

The Music Box

An International Journal of Mechanical Music

PAT. COLLINS

PARIS CH. MARENGHI & C^o PARIS

In this issue

How to photograph instruments Part 2

List our Fairground Organs before it's too late

François Nicole and his place in history

*Anomalies
Society news*

Musical pottery

Pack up your troubles in your old kitbag

The Journal of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain Price £6

VINCENT FREEMAN ANTIQUES

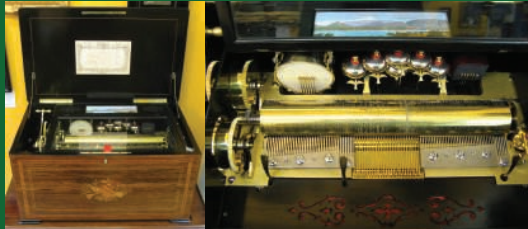
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Full Orchestral with Pipe & Reed Organ by Samuel Troll, c. 1875



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c. 1898

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Published on behalf of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain by the Short Publishing Company Ltd, and printed by Flo-Print Colour Ltd www.floprint.co.uk

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"Because of their unique characteristics, and François Nicole's indisputable role in the development of cartel boxes..."

Roy Ison

P50



"The controversial export of organs from Britain has led to questions being asked as to why authorities on fairground organs in Britain were not consulted when they became the subject of an export licence."

David
Dingwall

P47



In the case of jugs and tankards there are two main types. The first are transfer-decorated with a picture and text often telling the story of some well-known song or nursery rhyme. The second is more elaborate with applied relief modelling, frequently adding the text of some well-known song on the other side.

Arthur
Cunliffe

P66



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Editorial

Your reactions to the changes in design in my first edition of *The Music Box* have, I am pleased to say, been broadly favourable. People appreciate the additional space introduced into the magazine. Giving the content some 'room to breathe' makes it a more restful read than having every square inch of every page filled with text.

I have started to increase the size of the pictures, which is popular because members like to look into the works of the instruments as well as standing back to get an overall view. I will continue to further increase their size as I become more familiar with the kind of material you send me. But I do strongly encourage you, the contributors, to find and take better quality pictures, because these I can enlarge to good effect. If the focus and exposure are not so good then I cannot enlarge them.

I have reduced the font size by half a point from the last edition, so we now get more words to the page than before. Concentrating the feature articles at the front of the magazine whilst positioning those on the Society's business in the second part has been given general support, and more people have said they like this than the other way round.

It has been brought to my attention that your magazine is correctly titled 'The Music Box'. So I need to correct the running title at the foot of every page. The brand logo of the magazine does not appear to be a commercially available font, or at least one I can find, and I think it must be a piece of original artwork. Therefore I am in the process of finding a graphic designer who can draw for me a letter 'The' which matches the rest of the name. At the same time I will ask them to do me a matching 'The' for the title on the front page. This is work in progress and I expect to have this for the next edition.

Please write and send me articles for publication. I enjoy reading and editing them.

Richard Mendelsohn

Please submit all material to the Editor for publication in the form of Word documents, JPEGs or PDF files, at richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com

The Editor welcomes articles, letters and other contributions for publication in the Journal which relate to the study and appreciation of musical boxes and other mechanical musical instruments. The Editor reserves the right to amend or refuse any submissions. Any contribution is accepted for publication on the understanding that the author is solely responsible for the correctness of the facts stated therein, and also for any opinions expressed within. Its publication in the Journal does not necessarily imply that the Society, its officers or the Editor agree with those opinions. The Society, its officers and the Editor do not accept, and hereby disclaim any liability for the consequences of any inaccuracies, errors or omissions in contributions which are published in the Journal. The Music Box is published by the MBSGB quarterly. Deadlines for 2015 for copy are: 1 July, 1 October and 1 February 2016. No article or feature can be reproduced without the written consent of the Editor.

Britain's Historic Fairground Organs Need Listing

by David Dingwall

According to the Constitution of the MBSGB, amongst its aims and objects are to 'promote interest in musical boxes and all other forms of mechanical music ... and promote best practice in repair and conservation ...' For those of our members who are not also members of one or other of the various organ enthusiast organisations, David Dingwall here makes the case for a nationally recognised official register of historic fairground organs.



David Dingwall

We are all familiar with organisations such as the National Trust, English Heritage and various civic trusts who list our important buildings, and the need for export licences for significant items of cultural and historic interest. Despite the existence of the National Fairground Archive, and the Fair Organ Preservation Society, perhaps it is time for all of us interested in mechanical music to lobby parliament to bring in the listing of historic fairground organs, and introduce tighter regulation governing their conservation and export.

Last year news spread within the mechanical organ movement that two of Britain's most famous historic fairground organs were being offered for sale on the open market. These were *Neil Corner's 98 key Gavioli* (ex White's and cared for by the Show Organ Society since 1954) and *Bill Hunt's 98 key Chiappa Wonderland* (ex Pat Collins), which has been owned by the Hunt family for over 50 years. *White's Gavioli* spent almost half a century touring events by the very dedicated Show Organ Society, and the Hunt family celebrated 50 years of exhibiting *Wonderland* in 2014.

The news of these two organs being offered for sale was met with shock and sadness amongst many organ enthusiasts in Britain. Raising the profile of fair organ preservation in Britain during the past half century, they remain two of Britain's most important and highly regarded fairground organs. *White's* is, arguably, the most distinguished Gavioli organ surviving in the world. It is the largest of the eight Gaviolis which were supplied in 1908-9 specifically to the British market. The *Wonderland* organ on the other hand, is significant for being the largest organ completely constructed by Chiappa Ltd. This is a traditional firm of mechanical organ builders and

repairers, based in London, whose founder set up the business in the early days of the industry after training in Italy and Paris. It continues to trade today.

Over the years, a number of mechanical organs and fairground rides with a rich history of working on fairgrounds in Britain have been exported to other countries. In the last decade Britain lost two fairground organs to American collectors. The best-known organ to leave these shores was the 110 key Gavioli belonging to the Jonas family of Cornwall (ex Fred Gray of Hampstead, North London), which was sold in 2006. A year later another Gavioli organ, known to many as the *Cleethorpes Gavioli*, having spent more than 50 years residing in the town, left Britain.

So why should we care about the future of our fairground organ heritage? Fairground organs remain extremely vulnerable in the 21st century, and have lagged behind other campaigns protecting Britain's heritage from export, alteration or demolition. At the time our present monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, came to the throne in 1952, the biggest threats to our fairground organs were poor storage conditions and the fact that many showmen saw them as outdated technology that had little or no cultural value which were subsequently burned and destroyed.

There are, however, many people who helped to save fairground organs from either destruction or being sold overseas, the majority of whom were founder members of the Fair Organ Preservation Society, established in 1958, at a time when many enthusiasts were concerned about the future of British fairground organs. We owe it to these pioneers to think about whether there are sufficient safeguards in place for their future.



The Wonderland organ constructed by Chiappa Ltd in London in 1908-9

As touched on above, another aspect of a listing of important historic organs would be to prevent their destruction or radical alteration through unsympathetic restoration or rebuilding. This is important as they record the skills and styles of the builders and music arrangers of the time, in some cases where there is no surviving written record of either. As such, they are of invaluable interest to the serious scholar, not merely an object of pleasure for the spectator.

So how do neighbouring countries in Europe compare with the issues of protecting their mechanical organ heritage? Well, it has to be said there is a lot that can be learnt. In the Netherlands, the mechanical organ is a recognised element of Dutch culture. The KDV Society (Circle of Organ Friends, established in 1954) was established to promote interest and protect mechanical organs from destruction and prevent the disappearance of street organs from

the towns and cities of the Netherlands at a similar time to the decline of fairground organs in Britain. The Society promoted organ festivals in the Netherlands, broadening interest in the instruments. Organs were bought for preservation by enthusiasts and groups wishing to keep their heritage alive, an interest which is still thriving today. There have been two major milestones in the preservation of organs in the Netherlands. A National Mechanical Music Collection was established in the city of Utrecht in 1958, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The second was in 1992 when the Dutch government listed five mechanical organs with protected status. These instruments were identified as the most historically important instruments and cannot be permanently exported, or have inappropriate or irreversible changes made to their disposition, scale or appearance. This initial list of five organs has since increased to nine. Organs have

been recognised as such a significant element of Dutch culture that there is a government Minister of Organ Affairs.

In Belgium the government purchased the private collection of mechanical organs belonging to Mr Jef Ghysels in 2007 with the aim of establishing their own national collection. This is a project which now looks set to become reality by the end of the decade. Even in France, a country which has been slow to promote its mechanical organ heritage, they refused an export licence for their last chromatic 105 key Gavioli organ, which a foreign collector tried to buy in 2005.

The controversial export of organs from Britain has led to questions being asked as to why authorities on fairground organs in Britain were not consulted when they became the subject of an export licence. Two reasons may be that organ aficionados constitute a very small, specialist movement, and

unlike the National Trust or English Heritage, without the advantages of tens or hundreds of thousands of adherents. Secondly, the items themselves have so far failed to receive national recognition of their more serious importance.

The relevant organisations, including MBSGB, need to work together and create a strong and powerful united voice and call for enforceable measures for the greater protection of these vulnerable yet important historic treasures. Their fate is in our hands.

David Dingwall, aged 26, has been a mechanical organ enthusiast since the age of four. He has a particular interest in the history of mechanical organs and the music arrangers of the past. He is a member of the Fair Organ Preservation Society, Mechanical Organ Owners Society and the KDV as well as a new recruit to the MBSGB, and has written a number of articles on the subject.

Stray Note - The Dutch Alphabet by Niko Wiegman

The Dutch alphabet counts, as does the English one, 26 letters, but the 'y' is not present. In Dutch there is an 'ij', and the 'y' is used in foreign words. In Fig 1 is a standard Polyphon clock, but looking at

the detail, the name is not spelled with a 'y' but with a Dutch 'ij' (Fig 2). As the case was a standard model we may assume that this particular model came from Holland.



Fig 1



Fig 2

François Nicole and his Place in History

The following article is a compilation of a number of contributions from participants at the gathering described in this article. The Editor is especially grateful to Roy Ison and Jean-Marc Lebout, with many thanks to the latter for the excellent photographs taken of the musical boxes.

Part I – Study Group, Gathering in August 2014 in Germany.

With many thanks to Walter Behrendt and his wife for their wonderful hospitality for the duration of the two-day meeting.

At time of writing there are 32 known musical cartels extant in the world, attributable to François Nicole. On the one hand, such a small number might render this maker of narrow interest. On the other, their rarity might increase the level of interest. Because of their unique characteristics, and François Nicole's indisputable role in the development of cartel boxes, space is made here not only to report on a meeting of François Nicole owners in August 2014, but also to comment on some of the boxes, which were studied and discussed at that meeting, and to expand on François Nicole's place in history.

Predictably, given both the exclusivity of ownership and the rarity of these instruments, many of the owners of François Nicole boxes are known to each other. Amongst them are long-time MBSGB member Roy Ison, and the German collector Walter Behrendt, both of

them internationally well-known in the world of mechanical music. Both have been collecting for a long time, and those of us who have been privileged to visit either of them know that Roy has some very fine pieces, and Walter's collection is outstanding. It contains a superb range of both musical boxes and organs, all of which have been professionally restored to a very high standard. Both collections bear testimony to the intense earnestness of these collectors' respective interests.

It is not surprising then, to learn that Walter was keen to bring together a collection of François Nicole boxes and their owners for their mutual enjoyment and exchange of ideas. The plan was mooted a number of years ago. Eventually he and Roy Ison decided to go ahead and arrange a gathering to take place at Walter's home in Germany at the end of August 2014, with Walter himself issuing the invitations.

The informal 2-day occasion was a truly international affair, demonstrating the international dimension of the interest, and the co-operation between collectors from a number of different countries. Participants were: from Belgium Jean-Marc Lebout and Johan Goyvaerts; from the Netherlands Niko Wiegman and Luuk Goldhoorn; from Switzerland Raphael Lüthi; from Germany Germar Schrimpf, Robert Ferstl and host Walter Behrendt, and from UK Roy Ison, Alan Godier and Mark Singleton. A photograph of the group appeared on the inside front cover of last Winter's edition of *The Music Box* (Vol 26 No 8)

Everyone attending had the opportunity to look at, listen to and discuss several superb boxes, constituting 15 of the known François Nicole movements extant. The range of movements included overture boxes, clock base movements and also several combined overture and operatic airs boxes.

Some of the earliest cartel boxes are attributable to François Nicole. His early musical movements are admired for the exceptional quality of their music. The cylinders are densely pinned, with exquisite workmanship, and with hand-fashioned combs.

Fourteen out of the 15 displayed the guide channels which are unique to him. Three of the movements were originally from clock bases, although one has now been rehoused. Two of the 15 were not in their original cases, and there was no indication as to how they had originally been presented.

Some participants had their own observations about the unique characteristics which appear to be commonly presented by his boxes, and it has been suggested that further study, perhaps with a more formal approach with follow-up documentation, would be of interest.

