Robson's collection in Australia. Finally, an article about how the Wurlitzer Showroom Trailer returned to its German homeland.

Nieuwsbrief from MechaMusica (Belgian Society), October 2013

(See also www.mechamusica.be)

This opens with a report about the summer in Dendermonde, where fifteen small street organs played in

the flea market in the picturesque little market square. Geraardsbergen was the location of another organ gathering, sparsely written about but beautifully photographed. Twenty years ago Antwerp was the European city of Culture, as the next article reminds us. The Flanders organ-building industry was featured at an event in March of that year, commemorating the work of Mortier, Hooghuys, Decap, Verbeeck, Bursens... Twelve were represented, by instruments loaned by owners/hirers, including Arthur Prinsen, who was instrumental in putting the event together. The entertainment of the public by organs would appear to be a theme of this magazine with two more events reported. A more sombre event took place on 9th November 2013, reported here, when representatives of the Belgian Society and the British Mechanical Organ Owners Society (MOOS) held a service of rededication at the grave of Theophile Mortier.

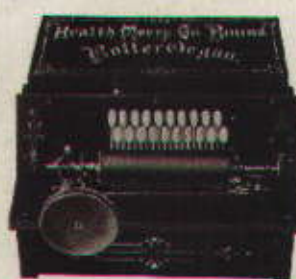
Pages from a catalogue of the Health Merry-Go-Round Company, found by Kevin McElhone, who has kindly shared some images from it.

Great exercise for kids! Like all good merry-go-rounds, it has an organ too - a Gem Roller Organette belt-driven from one of the wheels on the machine. It was available in four, six or twelve seat versions.



THE above picture is a story without words and gives you in a nutshell an idea of the immense amount of fun, pleasure and healthful exercise that children get from our Health Merry-Go-Round.

Read what we have to tell you about it in this book, and what others have written us. Then realise that you may bring the same joy to your little ones that others have brought to theirs. Remember, too, that our Merry-Go-Round is not a toy—that it is a source of continued delight and so strongly built that it lasts for years.



The Organ

THE ORGAN, which is one of the enjoyable features of the Merry-Go-Round, is a full grown instrument. It is nearly two feet long, by a foot high, has a good strong bellows and is an instrument that can be heard. It is very durably built. Of course it should not be left out of doors in rainy weather, because organs are put together with more or less glue, particularly the bellows parts. However, if ordinary care is observed, the organ is one that will last for a very long time. The music rolls are durable and will be found very satisfactory.

A belt is attached to one of the wheels of the Health Merry-Go-Round and the other end fastened around a small wheel which operates the organ. Thus the faster the Merry-Go-Round the more spirited the music.

The Awning

MANY of our customers have asked us for a canopy or awning, to be used on the Health Merry-Go-Round in lawns having little shade, to protect not only from the sun, but from the elements as well. To meet this demand, we have constructed a very attractive and serviceable canopy made of heavy striped cotton duck, supported by a frame of iron and wood that can be easily attached and detached. The additional cost of this canopy is small and when you consider the size, (virtually twelve feet square), it is sold at a low price. If you want an awning or canopy, be sure to say so when ordering, as it is only sent when specially ordered.

Our Guaranty

WE GUARANTEE the Health Merry-Go-Round to be free from every defect of construction and in case any parts are found defective, will replace them free of charge, and also to take it back and refund your money if at the end of three days' trial you or your children decide you do not want it. We have made this offer to every purchaser and have never had one returned. Read what people who have bought them say.

Money Making Proposition

As a money making proposition this twelve-seated Health Merry-Go-Round is better, and more of a novelty than the old, much worked ferris wheel, rattle-dazzle or other old style amusement devices and is liked to overflowing while the other devices are neglected. Novelty and the fact that each child helps to propel it rather than remain stationary is what makes this more popular than the regular Merry-Go-Round.

If run for profit at five cents a ride, this machine pays sixty cents each five minutes.

If placed in a public city playground it gives healthful enjoyment to twelve children at one time and is always ready to go.

It is exactly like the regular four-seated Health Merry-Go-Round, only of course heavier, stronger and much larger. If you live in a town with public playground, please show this to the Park Commissioner and ask him to write us. You will be doing a good act.

The "Teddy" Special—With Canopy

Our "Teddy" Special Twelve-Seated Health Merry-Go-Round—Without Canopy

THIS twelve seated Health Merry-Go-Round is made for Parks and Public Play Grounds, and the attention of the Park Commissioners, Park Owners and Municipal Officers is called to it (particularly).

There is nothing on the market that compares with it.

It is built for rough use, of the best and strongest of material—fourteen feet across—one or two children can run it alone or twelve ride and all work if desired. It is in a class by itself. The children furnish the motive power and the only expense in operating is a little oil on the bearings.

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Letters to the Editor

From Arthur Cunliffe

Dear Editor,

I am wondering if anyone can offer help and advice on the tricky subject of tuning a string instrument when particular difficulties arise. I do not have a wealth of experience in tuning matters but try always to move forward a step at a time trying not to take any backward steps!

The instrument that is causing me problems is a 48 note Racca Piano Melodico. Some of the wrest pins move easily and it is easy to raise or lower pitch using a correct tuning lever. Some wrest pins however, seem to be very stiff and "jump" no matter how much care is taken using the tuning lever. As a result the pitch is raised or lowered in steps of many cents with finding the correct pitch becoming more or less impossible.

I have always understood that when tuning a string it is better to raise the pitch to a cent or two above the correct note and then lower the note to where it should be. I don't know how to cure the problem of a sticking wrest pin and do not wish to make any silly mistakes. Can anyone advise me please?

From: Don Busby

Dear Editors,

Since joining our Society in 2006, I have attended local meetings of the Essex Group.

It has been a pleasure to be joined at these by members from further afield whom I might not otherwise have met, as personal matters and, more recently, minor health problems prevent me from wandering far from home.

I was pleased when the possibility of having a postal vote in the annual election of Committee members was on the cards for the 2013 AGM. This did not materialise for reasons which I still do not fully understand. Some months ago I supported a call for an EGM to ensure that a postal voting system could be established in time for elections at the 2014 AGM. There seems to be no action on the EGM front, with postal voting only being probable in 2015 or later.

Why is there such a delay in this matter, when the Committee of 2013 were on the brink of giving members this facility?

See the separate insert sheet and have your say.

From: David Worrall

Dear Editors,

Recently, a 4 Air Overture style Musical Box made by Bremond, Serial No 13473, has been added to the Cylinder Musical Box Register; it is pinned with arrangements of 2 Overtures by Rossini (William Tell & Semiramis); the 3rd, "Andante", Movement of Beethoven's 5th

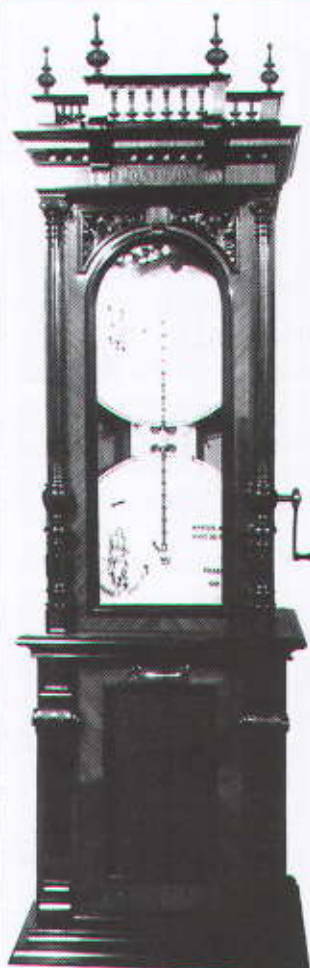
Symphony and "Invitation to the Waltz" by Weber.

More interestingly, however, there is an entry on the Register for the next musical box produced by Bremond, **Serial No 13474**; it has been there for many years, unfortunately without any details whatsoever as to its type or its programme of music.

Should any reader either own musical box Serial No. 13474, or be aware of where it is, it would be appreciated if the missing details were to be provided: Gamme No, cylinder length and diameter, number of teeth on the comb(s) and the number and titles of the airs played; this information could then be used to complete the entry on the Register.

It is emphasised that this request is made out of historical and research interests only; replies may go to the Editors who will handle it in the strictest confidence and forward only the above information; the identity of the provider and location of the box itself will neither be recorded on the Register nor retained or disclosed by any other means.