The number of tunes played ranged from 2 or 4, occasionally 6, but with a variation in the number of revolutions for obtaining them. Thus a 4-air box might play the tunes on 4 revolutions, or on 3, with the last 2 tunes consigned to one revolution of the cylinder. Certain tunes seem to be particularly popular: *The Italian*

Girl in Algiers, Der Freischutz and *The Barber of Seville*. All the movements had an instant stop; the hole through which the stop lever passed was round in 2 examples, and rectangular in the others. The round form is the most commonly found amongst other makes.

Attentive listening to the music generated surprise amongst the participants at the great variation in resonance or tone from one movement to another. One participant expressed his opinion as 'Once you've lived with a François Nicole box, there is nowhere else

to go – it is the Holy Grail. The venture was deemed a great success and extremely interesting by all participants, with the conclusion that François Nicole can truly be considered one of the 'fathers' of musical box development, and worthy of further study.

Part 2 - Development of Boxes by François Nicole by Roy Ison

Over the last 20 years I have managed to locate and record a total to date of 32 François Nicole cartel boxes, from the UK, Europe and the USA.

To help collectors who are not too familiar with this type of musical box I thought it may be as well to point out the main characteristics of the development of early boxes from this maker.

Manufacture took place from about 1822 until 1833 when François Nicole retired.

The first early boxes were mainly fitted into plain fruitwood cases with the three control levers fitted straight through the left-hand side of the box. Gradually from 1824 some larger cases were made from mahogany into which to fit the slightly larger movements. The control levers on these larger boxes again fitted through the left hand side of the case, but now little buttons were fitted through an engraved brass panel. (See the second photo.)

The problem in the early days of comb manufacture was the difficulty of producing a comb over 3 inches in length. This was gradually improved around 1824, and combs of 4.5 inches were made. By fixing two 4.5 inch combs on a bedplate and further adding one small comb of an inch at the base end, and roughly the same at the treble end, a comb of 10 inches could be used, and this enabled the maker to fit over 200 teeth. This procedure continued with comb manufacture for François Nicole until he retired.

Development of François Nicole boxes over a period of 9 years

The following photos and data show the development of their size over a period of 9 years.

BOX 1



CASE In a fruitwood case
Length 31.5 cms. (12.5 ins.)
Height 10cms. (4 ins.)
Width 12.5 cms. (5 ins.)

CYLINDER There is a grooved ring on the left-hand side of the cylinder
Length 21cms. (8.2ins.)
Diameter 5.2 cms. (2.1ins.)

COMB Both combs marked F Nicole 20.4 teeth/inch
Bass 3 + 85 teeth
Treble 80 teeth
Total 168 It plays 3 operatic airs.



BOX 2



CASE In a mahogany case
Length 42cms. (16.5 ins.)
Height 13.3 cms. (5.5ins.)
Width 17.8 cms. (7ins.)

CYLINDER There is a grooved ring on the left-hand side of the cylinder
Length 27.7 cms. (10.1 ins.)
Diameter 6.35 cms. (2.5 ins.)

COMB
Part 1 6 bass teeth
Part 2 98 teeth
Part 3 98 teeth
Part 4 7 treble teeth
Total 209 20.5 teeth per inch

Tune 1 *Der Freischutz* Weber 1821 plays on 2 revolutions
Tune 2 *Italian Girl in Algiers* Rossini 1813

There is no serial number, and the governor cock is marked *F Nicole*.

BOX 3



CASE Clock base mahogany with ormolu fittings
Length 40cms. (15.75ins.)

CYLINDER
Length 22.4 cms. (8.75ins.)
Diameter 6.35 cms. (2.5ins.)

COMB
Part1 5 bass teeth
Part2 87 teeth
Part 3 84 treble teeth
Total 176 teeth. There is a grooved ring on the left-hand side of cylinder

The musical movement for this case has been mounted upside-down in the original manufacture.

BOX 4



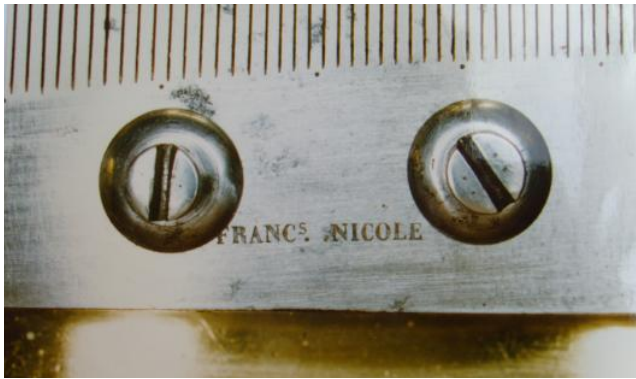
This box is in a private collection in the USA. I have used it to show the increase in size and the number of teeth. It might be one of the last to have been made by Nicole.

CASE Fitted in a fruitwood case
Length 45.6 cms. (18ins.)
Height 14 cms. (5.5ins.)
Width 19 cms. (7.5 ins.)

CYLINDER Grooved ring on left-hand side
Length 30 cms. (11.75ins.)
Diameter 8 cms. (3.15ins.)

COMB
Part 1 115 bass teeth
Part 2 131 teeth
Total 246 teeth 21 teeth per inch

Tune 1 Played on half turn of cylinder
Tune 2 *Fra Diavolo* Auber 1830 played on one and a half turns
Tune 3 *Robert le Diable* Meyerbeer 1831



Both parts are stamped *Franc. Nicole*

The main differences when you compare a François Nicole music box with any early keywind cartel box are:

- 1 The squared pattern cylinder formed by the usual radial lines with the additional horizontal lines. So far no other maker has been discovered to date who used this distinctive method.
- 2 No serial number system was used by François Nicole.
- 3 Often on early François Nicole boxes there was no name stamp on the comb or bedplate but sometimes on the governor cock.



Occasionally boxes appear on the market with no name stamps anywhere, but they all have the square patterned cylinder.

Editor's note: The information used in this article has been drawn from articles Roy Ison wrote in various issues of MBSI and MBSGB Journals.

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Photographing Mechanical Musical Instruments

Part 2

by Ned Walthall

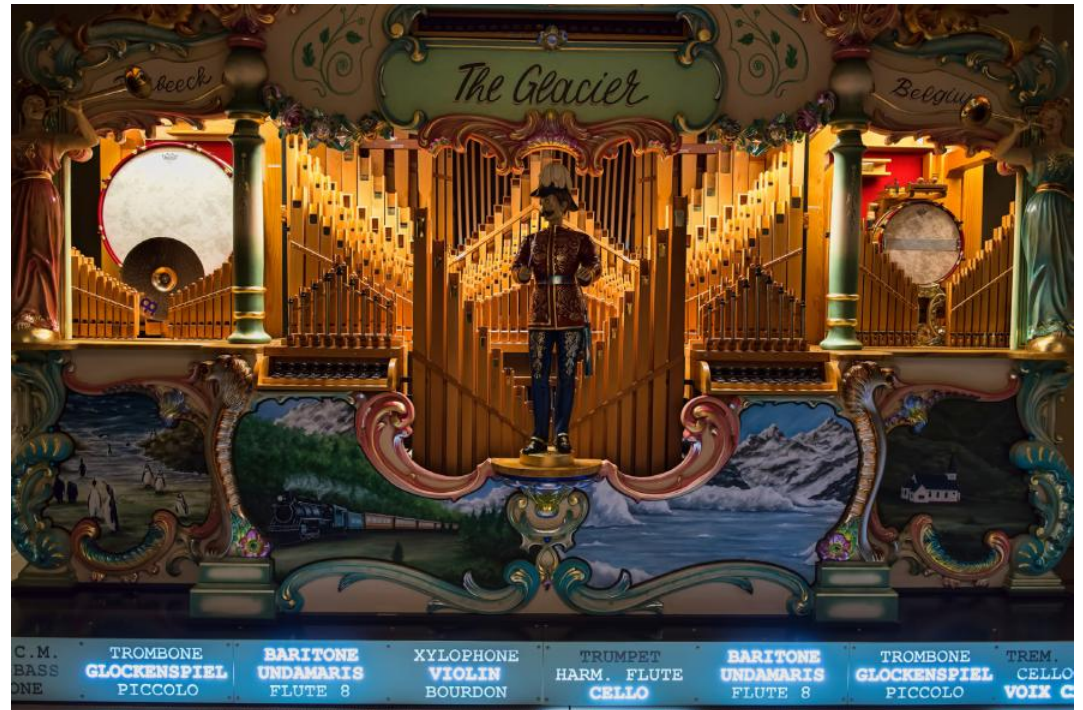
In Part 1 Ned Walthall covered cameras and how to manage exposure, shutter speed and ISO, going from the basics to the more advanced stuff, so as to make your pictures more interesting.

Now in Part 2 Ned tells us about taking pictures in low light, and considerations about composition, and trying new things such as black and white photography.

This article and its photographs are reproduced with the kind permission of The AMICA Bulletin

Taking pictures in low light

Here is a picture of the organ *The Glacier* in full view from the front.



This picture illustrates a number of challenges you are likely to encounter when a photographing a mechanical instrument indoors without a lot of natural light. This photograph was actually taken in the evening, and the organ is playing, so I don't have much natural light, and worse, I have some motion to deal with. I cannot possibly get away with a shutter speed of more than some fraction of a second. So what are my options? First, this is clearly a case where I am going to have to fall back on a relatively high ISO value so that I can keep my shutter speed down. And I am going to need a wide aperture. But there is an important point to be made about depth of field here: it does not matter. I don't need to worry about it. Why? Because in this picture, everything is roughly in the same plane of view. There is no significant difference between foreground and background, depending on how you want to look at it, it is all one

or all the other. There is no real depth to worry about here. The depth of field is going to be pretty much the same, no matter what aperture I use, which frees me to set it to a value that optimises my solution to another problem, the small amount of light that is available for the photograph. So I set my ISO to 2000, which the Nikon D800 handles pretty well, and my aperture to f/5.00, which is relatively wide. That allowed me to take the picture with a shutter speed of 1/25th of a second. Even that speed is too slow for this picture, given the movement of band leader's arms as the organ plays, and in fact if you blew the picture up you would see some blur as a result of the movement of his hands. And I removed some ISO related distortion from the photograph in post processing. But those 3 parameters, in combination, gave an adequate exposure, thanks especially to the lights built into the organ.

On the other hand, in this shot of a *Wurlitzer 165* facade, depth of field once again becomes a crucial issue. Why?



As is the case with *The Glacier*, I am trying to capture as much of the instrument as I can in a single frame, but notice here how the composition of the image comes into play. I am shooting at an angle, which creates depth from front to back. The horn player on the left is much closer to us than the one on the right, and since I am trying to give the viewer a sense of what the entire instrument looks like, I would like both to be in sharp focus. In this case, the organ was not playing, so I did not have to worry about motion. I set my aperture to $f/22$, very small and guaranteed to maximize my depth of field. I kept my ISO relatively low, at 200, and once again relied on a very slow shutter speed, four seconds, to give me the light I needed. The result was a picture that is in relatively sharp focus from front to back.

Composition

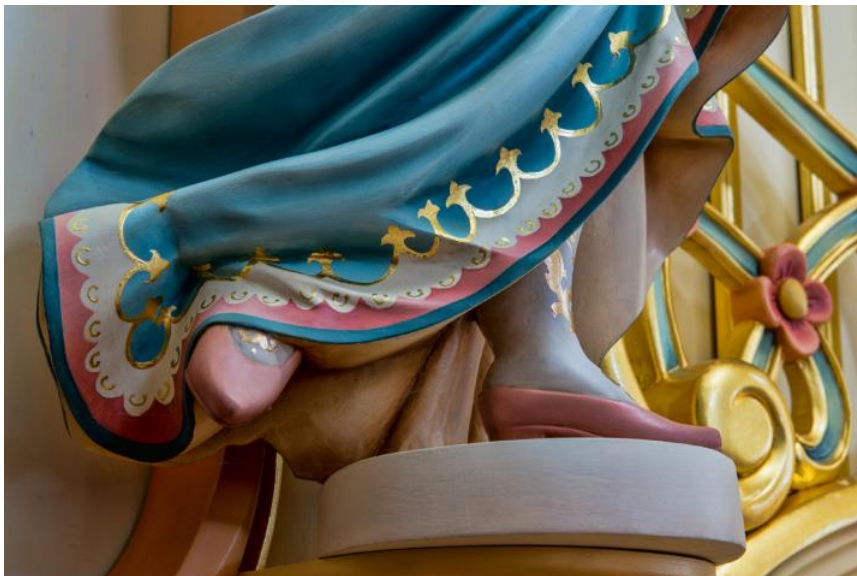
As critical as exposure is, it is only one of many ways in which your creativity is challenged as you try to take pictures.

Another is composition, the way in which your picture is arranged in the frame of the camera you use to take it. Composition is a broad subject, much more than can be covered in any detail here, and while it can certainly be learned, it is not easy. The great photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson probably had something like this mind when he famously said 'The first ten thousand pictures are the worst'. But if you are just starting out, I would make a few simple suggestions that are very applicable to photographing mechanical instruments and many other things as well. Whether amateur or professional, your job as a photographer is to help people view familiar things in new ways. Most of us spend a good part of our day either standing or sitting, which means we view the world either at eye or 'chair' level as it were, and out of politeness and at times caution, we don't tend to stick our noses into things. So right there are two simple things you can do that always make photographs more interesting:

don't sit or stand where people normally do when you take a picture, and get much closer to your subject than people normally get. The result will almost inevitably be a picture of something your viewers have not seen before, at least not in the way you have seen it. Here is an example below.



These are the feet of the two female horn blower figures in the *Wurlitzer 165*.



The entire organ is pictured above, but here I am concentrating on the remarkable detail and colour of the dress and shoes of the horn blower above.

To do this with a tripod I have to almost lie on the floor, because I want to point

the camera up so as to capture the lines and folds of the dress, the little flirtatious flip of the hem on the right, and the glimpse of her stockings with their gold decoration. You can see this standing up, but you can't quite see it this way and it's a bit more dramatic down here. In this picture I used a fairly wide aperture, $f/4$, focusing on the dress in the foreground and allowing the organ in the background to blur a fair bit. I took a similar shot of the horn blower below.

The reason for getting in close here is to capture the wonderful sense of movement being created by the tilt of the horn blower's right leg, and the draping of her dress over her right foot, extended as it is in the air, way out from the pedestal on which on her left foot is stationed. Notice how the repetition of the gold pattern of the dress amplifies the sense of motion and energy here, even as it gets lost for a moment in the folds of the skirt, only to re-emerge intact to the left of the shoe. Until I got down on my knees to take this picture, I had never noticed how fine this detail was. A photographer who does not get dirty is not doing his or her job. Unlike the previous photograph, here I used a much smaller aperture, $f/16$, again keeping my ISO low and letting my shutter speed of three seconds do the heavy lifting to get the image properly exposed. I intentionally created enough depth of field to bring the flower on the right into focus: its colour amplifies the pink of the horn blower's shoes and the gold in the background to the right echoes the gold pattern of her skirt.

Try New Things

Another way to stoke your creativity as a photographer is to give yourself the opportunity to try new things. One good place to experiment is with black and white. Digital black and white photography can be done in two ways: in camera, or via post processing. Most DSLRs have options that will actually make the camera create a jpeg in black

and white, so you can view the result immediately after taking the shot. Or you can easily convert your colour image to black and white using your post production editor. Most editors have tools for this purpose that are fairly easy to use. Shooting in black and white is a great exercise because it forces you to think about composition in very elemental ways. Not all photographs that are good in colour are good in black and white and vice versa. Black and white works well when there is contrast, light and shadow, and interesting shapes, forms and structures that emerge from the image. Colour is great when there is a lot of it and it is deep and rich in tone. Sometimes things overlap in the same photograph and sometimes they don't.

also something else going on here by way of experimentation. This piano is actually playing. Anyone have a guess as to why the keys are not moving? The answer of course lies in our old friend, exposure. For fun, I shot this image with an aperture of $f/32$, very, very small note the relatively deep depth of field that resulted; the keys in the foreground are as much in focus as the keys in the background. I also kept my ISO low, at 125, to avoid distortion. This of course meant that for adequate exposure, I would need a very, very slow shutter speed. Ten seconds, to be exact. Ten seconds is so slow that the camera cannot comprehend the movement of the keys. Here is an image in which the movement of keys is visible.



I will wind this up with a shot I took of a *Seeburg G Orchestrion*. This is in black and white, and it is an experiment of sorts.

There is nothing especially remarkable about this photograph except that it has been converted to black and white. I converted it for several reasons. There was not much colour to begin with; I was getting some lovely ambient light from the window at the back of the picture, and I felt that the contrast between the black and white keys, along with the reflection of the black keys against the white in the late afternoon light, would be more pronounced if the picture was simply in black and white. But there is

Because I wanted to capture the movement of the keys without blur, I needed a relatively fast shutter speed, so in this case I went with an ISO of 2000, an aperture of $f/5$, and a shutter speed of $1/100$ of a second. Notice that once again my depth of field is very shallow here, thanks to the wide aperture. But in this case it affects both the foreground and the background of the picture. Why? Because I am focusing on the keys that are in the middle. With a very limited depth of field, only what I am focused on is in focus. This is a good example of how you can manipulate a shallow depth of field to lead the eye, which in this case is drawn immediately to the centre of the keyboard.

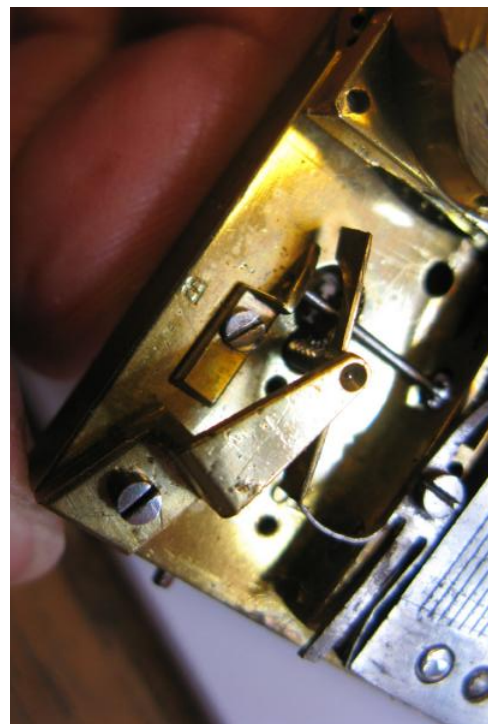
Mechanical instruments are remarkable works of art and as such are great subjects for photography. It is interesting, too, that like mechanical instruments, photography has deep roots in the history of technology, particularly as it is related to art. With a little patience, a good camera, and some imagination, you may, in photographing these fine instruments, not only take some great pictures but start to see the instruments in a new way. That is the essential joy of photography.

Ned Walthall's principal vocation is that of a professional photographer when he isn't encumbered by his 'day job'. His work has been seen at exhibitions, and his photography sites and blogs are regularly visited and highly praised. His work may be seen at <http://www.nwalthall.tumblr.com> and <http://www.nwalthall.smugmug.com>. He may be contacted at nwalthall@comcast.net. Instruments featured in the photographs are from the collection of Glenn Thomas.

Stray Note - Nicol and not Nicole by Luuk Goldhoorn

The Nicole family tree has often been discussed in these columns, and also on page 50 of this edition. It now turns out he had an almost exact contemporary namesake, who built a musical snuff box. The pictures show a black composition

box with a one-piece comb screwed from the underside. NICOL is stamped in a way which has no resemblance to the stamps used by the Nicole family. There is also a number stamp 241, so probably more Nicols can be found. The construction details indicate a pre-1840 manufacture, but there is a contradiction here, because black compositions cases were not made before the 1850s.



Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag

by Terry Broadbent

*In the second of our series of articles about popular music during WWI we look at the origins of one of the most evocative and enduring songs of that war. Perhaps the most famous of all the WWI songs was *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*, written in 1912 and therefore available from the very beginning of the war, when it made an immediate impact as a marching song. But running it a very close second was *Pack Up Your Troubles*, written early in 1915, which became an overnight hit. Indeed, it remained a popular element of sing-songs long after the war was over, and most people know it well today.*

The Creators of the Song

So let's see how the song came about, and look briefly at the lives of the two men who wrote it. They were the Powell brothers, Felix and George, who hailed from the small town of St Asaph (recently designated a city) in Denbighshire in North Wales. Their father was a house-painter and lay clerk. His first-born son, Felix Lloyd Powell, was born 28th May 1878, and he showed an early interest in music, and was a boy and adult chorister at St Asaph cathedral, where he also learned to play the organ. His brother George Henry, born 27th April 1880, was also a competent singer who showed an interest in popular music. By the year 1901, with both boys now grown up, the family moved to the Midlands, where Felix and George decided to try their luck as music-hall entertainers. After some initial success the pair teamed up with two of their sisters and others to form a group called *The Harlequinaders* which became very successful. They wrote most of their own material, with George writing the words of numerous songs which Felix then set to music. As a travelling music-hall variety act the group were constantly moving around the country, playing in theatres wherever they could get engagements. In this phase of their lives Felix married a girl called Mabel and their only child, a son



The Harlequinaders; Felix is on the left, George on the right

Harley, was born backstage at a theatre in Batley - the epitome of the 'born in a trunk' beginnings of many future entertainers.

The origins of Pack Up Your Troubles

This peripatetic lifestyle continued right up to the start of the war in 1914, and it was then that fate took a hand, bringing the brothers out of relative obscurity and into public acclaim. The huge success of *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* had not gone unnoticed by the music publishers, who clearly did not want it to remain the only song of its kind around. They were looking for something new. Early in 1915 the music publisher Francis Day and Hunter Ltd offered a prize of 100 guineas (around £7,000 in today's money) for 'The best new morale-building song'.

The brothers decided to try their luck; George came up with the words 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile', which Felix promptly set to music. For some reason George wrote his words under the pseudonym 'George Asaf', the latter part being adapted from the name of the brothers' birthplace. We do not know why. Perhaps he thought that a song written by two brothers would have less chance of success than one written by independent people - though fraternal authorship did the Gershwin brothers no harm a few years later.

Having considered the result of their labours, George described the song as piffle, but nevertheless they submitted it to the competition and, to their astonishment, they won the prize. One of the adjudicators noted it as 'perhaps the most optimistic song ever written'. They were appearing at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham when a telegram came through with the news. A few days later,



George Powell (Asaf) who wrote the words

whilst performing in Southampton, they sang it in their music-hall act, and the very next day they heard a regiment of soldiers singing it as they marched along the road towards Southampton Docks. Francis Day and Hunter had of course copyrighted the song before its release, the contract stipulating that the brothers would receive royalties.

A Success Story

When the Powells heard the soldiers singing their song they knew they were made financially. The initial prize money, substantial though it was, would eventually be swamped by what they would receive from royalties for the rest of their lives.

It is not hard to see why the song became such an instant hit. George had talked to soldiers and knew from them that marching for miles when hot, cold or tired was a draining business, and having something cheerful to sing as they marched along helped relieve boredom and revive their spirits. And their kit bag, which every soldier possessed, contained their personal possessions as well as army-issue items so was closely guarded by every soldier. So, to a soldier the words of the song were very apt and felt personal to them, and the chorus, with its regular, forceful beat, was an ideal accompaniment to their marching. The immediate success of the song was no fluke. It was quickly taken up and used by numerous well-known artists in their music-hall acts, including the famous Australian singer Florrie Forde, who also recorded it at the time, as did several other artists. As a result it quickly became a number one hit. And, like *Lily Marlene* in the Second World War, *Pack Up Your Troubles* was sung in translation by German troops, the catchy song having spread to Germany, as well as the other allies. Some of the early recordings of the period, which can be heard on YouTube, have the first line as *Pack all your troubles*, but all the post-

war versions give *Pack up your Troubles*. Perhaps George was uncertain at first which to use, before opting for 'up' rather than 'all'. The song in its full version has 3 verses as well as the rousing chorus. Looking at the verses one can see why George Powell, who wrote them, dismissed them as 'piffle'. They were written specifically for troops in the trenches, and in any other situation they are of no relevance. It is the wonderful chorus that made the song an instant hit. After the war, when soldiers were no longer fighting on the front line, the verses were quickly forgotten. So from 1919 onwards, all that one ever hears is the chorus, which everyone knows, whereas no-one at all knows or cares about the verses. In Florrie Forde's 1929 recording of the song (Columbia 9870) the chorus is all that she sings.

Pack up your Troubles

First verse

*Private Perks is a funny little codger
With a smile a funny smile.
Five feet none, he's an artful little dodger
with a smile a funny smile.
Flush or broke he'll have his little joke,
He can't be suppress' d.
All the other fellows have to grin
when he gets this off his chest, Hi!*

Chorus (sing twice after each verse)

*Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,
And smile, smile, smile,
While you've a lucifer to light your fag,
Smile, boys, that's the style.
What's the use of worrying?
It never was worth while, so
Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,
And smile, smile, smile.*

Second verse

*Private Perks went a-marching into Flanders
With his smile his funny smile.
He was lov'd by the privates and commanders
For his smile his funny smile.
when a throng of Bosches came along
With a mighty swing,
Perks yell'd out, "This little bunch is mine!
Keep your heads down, boys and sing, Hi!*

Third verse

*Private Perks he came back from Bosche-shooting
with his smile his funny smile.
Round his home he then set about recruiting
With his smile his funny smile.
He told all his pals, the short, the tall,
What a time he'd had;
And as each enlisted like a man
Private Perks said 'Now, my lad,' Hi!*



Felix Powell, who composed the music

The Brothers' War Years

One might have thought that, with impending prosperity, everything in the garden would be rosy for the brothers. But Felix was racked by guilt that whilst he and his brother were making lots of money from their song, the soldiers who were singing it were fighting, and often dying, on the battlefields of France, Belgium and elsewhere. To make matters worse a rift had developed between the brothers. Felix was a devout patriot who, though he hated war, realised that Britain had no option but to fight, whereas George was so anti-war that when conscription was introduced in 1916 he signed up as a conscientious objector. He bought a gipsy caravan and travelled around the country preaching pacifism. Riven with guilt because of his financial income from the song whilst thousands of our soldiers were losing their lives, Felix enlisted for active service



A rather posed photo of Felix, supposedly composing with a copy of Pack up your Troubles on the piano's music stand

in February 1916 at the age of 37. He became a staff sergeant, trained as a lorry driver and asked to fight at the front but the army refused to let him, realising his value as an entertainer. Upset by not being allowed to face the same dangers as his colleagues, Felix had to make do with the job he was given by his superior officers - which meant entertaining the troops - a valuable morale-boosting task in itself in an environment where horrific injury and death were all around.