The Editors are always pleased to receive responses to any points made in members' letters and will pass them on, either acknowledged or anonymously, as directed
- Ed



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Monopol String-playing Disc Musical Box

In his book, *The Disc Musical Box*, Kevin McElhone references a Monopol Harp on page 49: "In 1894 the company showed the Rakoczy, an Upright model standing 6 ft 2 in (188cm) high and playing on strings. However, no evidence has been found to-date that these instruments were put into production."

An example of this instrument has surfaced here in the United States. However, there are no discs with it. The owner would like to hear it play and has asked me to try and find some discs.

Can anyone provide information about this instrument, including original discs?

Bill Wineburgh
Succasunna, NJ
USA
wwineburgh@aol.com

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Ludophone 24 note, keyed organ kit. Part built. No parts missing, with some book music and instructions. (Tamworth area) Contact Keith Pratt on email: keithpratt0@netscape.net. Tel: 02392 378416

73-Note Rolls for Hupfeld Phonola. Approximately 150 available - tune list by request. Please contact the Editors - see Officers Panel. Can be shipped anywhere at buyer's expense.

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

Michael Macdonald, Tel: 0141 637 1014

Instruments: Coelophone, Chordephon, double-reed Ariel organette, Polyphon 19 5/8" (50 cm) coin-op, Thuringia Konzertina, Discs for Polyphon 17" (45cm) with bells, Olympia 15 3/4", Gloria 8" with bells, Stella 25", Fortuna 26", for myself and other members. Kevin_Mcelhone@btinternet.com 01536 726759. Note underscore between names.

I am looking for a **Thuringia** self-playing concertina (Konzertina), modern MIDI version of the Tanzbaer. Any model considered. Steve Greatrex, Tel: 01752 767936 email spg1@hotmail.co.uk

Ariosa discs (annular rings) any titles and in playing condition. Contact A Cunliffe, Email: adcunliffe@btinternet.com

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Deadline dates for Display Advertising Copy

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1st October; 1st February

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

Posting of magazine:

27th February; 27th April;

7th August; 7th November

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laurencefisher444@yahoo.com

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Viennese Musical Picture Clock, c. 1850s

With grand sonnerie movement. Impressive exhibition piece.
(€ 3,000 – 5,000 / US\$ 4,000 – 7,000)



Folding-Top 'Emerald' Polyphon Nr. 49c with Bells, c. 1900

In just perfect condition.
(€ 20,000 – 30,000 / US\$ 27,000 – 40,000)



Early Parisian Silver-Gilt Musical Box with Neoclassical Micro-Mosaic Ltd, c. 1840s

With rare Parisian guarantee stamp.
(€ 18,000 – 22,000 / US\$ 24,000 – 30,000)



Contemporary Enamelled Bronze Singing Bird Box, stamped 'EB'

(€ 2,000 – 3,500 / US\$ 2,700 – 4,500)



Musical Box with Dancing Dolls by Langdorf, 1890

Audio-visual late 19th Century parlour entertainment.
(€ 2,000 – 3,000 / US\$ 2,700 – 4,000)



Rare 'Pièce à Oiseaux' Musical Box by Ami Rivenc, c. 1870

With 16-note organ for birdsong, automaton bird in glazed 'bower'. Wonderful operatic repertoire!
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Early Cylinder Musical Box, c. 1820(?)

Four airs on chevron-shaped comb. Later case.
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Magicienne Musical Automaton by Roulet et Decamps, c. 1885

With stamped Jumeau bisque portrait head ('10').
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Paper-Roll-Operated Musical Box by 'Arno Co.', Boston, c. 1900

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Narghile Smoker Musical Automaton in Arabian Dress by Leopold Lambert, c. 1920s

Excellent working condition.
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Early Signed Fusee Cylinder Musical Box by Ducommun-Glrod, in Inlaid Ecrtoire, c. 1820

Important historical document for the development of the Swiss musical box.
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Contemporary Automaton by Michel Bertrand: 'Dresseur des Chien'

After an original Vichy design.
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...and many more!

For more information and large colour photographs of some more of the upcoming "Highlights" please visit our website at: www.Breker.com / New Highlights and youtube.com at Auction Team Breker starting mid April 2014

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Coin-activated Triple Singing Bird Automaton by Reuge, c. 1940s

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Console Disk Musical Box 'Mira', c. 1900

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