He organised a concert party called *The White Knights*, and for the remainder of the war carried out his orders, helping to raise morale through his endeavours in hostile surroundings. However, even in his supposedly protected situation just behind the lines he still saw plenty of death and misery. The war proved to be a deeply disturbing experience which left him, like many others, broken in spirit, a condition from which he never fully recovered.

Life after the war

Relations between the two brothers remained strained for some time after the war, but eventually there was a rapprochement. Felix and Mabel moved to Peacehaven near Brighton, a location he hoped would prove as tranquil as the name implied. Eventually his brother joined him there, and together they ran the local Peacehaven Gazette. Felix bought an estate agent's business on the strength of his continuing royalties from the famous song, and became manager of the Peacehaven Building Society. By the 1930s the brothers seem to have given up writing songs together, previous joint efforts such as *Have you seen the ducks go by?*, *There's a friend in every milestone*, *Queen of summer*, *When the sun sinks to rest*, having made little impact on the musical entertainment world, but the pair carried on in the music business as a sideline and opened a small theatre, *The Lureland* in Peacehaven, where projects were tried out before they went to Brighton and, with luck, to the West End. Felix also presented many amateur productions of Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas.

In the early 1930s Felix began writing his own musicals, words and music, unaided by his brother. In 1933 he wrote one called *Rubicund Castle*, which interested the former music hall star Annie Croft*, who wanted a new hit show to put on in London, having previously presented



Music hall star Annie Croft

**Annie Croft (1892-1959) was a music hall star and later an impresario. Born in Hull, she was the mother of David Croft, co-writer and producer of Dad's Army and several other very successful TV comedies. As a teenager David was present during some of the negotiations between his mother and Felix Powell concerning the possible West End production of Primrose Time.*

Tulip Time. Eventually renamed *Primrose Time*, Felix's show was staged in Brighton to favourable reviews. There were hopes of it going to London, but with another war in the offing, Annie Croft needed £10,000 to take it to the West End. Negotiations and attempts to raise the necessary cash dragged on for years.

A Tragic Finale

Eventually a man who was supposedly an impresario entered the scene. He promised the necessary financial backing and lent Felix money. But he turned out to be a fraudster and the whole project fell apart. Over a period of time the man, who was what we would now call a loan shark, demanded his money back with considerable interest. Felix was unable to pay and surreptitiously 'borrowed' money from the building society of which he was manager. By this time the Second World War was underway and with all hope of the show being presented in London gone, Felix, more depressed than ever and seriously in debt, joined the Home Guard. He tried to write new songs to pay off his debts, but he was then in his sixties, his inspiration had dried up, and musical tastes had changed. After a bout of pneumonia and severe depression he put on his Home Guard uniform, went to his theatre, stood on the stage and shot himself in the heart with his Home Guard rifle. He left two notes; one was an apology to his Home Guard colleagues; the other said 'I can't write any more. There's no point in going on.' This tragic event happened on 10th February 1942, when aged 63. It is ironic that he was unable to live up to the optimistic words his brother had written for their song. But, like many others, he was never able to forget the horrors he had seen in the war. Mabel soon paid back to the building society all the money that Felix had borrowed. Felix's brother George continued to live in Peacehaven until his death on 3rd September 1951, aged 71.

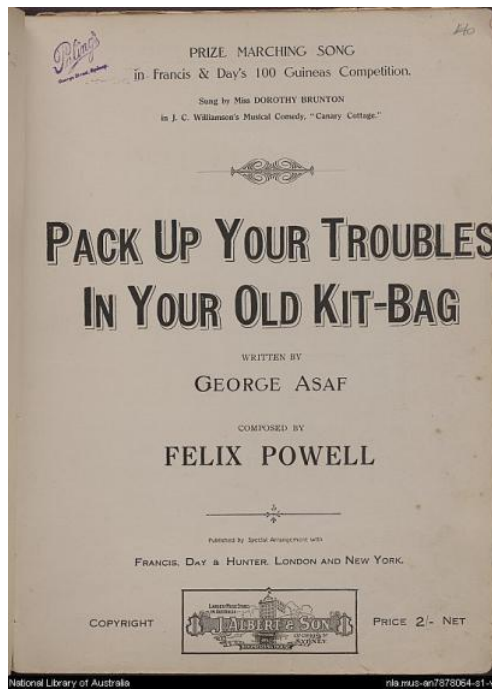
The Life of the Song

As would be expected *Pack Up Your Troubles* features on several piano rolls. Aeolian's *Community Song Choruses* Roll 3 (38152) which was re-issued years later as a Meloto roll with the same number, includes it along with 2 other songs. There was also an American Duo-Art medley which included the song in *Songs of the American Expeditionary Force* issued in 1929. Numbered 73418 it was arranged and played by Henri Bergman, a pseudonym of Robert Armbruster. Welte included the song as part of a medley called *Recollections* No.5 in which it is arranged and played by Harry Perella, who was the resident pianist in Paul Whiteman's orchestra. QRS issued a roll of the song (not part of a medley) in August 1918 (582), a hand-played version in which the pianists were Harold Scott and Jeff Walters. Numerous lesser firms, for which I do not have catalogues, issued piano rolls and there are sure to be other versions.

In the years since 1915, when the song was written, it has remained in the public consciousness as an ever-present standard, with royalties still rolling in steadily for Felix's grandson Aubrey Powell, Harley's son, the copyright having been renewed.

During World War II there was a resurgence in the song's popularity for the same reasons that had made it so popular in the 1914-18 war, and it was re-recorded by many different artists including Dick Haymes and the Andrews Sisters. There was another peak in popularity in the Vietnam War, illustrating the enduring quality of the song's sentiments. Even now pop artists occasionally record new versions and the song has recently been featured in worldwide television adverts such as one by the computer firm Dell.

And the title of the song seems to have become a standard phrase in the



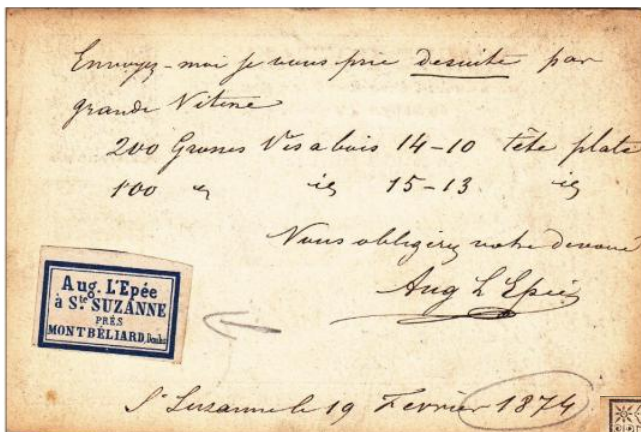
An early sheet-music cover

English language. Not so long ago when the footballer 'Wayne Rooney' was undergoing a difficult period in his personal life, but was seen cheerfully chatting and joking with his teammates at an airport, the reporter remarked 'There's Wayne Rooney, packing up his troubles in his old kit bag'. And it has been sung in numerous films over the years. It seems the life of this cheerful, optimistic and durable song is far from over. For the writers it was a 'one-hit wonder' but what a hit!

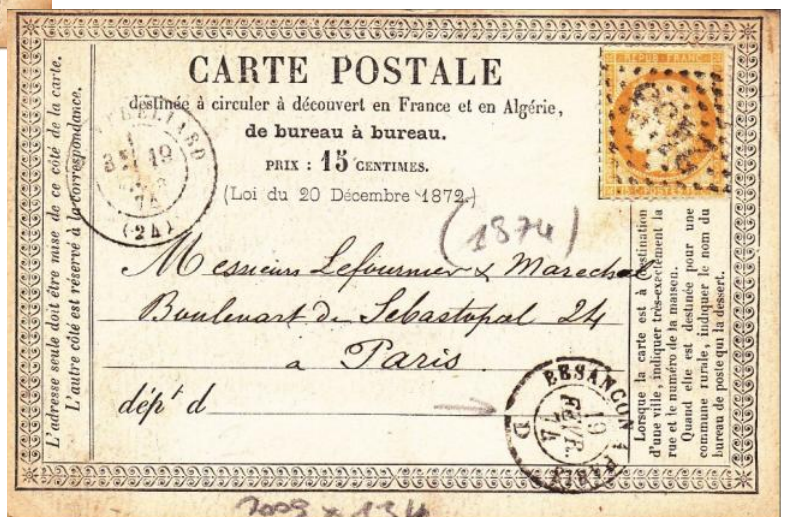
Editor's note: We are grateful to Terry Broadbent and the NWPPA for giving us permission to reprint this article, which was previously published in the Spring/Summer 2012 edition of the NWPPA

Stray Note - Musical box makers and their ephemera

by Luuk Goldhoorn



Towards the end of the 19th century printed letter heads came into fashion in the musical box industry. So it is with pleasure that I can show you a postcard written by Auguste L'Epée in 1874 on which he pasted a sticker with his name.



Anomalies

by Luuk Goldhoorn

Luuk describes an unusual musical box from the early 19th century, and how it differs from others made around this time.

In the first half of the 19th century, musical box makers were concentrated in Geneva and Saint Croix. A new idea was therefore often shared soon after its birth, because patent rights did not exist until 1889. It is unsurprising that many musical boxes look alike, bearing in mind that almost every task involved in producing it was performed by skilled craftsmen, who were working for different principals. In the absence of a name on a piece of work it is very difficult to trace who was responsible for its manufacture. And without that knowledge then dating a box is equally difficult.

Perhaps with the maker of this particular work, we are dealing with a man who was not part of that society and he had to work all on his own without the support or knowledge of his fellow craftsmen.

Look at Fig 1. It looks at first sight like an odd-man-out snuffbox. The case is made of tortoise shell, so we can date it to before 1830, because around that year a composition material appeared so as to replace this more expensive material.

Dismantling it shows a comb with the base at the right end. See Fig 2. In cartell boxes these were not unknown until about 1820, but in snuff boxes it would have been highly unusual except in works with sectional combs.

The second item which is unusual is the position of the cock. See Fig 3. In the beginning the start-stop mechanism was at the back, far away from the fan so it did not matter where the cock was positioned. But when that lever was repositioned at the front, the cock was placed in either the left-hand corner, or parallel to the left-hand side of the bedplate, so as to give the stop/start lever enough space. But as seen here,

this maker placed the cock in the old-fashioned way, and consequently had a problem in placing the lever. He solved this problem by letting the bow, which has to stop the fan, go in front of the cock.

The stop/start lever was made without a spring on its right-hand side, so allowing the lever to fall in the hole in the wheel left of the cylinder, thereby stopping the melody at its end. A small spring protruding from the bedplate pushed the lever into the hole. It was from the early 1830s that the stop/start lever was made in this manner.

A further anomaly is that only 1 pall was used in the ratchet under the spring barrel, whereas before at least 1828 it was the practice to fit 2 palls. This skilled maker knew something about pins in the comb base, but it appears he was not aware of the significance of what he was doing, so we see a comb on a brass plate. This last was pinned, but the comb was not. See Fig 4.

Possibly he found making a snail was too difficult, so instead he screwed in a little plate with three notches so the lever could rest in three positions. See Fig 5.

Finally, he was unaware that it is possible to insert a screw in the plates for start and change, so instead he soldered little pillars. See Fig 6.

The comb had no dampers, which suggests manufacture sometime before 1825, but as it had lead weights this would put it after 1818.

So we have here a musical snuff box, which at first sight points to a date around 1822, but on closer inspection shows that it was probably made at least a decade later.



Fig 1 The outside of the tortoise shell box. The box is engraved with the letters DRC

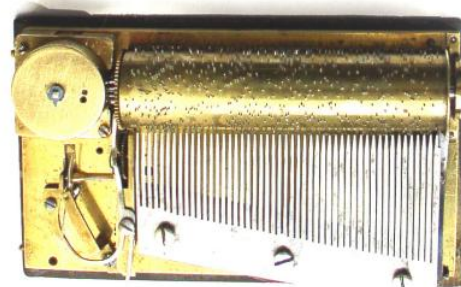


Fig 2 View of the complete work

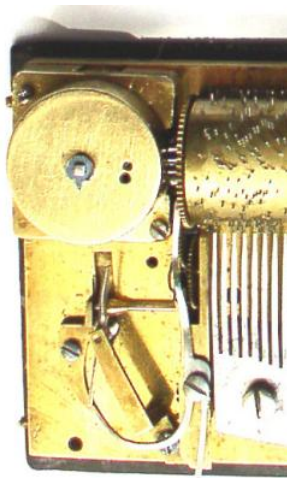


Fig 3 A big bow on the stop/ start lever engages the fan on its left

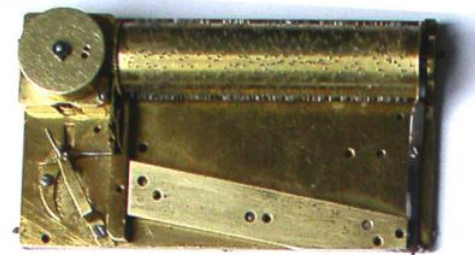


Fig 4 The brass plate on which the comb is screwed was pinned to the bedplate, not the comb



Fig 5 The change lever can be placed in three different positions



Figs 6 Little square pillars are soldered on the slides for starting and stopping

This That and t'Other

No 11 Musical Pottery

by Arthur Cunliffe

Arthur shows some fine examples of tankards from early in the last century, and tells us something of their background, and their amusing decorations.

There were a number of pottery manufacturers in the early to mid 20th century who made musical novelties. Generally these were jugs and tankards, which still turn up today in auctions, car boot sales or on eBay. When searching eBay a good starting point is to type in 'musical pottery'. Follow that with *Crown Devon* musical and then *Carlton Ware* musical. A number of advertisers list them under 'household', which seems to me rather odd, so expect the unexpected!

Unfortunately, many examples seem to have sustained cracks or damage and like all pottery they are best left alone unless particularly rare. The two major firms making musical items were *Crown Devon* and *Carlton Ware*, and opinion is divided as to who made the best. It all comes down to what appeals to the individual.

In the case of jugs and tankards there are two main types. The first are transfer-decorated with a picture and text often telling the story of some well-known song or nursery rhyme. The second type is more elaborate with applied relief modelling, frequently adding the text of some well-known song on the other side. An example of this type is the *John Peel* jugs and tankards. They pretty well always featured a handle in the shape of a fox.

The two tankards shown here were made by *Carlton Ware*, and whilst being transfer printed, they represent perfectly the type of work produced by that factory. The type of handle on both of these jugs was used by *Carlton* for nearly all of their jugs and tankards. What makes the two slightly unusual is that the tunes selected for each are not all that common.

The tankard shown in Figs 1 and 2

depicts cockney life in the Victorian era when 'moonlight flits' were part of everyday life. *My Old Man said follow the Van* is the tune usually used for this tankard, except that in this particular case the Thorens 28-note movement plays, *Another little drink won't do me any harm*. Technically either tune is correct for the tankard, as both were used originally with *My Old Man* being the more popular by far. As mentioned before the handle is the trade mark handle for the *Carlton Company*. Thorens list *Another little drink* as tune No 2642 in their lists. Unfortunately, I do not know what the tune number is for *My Old Man*.

The second tankard appears to be much rarer depicting a drinking scene with the motto on the other side of the jug, *We are given our Relations. Thank God we can choose our Friends*. In over 10 years of searching I have not seen another tankard of this type, but I am sure there will be others out there. The 28-note movement in this case plays *Should Old Acquaintance be Forgot*, which I understand is the correct one for this tankard and is most suitable. I suspect that another reason why this tankard is scarce is that it was not very popular when first produced, and so was withdrawn from sale after a short time. If you have seen a tankard which is part of this series of *Carlton Ware*, please take some photographs and write a letter to the Editor so that we can all learn more.

Remember that there were many other manufacturers producing items housing small musical movements, such as *Wade*, *Burlington*, *Schmid*, *Royal Doulton* and *Sylvan*. I wish you many happy hours of searching but please stay away from the newest battery operated movements and stick to keywind!



Fig 1 'My old man said follow the van'



Fig 2 'Another little drink won't do me any harm'



Fig 3 'We are given our relations...'

Editor's note: Member Tony King has published a book about Commemorative Pottery, and if anyone is interested in obtaining a copy they should contact a member of the MBSGB Committee whose contact details are on page 46.



Fig 4 'Should old acquaintance be forgot'



The President's Message No 8

At the time of writing, a number of threads are coming magically together, to the extent that I wonder if some invisible force is not at work suggesting 'coincidences' as a theme for this journal.

By the time you read this, we will have had our national meeting in Essex, taking in a day at the Stow Maries World War I aerodrome, although I fear you will have to wait to a later edition to read all about it. Recently Stow Maries hit the national television news, as it was granted £1.3 million in the Chancellor's Budget, towards a renovation project. This is in recognition of the role it played in the defence of our country in that great conflict a century ago. Securing the grant was no doubt the result of hard work, dedication and enthusiasm on the part of its champions making the case for its conservation, a theme to be picked up on in one of this journal's articles.

During a period of several months last year, debate was raging amongst mechanical music enthusiasts about the future of their interest. This is a perennial topic, with the doomsayers predicting the demise of any significant following for mechanical musical instruments, whilst others take the view that the interest will survive if one is open-minded and adapts to the challenges of the 21st century. Just before the last edition of the magazine went to press, we received notification of an exhibition on pianolas to be held at the University of Surrey. Elsewhere in this edition you should find an article by David



*President of the MBSGB
Alison Biden*

Dingwall calling for government intervention to protect historic fairground organs. This sentiment is in keeping with one of the aims of our Society, and one of the points David makes reflects a theme expressed at the conference held in London in July 2013 on mechanical music as a research resource. We are moving from seeing mechanical musical instruments merely as curiosities or objects of our personal pleasure, to having a more universal significance, one with relevance to engineers, musicologists and historians alike. If we wish our instruments to survive for the benefit of future generations, perhaps it is time that we looked beyond their function of giving pleasure, to having an historic or educational value.

Maintaining interest in mechanical music isn't just a question of keeping up the membership numbers of the various organisations, but demonstrating why it has relevance in the 21st century. This is one of the messages I hope we shall be getting over

at the various events planned for promoting both the Society and the interest. Our visit to Stow Maries is to be an opportunity to showcase some of our instruments to the public who may be visiting primarily to see the aerodrome and its own attractions. We may see 2 replica period airplanes belonging to film-maker Peter Jackson. This is an example of partnering another organisation, and we anticipate Stow Maries will also benefit from having us there as an attraction.

Forging symbiotic relationships is not limited to organisations in our own country, and over the next year I hope to see increased involvement with some of our overseas sister societies. I am pleased to report that at least one member of MBSGB is working in liaison with the Italians on their Barbieri project on sacred music on mechanical instruments. Echoes yet again of the importance of these instruments as a research resource. On a much more informal level, international collaboration was demonstrated at the gathering described by some of the attendees at a study group on François Nicole and his work held last August in Germany, and reported on here.

Time and space are running out, and I need to look forward to the forthcoming AGM when once again the members will have the opportunity to cast their judgment on the performance of the Committee, and direct the way ahead. There are some interesting ideas for taking the Society and the interest even further forwards, with your approval. However, running the Society requires willing

helpers. If you think you can help protect the future of our interest, and by implication the value and life of the instruments in your collection, or preserving the objects

of your admiration, please don't be shy about coming forwards. To paraphrase Kitchener's famous catchphrase from World War I 'Your Society needs you!' You might

not think your contribution is very significant, but in the words of a more modern catchphrase 'Every little helps.'

Letters to the Editor

Sir,
Fortuna Disc-Playing Musical Box

I have just received The Music Box and note with interest the article by John Farmer regarding the Fortuna 'Marvel' Orchestrion disc-player and note his comments regarding rarity. As I am sure many will recall, I wrote and described this instrument extensively in earlier editions of the Journal and published many photographs of my own model. See, for example, Volume 1, page 2.6a, 8, 13 &c of 1963. In subsequent issues, I reprinted many Fortuna advertisements including one in Summer 1968 (p.410) which

described the Marvel as 'Price with 6 discs £32' and noted that it was 'specially adapted for large halls, hotels &c'. As well as my own Style Z 'Marvel' (pictured also in my now-ancient book 'Collecting Musical Boxes' [1967] as Plate 23), our founding Treasurer, Frank Greenacre also owned one. I found my Style Z in a private house in Weston-super-Mare and bought it, together with some 63 discs, for £75 in 1962. I had to hire a van to collect it; the van kept breaking down and I had a nightmare journey both there and back. The clockwork motor in this machine is by far the largest single unit employed in any disc-

playing musical box. However, once restored, it was a joy to listen to. On a technical level, the mechanism was clever; from a musical standpoint, though, rather like those of the Adler to which it is related, the melodies were banal in the extreme. The arrangements, almost without exception, lack the technique and musical whimsy of many of the smaller-sized Polyphon and Symphonion arrangements. Inside the coin drawer of my Fortuna I found the original receipt from August 23rd 1903 for a grand total of £29!

Arthur W J G Ord-Hume

Sir, As a member of the Musical Box Society I wonder if any other members would be interested in a find I have made. Recently I bought a Swiss cylinder box that is in exceptional condition. Well, the box was except for one small blemish which was a large cigar or other burn on the lid. This had gone fairly deep into the veneer. I happened to see a van parked with the words French Polishing on the side. I found the workshop the next day and he said he could get rid of the burn for a reasonable price. We agreed and after a month I collected my item and was amazed by the outcome. The burn had gone and the finish on the lid was unbelievable to say the least. It turned out this man had spent most

of his career polishing grand pianos, and it shows in his work. Not the quickest person in the world, but he polished the lid of my box in the old fashioned way, and the result is superb. I enclose his card so other members can know of someone to fix similar problems.

John Humphrey

Editor's note: Anyone wanting the details of this french polisher should contact Alison Biden

Sir, My interest in the MBSGB came about in a convoluted way. One of my earliest memories is of Bill Hunt's Wonderland fairground organ performing

at Bloxwich carnival in the late 1960s. It initiated a life-long interest in mechanical music, mainly of the organ variety. The first LP I ever purchased was of Joseph Seal playing the National Musical Museum's Wurlitzer and I've spent many a happy hour down in Brentford listening to the organ played by both human hands and the Wurlitzer Automatic Reproducing Roll Player, as well as listening to all the other fascinating machines there being demonstrated by the late Frank Holland. I lost touch with my organ hobby for a while, but my interest was rekindled when I saw the Wonderland organ at the Walsall show a few years ago. I decided to build a 1/6 scale model of it, with a 30-note modular

organ by Alan Pell behind the façade. I spent some time at the National Fairground Archive in Sheffield researching the Pat Collins Wonderland No.2 show for which the organ was built and purchased a number of books on the subject of Fairground architecture and decoration. One very interesting book was *Fairground Art* by Geoff Weedon and Richard Ward, and this mentioned that the Wonderland organ façade had been designed by a gentleman by the name of Zotocornella giving the reference as an article in *The Music Box*, Volume 7 Number 7 dated 1976. Here's a link to some pictures of my model, in its early stages:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/24982765@N07/sets/72157632975638054/>

It's been a while since I found the reference to the Musical Box Society in *Fairground Art*, but recently I decided to look up the society's website and found it very interesting; the fact that it caters for people interested in organ-type instruments, as well as the more obvious musical box subjects which I'm keen to learn about. Although I'm already a member of the FOPS, I decided to join the Musical Box Society as well, to expand my knowledge of the various mechanical instruments for which it caters, as well as making use of the back-issue ordering facility to find out more about the article mentioning Zotocornella and other organ-related subjects. My first copy of *The Music Box* arrived today and I'm really impressed with its quality. I hadn't realised what a wonderful variety of articles it contains and the number of superb colour photographs (the tuning and photography articles particularly come to mind). I was

even surprised to see mention of my favourite organ on page 37! Mr Hunt told me the sad news about the sale of the Wonderland organ before it appeared in *The Key Frame*, but nevertheless, it was almost like a good omen to see the organ mentioned in a journal of the society I've just joined!

David Cresswell

Editor's note: Thank you to all our correspondents. Do you

have a project on the go to tell us about, or the story of how your interest was first kindled?

*Congratulations to
Teme Valley Winders
on their
10th Anniversary!*

New Members of the MBSGB in April 2015

We welcome the following new members who have joined the MBSGB since the last journal was published:

3201	Jill Byron	Shropshire
3202	Jerry McQuinn	USA
3203	Kenneth Robinson	Shropshire
3204	Ragnar Lie	Norway
3205	David Cresswell	West Midlands
3206	John Gilbody	Hampshire
3207	Patrick Dawson	Canada
3208	Mark Simpson	London
3209	David Pearce	Hampshire
3210	Ms. Ayse Polat	Turkey
3211	Dr. Paul Salmon	London

If you would like to get in touch with members near you, please contact the Correspondence Secretary, whose contact details are shown on page 3. If you would like to start a new local area group please contact Kevin McElhone on 01536 726759 or kevin_mcelhone@btinternet.com [note the underscore _ between his 2 names] and he will be able to advise you about other members in your area.

You will get much more from your membership if you come along to local or national MBSGB meetings, and there you will make new friends and hear wonderful instruments, and can ask for restoration and other advice. If you are not sure the first time, then just book in as a day-visitor with the meeting's secretary. Now that there are 4 Local Area Groups we hope that more members will come along and join in.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2015

4 th May	Winchester Cathedral. Organ grind and festival. Details from Alison Biden or the website.
10 th May	National Vintage Communications Fair. Warwickshire Exhibition Centre. The Fosse, Fosse Way, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1XN. Sales of vintage radios, TVs, equipment, gramophones, phonographs and mechanical music.
27 th to 31 st May	MBSGB trip to Switzerland. This is now fully booked but if interested, please contact John Phillips in case of spaces becoming available, 01584 781118.
6 th June	MBSGB AGM and Annual Auction. Roade, Northamptonshire.
13 th June 11am	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders. Eastham. Tenbury Wells. Worcs. This is a special 10 th Anniversary Celebration Event with additional features. Full details from John Phillips. 01584 781118 phillipsjohn398@gmail.com
1 st to 5 th September	MBSI Annual Convention. Los Angeles. USA.
12 th & 13 th September	Longiano Organ Festival. Italy.
18 th to 20 th September	MBSGB National Meeting. Polyphons, Orchestrions and Classic Cars in deepest Staffordshire. Three new venues for visits. Full details in flyer with this issue.
4 th October 10am	Cotton Enthusiasts' Day. Cotton Museum, Nr Stowmarket, Suffolk. IP14 4QN
10 th & 11 th October	Milton Keynes Organ Festival Milton Keynes Museum McConnell Drive Wolverton MK12 5EL
18 th October 12pm	Oktoberfest. Classic organs and model steam. Mizens Railway, Barrs Lane, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2JW
21 st November 11am	St Albans Museum Dance Organ Day. Organ Theatre, 320 Camp Road, St Albans AL1 5PE
5 th December 11am	MBSGB Teme Valley Winders Christmas meeting. Eastham, Tenbury Wells, Worcs. Details from John Phillips. 01584 781118

Stray Note - Soldiers and a Piano on a Cart

A while ago Kevin McElhone came across an old photograph of WWI soldiers with an Ariston organette. Sometime after that, the French Society produced a one-off magazine entitled *Chanteurs*



et Musiciens Ambulants. The centre-page spread contained the reproduction of a painting by a Georges Bruyer, a French soldier in WWI, who hastily painted it to commemorate the bizarre scene he had come across one day: several soldiers listening and even dancing to a barrel piano in the middle of the wasted French countryside. Bruyer wrote a letter to his parents describing the incongruity of the scene, and the brief respite from the horrors of war that this interlude provided, the music nostalgically evoking happier times. Due to copyright on the actual painting we are unable to print it here; however, thanks to Kevin we are able to reprint a photograph of another piano, although we have absolutely no details about it or the context.



THE MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN

Précis Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 7th June 2014 at Roade, Northamptonshire.

The President, Alison Biden, took the Chair and declared the AGM open at 12.10 pm. 56 Officers and Members present.

Apologies for Absence: An additional 23 members sent apologies.

Extraordinary General Meeting 7th June 2014: The proceedings were ratified.

Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting: The 2013 AGM Minutes, with one minor addition, were approved.

Matters Arising: Updates given on: The President's Report, the Audit of the 2012 Accounts, additional CDs for The Nicole Factor and Paul Bellamy's proposed book *The Music Makers of Switzerland*.

President's Report: Attention drawn to support from EC Members; American members' appreciation of *The Music Box*; gratitude to Christopher Proudfoot for standing in to edit *The Music Box*; the need to make decisions on Voting in Absentia; the Code of Conduct agreed by the EC; events at which MBSGB had been represented; outlined plans for the future; and thanks to Members for having faith in the Executive and making the Society what it is and one for which it is worth working.

Secretarial & Officer Reports: Reports received from the following:
Subscriptions Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Meetings Secretary.

Code of Conduct: Approved.

Treasurer: the reworked 2012 Accounts together with the 2013 Accounts were reported and adopted.
Reports received from other Officers: Archivist, Auction Organiser, Advertising Secretary, Web Master and Registrar.
Reports given on Publications, including the Journal and Authorised Sub-Committees and Working Parties.

Propositions under Bye Laws Article 1 Section 4: The EC's amendments to The Constitution, including a new Article allowing Voting by Proxy were approved.

Election of Society Officers for the Forthcoming Year:

Election of Hon. President/Chairman: Alison Biden re-elected President/Chair.

Election of Hon. Joint Vice-president: John Phillips re-elected to the Office of Vice-president.

Election of Committee Members: The following appointed to serve as Officers of the Society for the year 2014-2015:

Joint Vice-President [US]	Robert Yates	Archivist	Alison Biden
Membership Secretary	Kevin McElhone	Advertising Secretary	Robert Hough
Treasurer	Michael MacDonald	Auction Organiser	Nicholas Simons
Subscriptions Secretary	Michael MacDonald	Webmaster	Nicholas Newble
Correspondence Secretary	John Ward	Member without Portfolio	John Farmer
Member and Recording Secretary	David Worrall		

Appointments Unfilled: Meetings Secretary; Editor.

Note: Arthur Cunliffe continues as Registrar outside the Executive Committee.

Set Level of Subscriptions/Fees for 2015: Membership Fees for 2015 agreed as follows:

Single Member: UK £27.00; Europe (EU) £32.00; Rest of World (Surface mail) £34.00; Rest of World (Air mail) £38.00;
Joint Membership £30.00; Life Member £Nil.

Date and Venue for 2014 AGM: Saturday 6th June 2015 at 11 a.m. in The Village Hall, Roade, Northamptonshire.

Any Other Business: Members' request to Mr Paul Bellamy to return Society assets held by him; EC empowered to appoint a Trustee of The Society if necessary; EC authorised to report on ways of improving the Governance of The Society.

Vote of Thanks to President and EC: Approved with acclaim

The meeting closed at 4pm.

Register News No 86

Since the last Register News there have been a substantial number of new boxes being registered. Now there are over 10,300 boxes in total, thanks largely to increased interest from Canada and America. Details of these previously unregistered boxes show the manufacturers chose melodies they thought would appeal to the American market, folk and patriotic tunes in particular.

Alongside the Register there are other computer files, which are designed to link together to make the whole project more far-reaching. The first of these is the picture file which now has over 3,500 JPEG images of registered boxes. These are identified by their serial number. The old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words continues to be very apt, as being able to see a photograph of any box opens up a whole new dimension for research.

The second development is the formation of another database, listing the tunes that have been pinned on cylinder boxes. This also has the name of the composer where known. To date I have 1,300 tunes listed along with the date when they were composed.

The third database is a simple one listing as many details as possible about the composers mentioned on tune sheets, giving where possible, a date of birth and death. It is interesting to see in some cases the relatively short lives people led in the Victorian age.

Just to give an example of what is available by combining these files, I have chosen two composers you may have seen mentioned on tune sheets:-

Czibulka: 1842 - 1894 (aged 52).

D'Albert: 1809 - 1866 (aged 57)

Looking at *Czibulka* and at one of his compositions, we find his *Myostis Waltz* was composed in 1890, and that 8 late boxes have this tune pinned on them. The makers were *Ami-Rivenc, Paillard, Junod* and *Nicole*. This is just as one would expect when looking at this period.

When we look at *Czibulka's Stephanie Gavotte*, 52 boxes play this tune and all must have been made after 1886, which is the date of composition.

Looking at the composer *D'Albert*, his *Bridal Polka* composed in 1846 is to be found on 31 boxes, whilst his *Helena Polka* composed in 1847 is found on only 6 boxes. Why this is so is anyone's guess. Maybe it was not a very popular tune.

By combining all the information, these facts illustrate it is possible to deduce much more about boxes. Also it is possible to be a little more accurate about the date of manufacture of any box. By looking at the manufacturers' and agents' data it is also possible to see what they were doing in a specific year in relation to each other, and where they were up to with their serial numbers. To date I have concentrated on amassing the information, and eventually it will be up to others to do the detailed searching. I am quite sure however that there will be much of importance buried within these files, and eventually they will yield much information that will advance our knowledge about musical boxes significantly.

The power of modern computers also enables us quite easily to find

anything that is odd and unusual. If for example, we take another of *D'Albert's* tunes, we find that his composition *The Court of St James Quadrille* composed in the year 1865 has been found on only one box. This box with the serial number 1842 is a hidden 8-bell box made by *Ducommun-Girod*. It has another little known tune pinned on it called *Undine*. This tune by *Lortzing* was composed in 1845, but because of the 1865 quadrille, that means that the box could not have been made any earlier than that date. It would be safe to assume that this box was made very shortly after 1865, as all makers tried their utmost to keep up to date.

Richard Genée, born February 7th 1823, was a composer and playwright whose works sometimes feature on cylinder boxes. He was also the librettist for *Karl Millocker's* opera *Der Bettelstudent*, and later he wrote the opera *Der Seekadette*, perhaps the only opera to feature a game of chess in Act 2. In later life he became the conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra in Mainz. He died in Baden June 15th 1895, aged 72.

Returning to *Czibulka*, he was born in Hungry on 14th May 1842, and became a recognised musician by the age of 15. He later became a bandmaster for various regiments in the Austro-Hungarian army. When he retired he became the resident conductor of the Concert House in Hamburg. He died in Vienna 27th October 1894. There are 14 boxes noted in the Register playing his tunes. *Mermood* appears to be the maker who used his tunes the most.

The illustrations are of the hidden drum and bell box by *Ducommun*,

Register News No 86

(S/No.1842). Whilst not having the *Ducommun-Girod* name stamped anywhere on the movement, the tune sheet looks like one of theirs. Anthony Bulleid said that *Ducommun* always marked their movements, but there are at least two that are not marked with a name anywhere. I believe that both these boxes were made by them during the early years of their second series of numbering. Note that both of these boxes fit perfectly into the *Ducommun* dating chart, so one wonders why they stopped stamping their movements with their name and if so, how they did this? I would be interested to hear your views.

Future editions of the Register News will include not just information about boxes, but also facts about contemporary music and musicians.



Fig. 1 Ducommun 1842 case



Fig. 3 Ducommun 1842 general view of movement

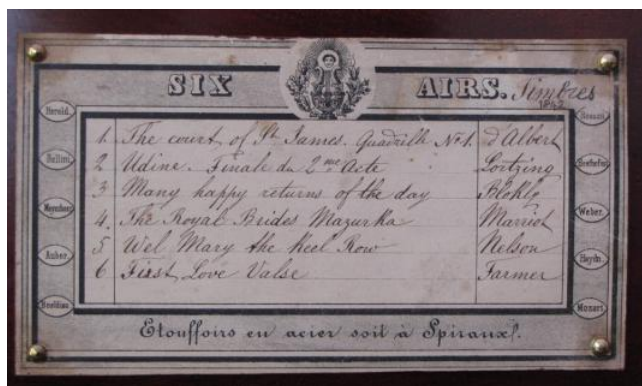


Fig. 2 Ducommun 1842 tune sheet



Fig. 4 Ducommun 1842 Close up of 'Mask above Lyre' trade mark

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Reunited after 158 Years Apart!

Report of the Wessex Group Meeting, Sunday 1st March 2015

For the second time running, the well-appointed village hall of Itchen Abbas, in the Itchen Valley, near Winchester, was the venue for the Wessex Group's meeting. Keen members rolled up early and despite a bitter wind, engaged in animated conversations in the car park even before the opening time. A small group tightly huddled around an open car boot examined a disparate collection of organ parts, pronouncing on their usability, giving rise to a not very serious suggestion that at some time in the future members should be invited to bring along random spare instrument parts and, in true *Blue Peter* fashion, see what we can construct in a day.

After the friendly chaos of setting up and consuming the first of the day's many hot drinks, organiser Alison Biden convened the meeting a few minutes later than advertised due to a programme change. The first item was to have been a late-nineteenth century Jaccard cylinder box, but unfortunately its owner was unwell. David Worrall stepped into the breach and not only entertained us admirably, but also educated us about 'sacred air' boxes. These apparently fall into three broad categories: music which is performed by semi-professional musicians and singers, such as oratorios; music for public singing; and late 19th century evangelical music emanating largely from the USA.

This led to an introduction to Sankey and Moody, now well-known for their prolific output of hymns, many of them frequently found on musical boxes and other mechanical instruments. David

illustrated his presentation with a *Paillard Vaucher et Fils* 8-air cylinder box made in 1896. Not to the taste of the modern ear but, PVF were obviously very confident when the box was made that the selection of tunes would sell. David could not be persuaded to give a vocal rendition of the hymns, but a number of audience members were heard humming along to the box.

With a complete change of topic, but still using cylinder boxes to illustrate his point, Terry Longhurst compared the length of playing times for cylinders of different diameters, pointing out that some manufacturers managed to achieve a playing time from fatter cylinders, which was proportionately more than the increase in the cylinder's circumference, by means of slower running. The first box played was a *Ducommun Girod* from 1857, playing 8 airs. Each tune lasted about 1 minute. The second box was also by *Ducommun Girod*, and played 4 airs in mandolin style, on 184 teeth. The third box was a *Langdorff* overture box, and each tune lasted about 2 minutes. The fourth box was, coincidentally, another *Ducommun Girod* mandolin box, with a serial number consecutive to the second box, although belonging to a different owner. Terry speculated that this meeting was the first time that the two boxes had been reunited since they were made in the *Ducommun Girod* workshop in 1857.

Gordon Bartlet then took the floor and showed the results of a project he had taken on: the rebuilding of 3 'bird' organs, as he likes to call them. Although virtually all identical, they were

in fact each unique, in that none of the removable parts were interchangeable.



Gordon Bartlet demonstrates his 3 'bird' organs

Each came with an identical set of 3 barrels: one of nursery rhymes, one of traditional tunes, and one of tunes associated with Christmas and New Year. Having the three presented all together, Gordon was able to expose simultaneously both a front and a back view of two of them, so the audience could see the mechanism, while he played the third. These proved very popular, and not all went home with him.

It was then time for a departure – literally – as the group decamped to the very beautiful, red brick Georgian church of St Mary, Avington, about a mile away, to see and hear its historic barrel organ.



Members of the Wessex Group studying the interior of the Georgian church and its organ

Gill Graham-Maw delivered a short introduction to the church, and the

organ, which was expanded on by notes supplied via Gordon Bartlet from someone who restored the organ in 1960.



Gordon Bartlet addressing those gathered in the church - does this herald a new vocation?

Then the more energetic mounted the steps to the musicians' gallery to inspect and play the organ, presented to the church by Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*.



Inside the organ showing barrel and some of the pipes

Back at the hall after lunch Lester Jones continued the theme of sacred music with a very pretty and bright-sounding 26-note *Peter Varetto* reed organ, with a pinned barrel of 8 sacred tunes or popular hymns

from the late 19th century.* This prompted a debate as to whether this was the only barrel the organ would have had, and whether the owner would have visited a number of chapels with it or perhaps have played it in a park on Sundays, or it had at some time in its life had other barrels with non-sacred music for the other 6 days of the week.

We were then treated to some very fine music on a *Nicole Frères* piano forte box from the 24000 series, and, as a complete contrast, shown a selection of marottes and other entertaining mechanical toys. The circle was rounded by a smaller Nicole piano forte 'dealers' box from the 38000 series, playing ... sacred airs.

The sacred theme was picked up by Brian Chapman, who had brought along a *Concert Roller Organ*, which would have been used in American chapels and churches, on which he played a selection of hymn tunes. This was followed by a brief demonstration of a rare *Gloria* disc musical box with 3 bells.

The afternoon's formal proceedings terminated with a demonstration by John Phillips of two *Singing Bird Tabatières*, which despite an initial similarity of appearance, were very different when it came to their action. The meeting broke early for a final cuppa, and the opportunity to revisit the various items displayed and more chatting. By the end of the meeting, numbers had swelled to 24, including one very

recent new joiner, and a guest who subsequently joined on the spot.



Another view in more detail of Gordon Bartlet's 'bird' organs

Coincidentally, 2 days after this meeting there was a posting by Paul Baker on *Mechanical Music Digest* regarding a 26-note street barrel reed organ with a barrel of 8 airs, 6 of which are secular, and two which appear to be hymns or sacred airs. The identified tunes are: *Granny's Song at Twilight*, *Just Like a Thief*, *Sheba*, *Romany Rose*, *I'll Stand beneath your Window tonight* and *Whistle*, and *Shores of Minnetonka*, all published in 1923. Paul knows of other examples of 26-note barrel reed organs, or street harmoniums as the makers called them, which have 2 hymn tunes as part of their 8-tune repertoire. If anyone can identify the tunes from the links below, please get in touch with Paul at phonopual@aol.com – and let us know the outcome too.

* **Links to the tunes mentioned above: -**

http://www.mmdigest.com/Attachments/15/03/03/150303_134721_barrel%20harmonium%20001.MP3

http://www.mmdigest.com/Attachments/15/03/03/150303_134721_barrel%20harmonium%20002.MP3

News from other Societies

Compiled by Alison Biden and Nicholas Simons

Mechanical Music Vol 61 No1 **January/February 2015**

See also www.mbsi.org

The majority of this issue is dedicated to photographs and an extensive



report on the MBSI's 65th Annual Convention in Florida in October 2014, the Trustees' Meeting held at the beginning of the Convention, and the Business Meeting later in the week held for all members attending. In addition there is an item by Membership Chair, Ardis Prescott, featuring members Ralph and Gloria Schack, known to many MBSGB members, and their collection. The other main feature is an article several pages long by John Field, about carillons, in which he focuses on some of the ones which can be found in the USA. This is an informative and accessible piece, but otherwise difficult to summarise here. Chapter meeting reports are from the National and Southern California Chapters.

Mechanical Music Vol 61 No2 **March/April 2015**

See also www.mbsi.org

The emphasis in this edition is very much on musical boxes. After the President's regular address, Membership Chair Ardis Prescott chooses as her subject this time Frank and Shirley Nix, and their collection. Frank and Shirley will be amongst the hosts for the forthcoming MBSI Annual Convention to be held in Torrance, Los Angeles in September. Anyone tempted to go should look at the teaser film on MBSI's website – you won't need any more persuading!

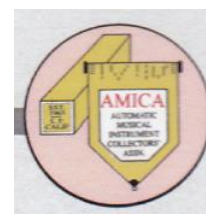
Frank Nix first caught the bug at a tender age, exposed to a large upright *Regina* box of his grandparents. When he married Shirley she quickly learned that he wanted an antique musical box of his own, and that was the start of it ... Special Exhibits Chair, Wayne Myers, reports on a number of events in which MBSI has participated or been represented, in an attempt to promote it and mechanical music to the wider public. The one which particularly caught my fancy was a workshop held at The Villages in Florida, a retirement community, at which children teamed up with their grandparents to make musical boxes. The theme of DIY continues with the next article in which author Anatoly Zaya-Ruzo, who, frustrated at not finding a modest street organ kit (as opposed to the more 'professional' ones), finally set about creating one. Sixteen months later, he had produced what he calls the *MINI-14* – a paper roll mini pipe organ. It had to be compact and simple in design, not intimidating, and easy to assemble, and he chose as his models the *Serinet* and organette. The finished product can be seen in action on YouTube – go to YouTube and search 'MINI-14 Organ'. Anatoly has produced a kit containing 150 parts, and a detailed construction booklet. There is also a roll-cutting board kit. It's a return to musical boxes for the next item, by Robin Biggins, entitled *An American Triumph*. The *Triumph* is a rare disc playing machine, made by the *American Music Box Company* of Hoboken in New Jersey. The example Robin bases his article on is in an attractive octagonal case, and as well as quoting extensively

from Kevin McElhone's *Disc Musical Box Book*, Robin sends out a plea for anyone else who has one to get in touch with him. This machine has some unusual features; an angle shape to each of the comb teeth, and a very complex damper design, which Robin suggests was possibly used to avoid patent infringements. The disc projections are also unusual in that each is reinforced by a 'pimple'. The article is beautifully illustrated, making it easier to understand the complicated descriptions. Another beautifully illustrated article, 9 pages in length, features the *Rakoczy Harp*, invented by Paul Erlich. Although a number of firms were making disc-playing piano harps at the time, this model appears to be unique as the hammers striking the piano wires are not spring-loaded or levered, but are lifted by the star wheels and dropped onto the strings using only the spring tension of a steel comb. The Special Exhibits team features once again in a report on a show held over the Christmas Holiday period, in The Villages. There are reports on East Coast, Southern California, Golden Gate, National Capital, and Northwest International Chapters. Sadly, there is also an extensive In Memoriam section.

AMICA Bulletin Vol 52 No 1 **January/February 2015**

See also www.amica.org

This issue is dedicated to commemorating the centenary of Wurlitzer's introduction of the *Style 165 band organ* in a short



item by Matthew Caulfield. The oldest extant 165 known today is in the *Sanfilippo* collection, and it appears to have a unique crest. The final article in this edition deviates from the theme of the 165, and concerns the history and restoration of Melville Clark *Solo Apollo Pianos*. Author Jere DeBacker is another one who got hooked early in his teens! The contents conclude with reports from the Boston Area, Chicago Area, Founding, Midwest, and Texas Chapters, and tributes to the late Robert 'Bob' Streicher, not an AMICAn, but someone who had helped many.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXIII No 3 2014

See also www.reedsoc.org

The President's message caused a bit of a diversion as I checked out her reported appearance on US television via YouTube. If you have about 13 minutes to spare, I can recommend it, as the programme, one in a series entitled *Collecting Seriously*, is a splendid example of an entertaining, yet concisely informative piece on reed organs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOtFJzDu0uk> Several pages at the beginning of this edition are dedicated to the ongoing issue of proposals for a stringent ban on using and moving around ivory products, which would have a serious impact on reed organ owners and restorers, should it become US Law. There is an extract from Hermann Smith's *Practical Treatise on the Harmonium, How to Build and How to Use it*, first published in *English Mechanic* 1867-70s. More extracts are planned in the future. Allen C Myers than writes about



Dating Reed Organs by Internal Evidence, with a caveat not to be misled by patent dates related to parts produced by independent manufacturers. This article is 10 pages long, and if anyone wants to know more, please contact the MBSGB Archivist. The penultimate piece in this edition is a restoration article, on a *B Shoninger Bell* organ, whilst the final item tells how the Reed Organ Society helped a couple in New Zealand identify the correct top for their Cornish *Corona* organ.

Reed Organ Society Quarterly Vol XXXIII No 4 2014

See also www.reedsoc.org

This edition opens with an item from the UK; ROS member Pam Fluke recalls an interview with renowned English organist Ralph Downes who died in 1993. Downes was an advisor for the new Royal Festival Hall built in 1951, and consultant at Gloucester Cathedral. As a young man Downes was employed to play the organ in a Nottingham cinema. The interest here is that he later owned two *Mustel* reed organs. Following the international flavour, the next item comes from Ireland. Author Darragh Connolly describes his quest to find and obtain a reed organ, and, finally tracking down an *Estey* and how he came to restore it. Inevitably this led to the acquisition of more. At first sight I thought the next article also came from the British Isles, as it concerns the reed organs of Pendleton, but it turns out this is Pendleton County, West Virginia. Next are the scores of 2 tunes, in the occasional series which occupy the centrespread; *Bird Schottische* by W F Sudds, and *Gen'l Persifor F Smith's March*, by T J Martin. As promised there is another extract from Herman Smith's *Treatise on the Harmonium*,

here following the topic of reed cells. The edition concludes with a report on a series of reed organ concerts in Ohio, and a number of recitals given featuring Marilyn Swett playing her reed organ and her friend Amy Cole on bassoon.

Vox Humana November 2014

See also www.moos.org.uk

The contents of this edition consist of MOOS News – a round-up of events and notifications



for members; Minutes of the 2014 AGM and reflections on it provided by Chairman Alan Smith, 'Some brief notes on organ temperament' from Matt Gamble, the petition to save historic British fairground organs, and an article by Peter Craig about his 72-key *Decap* organ. In this article Peter discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the 72-key over the 92-key *Decap*. Before he bought it Peter's organ resided in former MBSGB President Jon Gresham's Penny Arcardia in Pocklington.

Organ Grinders News No 92 Spring 2015

See also www.boga.co.uk

This issue starts with the sad news of the death of Fred Merrick, who was a well-known organ grinder in the early days of the resurgence of street organs. The AGM is planned for the Black Country Museum, which is ideal for such an event. The name Adrian Oswalt will be



known to anyone who has been to the Waldkirch organ festival. Here he writes about his new, very large mechanical organ, which he designed to play his own compositions. It is modularised, for easier transport, and plays electronic sounds as well as the traditional organ pipes. He was helped in the construction by Jager and Brommer of Waldkirch. John Smith, the 'king' of the self-build organ, tells us more about his early days as an organ designer.

Organ Grinders News No 91 Winter 2014

See also www.boga.co.uk

This issue includes reports of the Milton Keynes Organ Festival and the Oktoberfest. Both festivals had a good gathering of the smaller organs covered by this society. Alan Dunn writes about his acquisition of a 20-note paper roll organ which was built by *Carl Frei Junior of Waldkirch* in 1989. The organ sports a splendid carved front, made by *Franz Lang of Elzach*, just up the valley from Waldkirch. Also of note is the mention of the diamond wedding anniversary of the organ builder Josef Raffin and his wife Thea. Organs must be good for you!

The Key Frame, Issue KF 4-14

See also www.fops.org

This issue starts with an article by Andrew Pilmer detailing the



restoration of a 101-key *Mortier* organ, once resident in the Paul Corin collection. This organ has now moved to its new home in Holland, but before it went it was presented at an open day attended by over 50 enthusiasts. The colour centre spread shows the delights of the MOOS trip to Holland where

they visited such notable collections as *De Voer*, *Koos Meulkens*, *Ruud Vader*, *Museum Dansant* and *Cafe Centrum* in Edegam, which has recently had a 92-key *Decap* installed, so it appears that dance organs are still very much appreciated in Holland.

Musical Roots, this time, describes the life and times of Fred Godfrey who had his greatest hits in time of war. *Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty* was a hit in 1916 and *Bless 'Em All* in 1941, the latter made famous by George Formby.

The Key Frame Issue KF 1-15

See also www.fops.org

We start this time with Musical Roots with the focus on Albert von Breitenbach. Who? I hear you say. Actually it is Fred Fisher, who emigrated from Cologne to America in 1900. Some of his early tunes have rather politically incorrect titles today but he moved on to such hits as *Come Josephine*, *In My Flying Machine*, *Peg O' My Heart* and *Your Feet's Too Big*, made famous by Fats Waller. In 1922 he wrote *Chicago* and continued to write memorable tunes such as *Happy Days Are Here Again* and *Whispering Grass*. He certainly had a massive talent for tune writing.

Elsewhere Jonathan Holmes asks the question 'When Did You Catch The Dreaded Fair Organitis'? He tells us his own story of organ enlightenment, and this could be an interesting feature in any special interest magazine, such as our own. How about telling us your own story?

Player Piano Group Bulletin 209, Spring 2015

See also www.PlayerPianoGroup.org.uk

This issue contains 2 major



articles, along with the usual home visit reports and invitation to the forthcoming AGM, due to be held in the stately surroundings of Madingley Hall, near Cambridge. Peter Phillips of Australia gives us a history of the *Welte Company* from the early 1905 recordings on the red rolls, through their establishing of a factory in Poughkeepsie, NY, and the development of the Licensee roll, concluding in 1922 with the green roll.

At last year's AGM Richard Shepherd gave a presentation about his design and manufacture of a small number of really high-end solenoid operated reproducing pianos. He has fitted his system into *Steinway* and *Bosendorfer* pianos. *Zenph Studios* had developed a programme for extracting the actual notes and dynamics from scratchy 78 records, so the marriage of the two systems was an obvious move, which resulted in great acclaim at concerts in *Carnegie Hall*, and on CDs by the Sony Corp. This is presented here complete with detailed technical photos plus some showing the recording process and concert hall. This is truly a world-class piece of work.

Friends of the Amersham Fair Organ Museum Newsletter.

December 2014

After a short break we now have a new Editor and Friends Coordinator in Ben Eley, a young organ builder who recently took a position working for the well-known organ builder and music arranger Kevin Meayers. This issue covers 12 pages with quite a few devoted to an article about the

Gaudin Brothers, who bought the *Marengi Company* after the death of Charles Marengi in 1920. The company didn't last long due to the reduced demand for organs at this time, and bankruptcy ensued. The museum treasurer presents a healthy outlook, helped significantly by a generous bequest, with funds now allocated to an improved kitchen and an accessible lavatory.

Visits are being arranged for the New Year, with the first to a private collection in the Midlands. Amersham museum is run by a charitable trust and all income goes to the maintenance of this superb collection of organs. The open day dates for the forthcoming season will be included in *The Music Box* when known.

Non-English journals

Das Mechanische Musikinstrument No 121 December 2014

See also www.musica-mechanica.de
In his **DAS MECHANISCHE MUSIKINSTRUMENT** comments

President Ralf Smolne brings readers up to date with changes by the German society's committee. The first article is about the carillon of the *Munich Town Hall*. As often with articles in this publication it is accompanied by technical diagrams. Operated by a pinned barrel it can also be played by a keyboard. The second article concerns a *Harmonie-Oktavo* (sublime harmony) musical box by *Cuendet* with 3 combs, as opposed to the usual 2. Seven pages are devoted to a brief (!) account of the restoration of the

Hupfeld Phonolistz-Violina in the *Schloss Bruchsal Museum* by Jorg Borchardt. Jorg Borchardt himself is the focus of the next feature as he is introduced as the new Vice President of the German society. The new Treasurer, Adrian Schmidt, is then introduced in similar fashion.

The subject of the obituary in this edition is Paul Fricker. There then follow several pages of business notes about the general meeting held on 27th September 2014, at the *Bruchsal Museum*, along with 2 more of photos of the same. There is then a report on the exhibition of jukeboxes at the *Seewen Museum*. The final piece of interest concerns a conference on *Musical Media Practice in the early days of Phonograph, reproducing piano and radio*.

Het Pierement January 2015

See also www.draaiorgel.org

Two *Perlee* organs, the *Drie Pruiken* and the *Buffel* are the subjects of Wim Snoerwang's regular feature 50 years ago in Amsterdam.



Henk Hiddinga writes about *Walon's* carousel and the *De Duwijn* organ, well-known in its time in Leeuwarden. The same author collaborates with Hans Brink to write about the relationship between church organ builder *Cavaillé* and *Ludovic Gavioli*, with the composer *Gioacchino Rossini* having a hand in it. Next up is an article about the *Mercurius* which Peter de Groot has now owned for 35 years. An organ once known as *De Bedstee* (Bedstead) but now known as *Cupido*, is the subject of the next item, describing its

most recent restoration by Johnny and Jeffrey Verbeeck. More organ history follows in the form of the second in a series entitled *Do you remember ...?* By way of a change, there is a brief article about the *Aeolian Orchestrelle style 1250*, by Hendrik Strengers, followed by a short piece about a *Popper's Happy Jazz Band*. Next we see the first in a new series about the ranges of organs with mechanics described as *Gavioli* system or *Limonaire* system etc. as the author Marten van der Vlugt says in his introduction 'This series aims to shed light on the composition of the ranges by different manufacturers and also bring a discussion about what is beautiful and what is good.'

Wim Snoerwang reports on a second *39 Ruth*, known as the *Swiss Double Ruth*, moving to the Netherlands. A number of events are also reported on; an organ festival in Amsterdam in September 2014, the 32nd Organ gathering in Lichtensteig also last September, a Belle Epoque-themed weekend in Newport, Belgium last September, and the annual fair organ open day hosted by the De Voer family in November 2014.

Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes No 93 Spring 2015

See also www.aaimm.org

In his **Musiques Mecaniques Vivantes 93** opening address President Jean Pierre Arnaut looks forward to celebrating AAIMM's 40th anniversary at its AGM in the Savoyard town of Les Gets, and to a number of projects being undertaken by the Society during the coming year. In anticipation, the Society's accounts and a review of the Society's activities during

the last year are published. To commemorate the 40th anniversary, AAIMM have produced a DVD of the collection of Henri Triquet, on which a Parisian museum of mechanical music was based, and which pioneered a number of other similar museums and collections during the 1970s and 80s, seen as the renaissance of interest in mechanical music.

Two forthcoming exhibitions are showcased; one at the *Musée Baud* on *Fisher Price* musical toys, and the other on automata at the *Musée de la Magie* in Blois. The indomitable Marcel Mino has rescued yet another barrel piano, found languishing in a farmer's stable. Made by *Magnan Frères*, M Mino has restored it and it now delights by playing 10 dance tunes from the 1920s. Arnaud Moyencourt dedicates a piece to verifying sources on the *Aubert family*, who featured in the special supplementary magazine *Chanteurs et Musiciens Ambulants*, produced in February 2014.

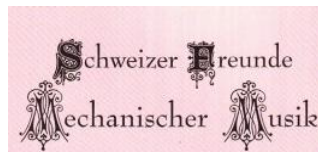
There are reports on a number of organ festivals; *6th International Organ Festival* in Pavilly on 13 and 14th September 2014; *4th Organ Festival* in Varilhes, 19, 20 and 21st September 2014; the *2nd Organ Festival of Kranj* (Slovenia) 18 to 20th July 2014; *34th International Organ Festival of Oignt* in Beaujolais; an organ festival in Nitra, Slovakia, in June 2014, followed by second a month later and one in Varazdin, Croatia and one in August, 2014. Both towns will be holding festivals in 2015, and are seeking participants from western countries. There is also a report on the French Society's visit to the Lille area last October, and a round up of results from a

number of international auctions. Jean-Marc Lebout writes about François Nicole boxes and their unique characteristics, as well as the gathering of François Nicole box owners in Germany last August. Regular features include Jean Nimal's SeriNET – some recommended video clips from the internet, posted on AAIMM's site, a couple of disc reviews, and obituaries on René Mellier, Freddy Piquer and Paul Fricker.

Schweizerischer Verein der Freunde No121 December 2014

See also www.sfmm.ch

The first, brief article in this



edition concerns American organette manufacture, and also corrects a confusion between Paul Lochman, producer of disc musical boxes, and Paul Erlich, manufacturer of the *Ariston* organette. Hansjorg Surber then writes about how a collecting trip in Germany developed into an interesting little holiday, taking in visits to a number of collections and museums. This is followed by Peter X Bürgisser lamenting that there are to be no more organ festivals in Brunnen.

Friedlinde and Rafael Engeser write a spirited obituary for Paul Fricker, who died last 1st October. Jacqueline Both, known to some of us in MBSGB, reports at length on a Swiss Society visit to Berlin last September, illustrated with lots of photographs of very happy looking people. A restored *Wurlitzer* cinema organ from the USA, which curiously found a new home replacing a church organ in

St Georgen, is the subject of the next article. The contents close with a list of dates of events.

Nieuwsbrief from MechaMusica February 2015

See also www.mechamusica.be

This edition opens with a report of a gathering in January at the organ collection of Jan and Claudia Van den Eede, which judging from the photographs, was a most enjoyable event, featuring a number of *Decap Antwerp* and *Herentals* organs. Tragically, only 2 weeks after this event Jan died, and there is a long piece in tribute to him. After a number of pages of notifications of various sorts, there is a photo feature of the old organ hire firm of *Gustaaf Schollaert and Son*.

The Musical Box Society of Great Britain félicite l'Association des Amis des Instruments et de la Musique Mécanique à l'occasion de son 40^{ème} anniversaire!

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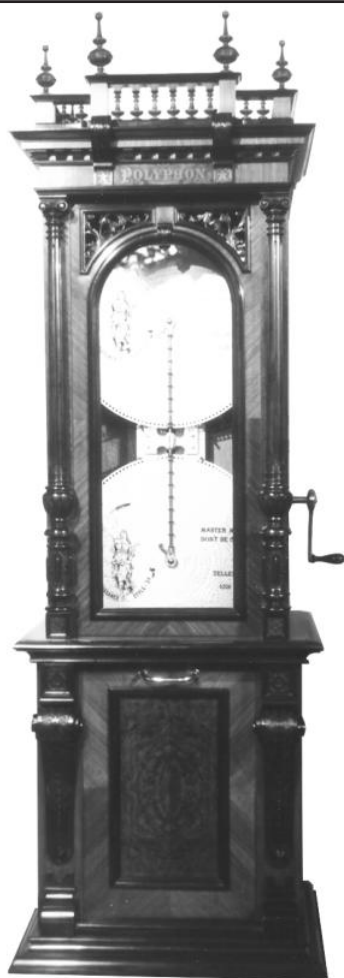
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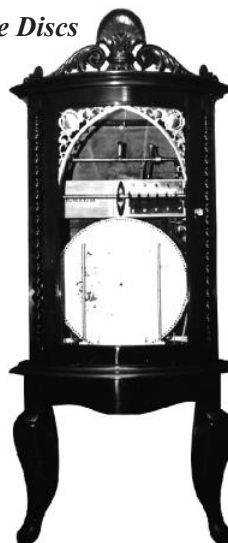
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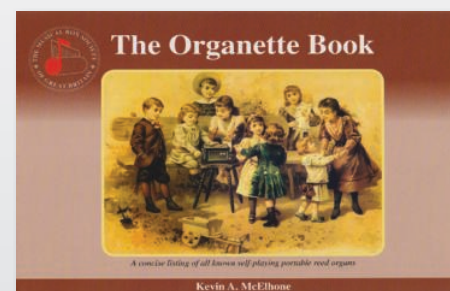
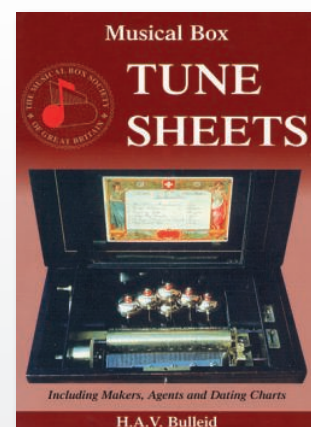
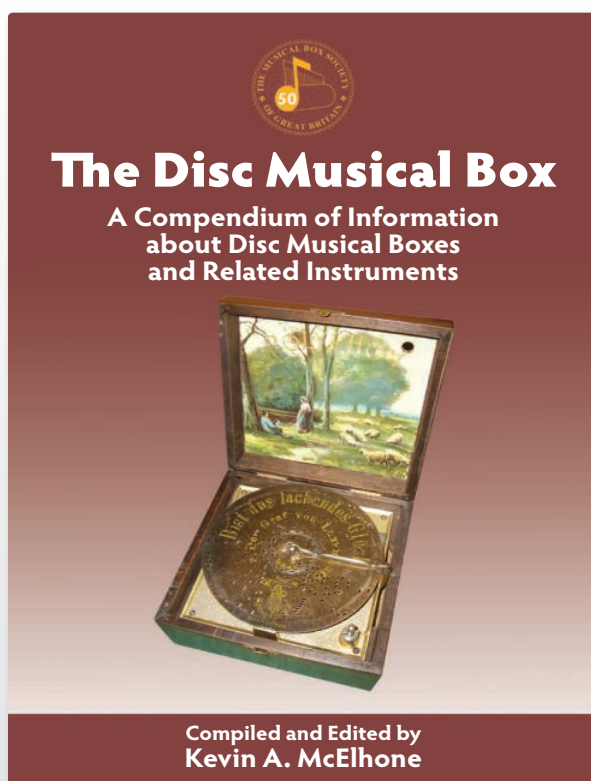
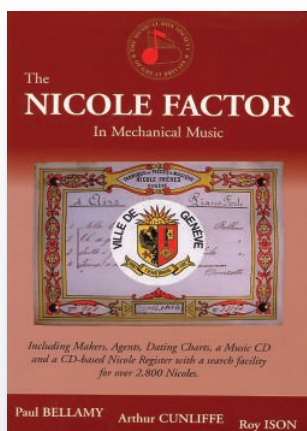
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